



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AND FACULTY
OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
HO CHI MINH CITY OPEN UNIVERSITY



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**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 7TH OPENTESOL
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INNOVATION AND INSPIRATION:
BUILDING THE FUTURE OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

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ABOUT OPENTESOL

Welcome to Ho Chi Minh City Open University,

The  International Conference series was established in 2012 by The Faculty of Foreign Languages and The Graduate School of Ho Chi Minh City Open University, a higher education institution offering a variety of programs ranging from on-site to distance learning and learning at satellite academic centers and aiming to meet various learning needs of society and to contribute to enriching the country's human resources.

OpenTESOL is a conference for local and international professionals in the field of Foreign Languages Teaching and Learning. OpenTESOL has been recognized as a valuable professional development forum for practitioners and researchers in the region.

Since 2016, OpenTESOL has also published its conference proceedings. All presenters are encouraged to submit their papers for consideration in this publication.

OpenTESOL honors the following groups:

- Classroom teachers and teacher educators;
- Ph.D. students and researchers in the fields of foreign language teaching and learning and applied linguistics;
- English language school's managers and tertiary education administrators.
- Foreign experts or researchers who wish to network within the foreign language communities in the region.

OpenTESOL aims to:

- Establish a quality hub for sharing ideas of appropriate pedagogies in different teaching and learning contexts;
- Provide an opportunity for building a network of teachers and those professionals involved in language teaching;
- Strengthen the ties between the foreign language teaching communities in Vietnam and other nations;
- Connect local communities with international language education institutions or associations;
- Present state-of-the-art research into language and language education.

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EDITORIAL

Themed as *Innovation and Inspiration: Building the Future of Language Education*, the 7th OpenTESOL International Conference Proceedings 2019 has received valuable contributions from both researchers and practitioners across contexts. The threads that bind all articles are the authors' endeavors to anticipate what futures may hold for language education through the lens of glocalization, internationalization and the 4th industrial revolution. In the words of the English writer Zadie Smith: "The past is always tense, the future perfect."

Given that this is the 4th year the OpenTESOL conference series has published its conference proceedings, we are honored to present a diverse community of authors who are willing to share systematic accounts of in-situ practices to a much wider audience.

The subthemes of this year's conference proceedings explore multiple perspectives of inclusion, creativity, technology, speaking/reading instruction, learner strategies, culture, project-based learning, approaches, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), the psychology of language learning, applied linguistics, and teaching Chinese/Japanese. The breadth and depth of the paper selections aims to invite the readers' rigorous reflection processes to advance knowledge in these changing times.

The publication of the proceedings will not be made possible without the reviewers' enormous support. We would like to express our sincere thanks for their commitment and expertise in scheduling their time to provide insightful feedback on the authors' initial works.

That being said, we wish readers of the proceedings an inspiring reading experience and invite all of you to submit a full paper for our 2020 OpenTESOL conference.

All the best,

Dr. Nguyen Thi Xuan Lan - Dr. Bui Thi Thuc Quyen - Dr. Huynh Cong Minh Hung - Mr. Mai Minh Tien

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INCLUSION – CREATIVITY

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED PERSONALIZED LEARNING TO EMPOWER A STUDENT WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

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ABSTRACT

The fourth industrial revolution sets forth more elaborate challenges in education practices. This paper explicates how technology-enhanced personalized learning approach is implemented in Basic Grammar course to empower the student with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in taking the ownership of learning and meeting his learning needs based on his personal strengths, weaknesses, and interests. The technology-enhanced personalized learning detailed in this paper facilitates student to take more control of his learning, facilitate decision-making and communication skills, and engage in the learning process. This paper aims to invite educators to integrate technology in personalized learning and to provide new insights on how to implement technology-enhanced personalized learning in inclusive classrooms. Further, it is expected that the idea of equity in inclusive education could become an omnipresent practice in the effort of improving Indonesian education-for-all quality.

Keywords: *technology-enhanced, personalized learning, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), inclusive education.*

INTRODUCTION

Digitalization is deemed as an essential factor in the fourth industrial revolution (Weforum, 2016) and being such a factor, it has been powerful enough to have implications on current and future education practices. In its definition, the word invokes positive associations with abundant information that is available and less costly. Therefore, digitalization is changing the work environment as well as the way

classrooms work. In such classroom contexts, students are expected to learn with greater efficiency and personalization.

Personalized learning has gained its buzz in inclusive educational settings, as it creates a learning environment in which students with disabilities can manage their learning pace themselves. In this environment, they can adapt and manage their learning based on their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and skills since the aims of personalized learning are to put students as active participants in their learning process and incorporate some learning approaches which accommodate their different needs. Further, this promotes students' learning success as it creates student learning engagement, provides meaningful assessment, establishes individualized learning plan, and exercises students' problem solving and critical thinking skills (Jenkins and Keefe, 2002; Jones and Casey, 2015; Kim, 2012; Pane et al., 2015).

This paper focuses on one of the courses offered in the English Education Department of Duta Wacana Christian University. Basic Grammar course was selected since it is one of the compulsory courses for the first-year students and is attended by students with various backgrounds, different English competences, and learning abilities. This course requires students to learn the basics of English grammar and apply them in writing assignments. At the end of the course, by applying the grammatical items learned during the semester, all students were assigned to write a short article about themselves or their closest friend/relative and to set up a personal blog for showcasing their writings during the semester.

This paper showcases how technology-enhanced personalized learning is implemented in this course to ensure the attainment of the course's goal and objectives. I implemented technology-enhanced personalized learning to guarantee that all students had equal learning opportunities considering that in this class there was a student with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Operationally, some innovations derived from technology-enhanced personalized learning approach were implemented to empower the student with an autism spectrum disorder in facilitating his learning.

To provide a clear picture of how technology-enhanced personalized learning was implemented in Basic Grammar course, this paper

provides essential information, such as the description of the course, the student's with autism spectrum disorder profile, the rationale of implementing personalized learning for student with ASD, and how the technology-enhanced personalized learning was implemented through some innovations. In doing so, it is expected that educators, practitioners, and researchers may adopt this approach and modify the activities based on the corresponding contexts to accommodate the needs of both regular students and students with ASD in promoting their learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Autism or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is defined as neurodevelopmental disorders which affect genetically to certain individuals and impairs communication skills, social interactions, and behavioural aspects (Conroy, Sticher, and Gage, 2011). In its continuum ASD ranges from low to high which manifests different levels of intelligence. The higher spectrum of autism or High Functioning Autism refers to individuals whose intelligence is between normal to the above normal level, while the lower spectrum of autism is characterized as low intelligence level. Individuals with the lower spectrum of autism have limited communication skills and abilities, and social skill. Essentially, individuals with ASD are likely to have some issues related to communication impairments, social relation issue, and behaviour.

Students with ASD have certain characteristics which differentiate them from their peers; they will respond differently in understanding concepts, socializing, and communicating their ideas, thoughts, and feelings (Pritchard, 2009). Teachers and educators should well recognize these characteristics and implement some approaches, principles, and strategies in order to provide support and opportunities in learning. In line with this, The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) of the Department of Education in Northern Ireland (DENI 2016) has published a booklet entitled 'Autistic Spectrum Disorders: A Guide to Classroom Practice' for teachers and educators which provides a complete guideline of how to deal with students with ASD. Some of the principles derived from the booklet which can be adopted into the classroom are as follow.

1. Reducing the amount of language in giving instructions; the language used should be clear, simple, and direct.
2. Giving an adequate amount of time to process and understand information rather than expecting immediate answers
3. Working with routines and structures on a daily basis
4. Setting realistic and attainable targets in a short-term period of time
5. Keeping the environments informed of the strategies applied

In Asia educational setting, as reported in some studies, the pervasiveness of individuals with ASD is growing from time to time (Weiwu and Chen, 2000; Honda et al., 2005; Sun and Allison, 2010). Septia et al. (2016) assert that Indonesia is one of the countries in Asia which shows the growing number of students with ASD between 2010 to 2016. Interventions and innovations in the curriculum to accommodate the needs in granting equity in education are needed in response to the increased number of students with ASD in Indonesia education system. In addition, Septia et al. (2016) and Setyoputri (n.d.) claim that personalized interventions are among the most successful approaches in learning when dealing with students with ASD.

In this study, student with ASD operationally refers to an individual having social interaction and communication impairments who has frequently repetitive phrases and difficulties in maintaining conversation. Also, this individual has difficulties in receptive language skills, such as in understanding comprehensive instructions, long talks, and lengthy texts. In addition to receptive language skill difficulties, the student with ASD in this study has high level of apprehension, anxiety, or nervousness when facing challenges during classroom activities.

Personalized interventions have been discussed and described under several terms; however, 'personalized learning' seems to be the most common and frequently used term. As 'personalized learning' is a 'multi-layered construct with numerous definitions and various forms of interpretation' (Schmid and Petko, 2019), scholars and researchers have explained the concept differently, yet it carries the same approaches. Prain et al. (2013) argue that personalized learning

‘depends on the expertise of the teachers to support students’ meaningful goal-setting, accompanied by the provision of an engaging curriculum that offers timely strategies and learning experiences to address student goals’. Personalized learning provides opportunities for students to take ownership of learning by including some activities, such as project-based learning assignments, establishing individualized learning plans, establishing performance-based assessments, and creating student portfolios (Childress and Benson, 2014). Furthermore, The Institute for Personalized Learning (CCSSO, 2017) characterizes personalized learning as an approach where teachers and students work collaboratively to tailor learning based on students’ strengths, needs, and interests. Fundamentally, personalized learning enables students to take ownership of learning and have more active roles in learning.

The advancement of technology closely associated with personalized learning has recently taken the level of personalized learning into new heights enhancing the effectiveness of learning and providing diverse learning experiences. Along with this, Reigeluth (2017) proposes three reasons for integrating technology into a personalized learning environment. For teachers, it facilitates administration and saves time. For students, it motivates students by providing authentic and immersive tasks which allow students to experience real-world problems. Furthermore, technology-enhanced personalized learning provides a supportive network of learning where students can interact with one another, collaborate, share their learning experiences, and discuss problems during their learning process.

Holmes et al. (2018) use a framework proposed by FitzGerald and colleagues (2017) to elaborate on how different aspects of technology-enhanced personalized learning can be implemented in the classrooms. The first aspect is built upon the aim of technology-enhanced personalized learning which is to enable students to have their own freedom in making choices over what, where, and how to learn. The second, technology-enhanced personalized learning provides opportunities for student-led project-based learning. The third, technology-enhanced personalized learning is designed to support personalized contents in various ways, such as the use of blended learning, flipped learning, and learning management systems to

coordinate learning across contents. The fourth, technology-enhanced personalized learning allows students to adjust the pace of their learning according to their cognitive strengths and weaknesses and their learning goals. The next aspect deals with the individuals involved in technology-enhanced personalized learning; in this approach, the technologies support both individual and collaborative learning. Finally, the last aspect of this approach highlights the context of learning. Personalization can take place either within or beyond the classroom walls providing students ubiquitous learning experiences.

In regard to education equity, Worthen (2016) asserts that a personalized learning environment provides differentiated learning experiences not only for students without disabilities but also for students with ASD in particular. Personalized learning allows students with ASD to fully engage into general education classes without the feeling of being singled out. In addition, this approach tailors the learning paths for students with ASD based on their strengths, weaknesses, learning progress, and performance.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The goal of this study was to determine how technology-enhanced personalized learning was implemented in Basic Grammar course. Therefore, the research question was defined as follows.

How was technology-enhanced personalized learning implemented in Basic Grammar course?

THE STUDY

This study was conducted in Basic Grammar course attended by the first semester students of English Education Department of Duta Wacana Christian University, Indonesia. This course is a compulsory, three-credit course, which required the students to attend the class once a week, involve in flipped and jigsaw learning, do some quizzes and written assignments, and set up their own blog to showcase their written works. In one semester, the students learn the basics of English grammar, such as parts of speech, phrases, past, present, and future tenses, subject-verb agreement, and coordinating conjunctions through some activities, such as games, material presentations, project-based assignment, written practice, and discussions. At the end of the course,

the students were expected to be able to optimally apply the grammatical items they have learned during the semester into a 500-word essay describing themselves or one of their closest friends.

In the effort of showcasing the personalized learning implemented in the course, this study follows a student with ASD. Prior to attending college, he attended a private vocational school majoring in culinary. Although he had always been interested in music, English language, and theology, he decided to pursue his study in a vocational school due to his limited competence, knowledge, communication, social, and interpersonal skills. The school curriculum had been limited in accommodating and providing an appropriate education for students with ASD; however, his parents had provided him with various opportunities to develop and follow his passion in music, English language, and theology by involving him in many religious activities in their church. His parents and teachers had been very supportive in motivating the student to pursue his higher education.

Despite the fact that he completed the course with a minimum score, it was not easy for the student to achieve his learning journey. The student had enrolled in the course twice since previously he failed the course in his first year of college. Previously, his overall progress during the semester was not satisfying although he attended the class regularly and participated actively in all class activities. Due to his disability, he was overwhelmed with class assignments and homework. Additionally, interventions and innovations for a student with ASD were not made available during his first Basic Grammar course. He was given the same assignments without any personalized instructions, modification, substitution, and duplication of each assignment given during the course. As a result, he had been more apprehensive about doing the assignments and homework, understanding complex instructions, and applying the grammatical items in various contexts.

However, in his second enrolment, he challenged himself to learn more about basic grammar in this course. During the class, some interventions and innovations were made available to accommodate his learning and needs by providing opportunities for him to learn at his own pace. As a result, his learning performance was improving in his second enrolment.

The data of this study were gathered from the teacher's reflection, class records, class assignments, and interviews. The class records and assignments during the semester were gathered and analyzed to explicate the innovations and the results of implementation. Furthermore, the teacher's reflection and interview supported and corroborated the findings of the analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Derived from the theory of personalized learning as the umbrella of the technological innovations applied in Basic Grammar course, the innovations implemented in this course provide opportunities for the student with ASD to take ownership of learning, set his learning goals, and meet their learning needs. The innovations discussed in this study were flipped and jigsaw learning, Google Forms to provide step-by-step instructions, and a blog to showcase his works. The following paragraphs explain and illustrate how each innovation reflects the essence and principles of technology-enhanced personalized learning.

Worthen (2016) asserts that personalized learning allows students with disabilities to engage in classroom activities where they can work collaboratively with their peers in an inclusive classroom setting. In such a learning environment, their communication, social, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills will flourish and develop. Further, this learning environment creates a condition where they feel fully accepted without being stigmatized and singled out. As part of this strategy, flipped and jigsaw learning meets the needs of students with disabilities in involving them actively into the learning process, helping them in expressing their thought, ideas, and aspirations.

Flipped learning which is characterized by an inverted classroom with reversed instructions (Yarbro et al., 2014) require students to read and understand previews before coming to the class. Students learned the previews or content materials, such as PowerPoint slides, online video content, pdf documents provided by teachers and made available in the university's learning management systems (LMS). During classroom meetings, the teacher made use of the time to discuss and share students' understanding of the materials by using a jigsaw learning strategy.

Jigsaw learning enables the student with ASD to improve his social and collaboration skills by sharing, discussing, and solving problems related to the content materials with his peers. In jigsaw learning, students initially worked with their “expert group” to share, discuss, and clarify questions related to the assigned materials they had read before the class. Based on my observations, the “expert group” helps the student with ASD interact with his friends and discover a shared problem solving based on the questions or problems found in the content materials. This innovation, therefore, empowers the student’s learning experience in improving their communication skill and collaborating with their peers to identify the problems and develop shared understandings (Friend and Bursuck, 2012). The next step in jigsaw learning, students cross-share the content materials they had prepared and discussed in the “expert groups” in their new group, known as “home group”. Both flipped and jigsaw learning have provided some benefits for the student with ASD in determining his learning pace, increasing his engagement and achievement, exercising his decision-making skill, improving his confidence, assessing his understanding to the content materials learned, and reducing the stigma of being singled out (NCLD, n.d.).

The second technology-enhanced personalized learning implemented in this study is using Google Forms to provide explicit, simple, clear, and systematic instructions for the student with ASD to facilitate him in understanding classroom instructions. The teacher provided step-by-step instructions in the form of Google Forms link consisting of what to do before, during, and after the class to support learning activities. The link to Google Forms was given at the end of each meeting to help the student with ASD set his patterns and routines during his learning process. Google Forms seemed to be successful in helping the student with ASD in understanding learning instructions, setting priorities, and reducing the high level of apprehension, anxiety, or nervousness. In essence, Google Forms helped student with ASD to set structured activities on a daily basis and tailored his learning based on the needs. Moreover, it aligns with DENI (2016) which asserts that one of the strategies which are likely to be successful to facilitate students with ASD in their learning is providing them with a set of routines and structures on a daily basis.

The last technology-enhanced personalized learning implemented for the student with ASD was a project-based assignment in setting up a personal blog to showcase his writing works. This project-based assignment served as a practice for the student with ASD to tailor his learning by deciding his own choice in what technological tool he would use to showcase his works during the semester, how and when he would do that. This innovation is a good practice in enabling student's voice and choice in what, when, where, and how they learn (Worthen, 2016). In this student-led project-based assignment, the student with ASD decided to use Padlet as a tool to showcase his writing works. His main reason for using the tool was that he felt more comfortable with this tool as he had used it last semester and he had been familiar with it. By tailoring the learning based on his strengths, weaknesses, and interests, the student with ASD managed to use and generate his own Padlet to showcase all his writing assignments during one semester in Basic Grammar course.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The integration of technology in personalized learning in Basic Grammar course empowers and facilitates student learning and provides ownership of learning, especially for the student with ASD in an inclusive educational setting. Moreover, the facts showed that the implementation of technology-enhanced personalized learning has more advantages than challenges. In an inclusive classroom context, technology-enhanced personalized learning increases the engagement of students with ASD, builds their confidence and decision-making skill, reduces the stigma of being singled out, helps them follow the classroom instructions, and reduces the level of anxiety of the students with an autism spectrum disorder. Nonetheless, its implementation has some challenges, such as the learning environment should be informed, educated, and empowered about the nature of personalized learning practices and the assessments of the personalized tasks should be aligned with both the curriculum and personalized learning. The process of informing, educating, and empowering peers, other teachers, and administrators was a long journey because each person has different acceptance towards the view. The other limitation was generalization of this study was not possible although there might be possibilities to transfer the innovations to different contexts and other

students with ASD.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the integration of technology in personalized learning can be varied and modified based on the characteristics and needs of the students. Further, teachers are suggested to implement this approach in an inclusive classroom setting to empower learning, provide opportunities for students with ASD to take ownership of learning, and promote equity in education. Further studies can investigate the experience of students with ASD in the personalized learning environment. A study on the perceptions and beliefs of technology-enhanced personalized learning on the students with an autism spectrum disorder might be conducted.

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THEATER IN EDUCATION IN VIETNAM: STUDENTS' CREATIVITY IN DEVELOPING SCRIPTS IN AN ENGLISH LITERATURE CLASS

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ABSTRACT

This case study is intended to investigate how the students of an English Literature class were motivated and helped to develop their creativity in writing the scripts for their plays based on the literary works they chose to stage in a Theater in Education program at the Drama Theater of Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam in May 2018. Three script-developing teams of the class were interviewed in March 2019, ten months after the success of the program. The differences and similarities in three different situations of applying the Theater in Education method in the class were revealed from which a working model that was experienced by all the participants is presented for possible reference for those who have been working with this artistic project-based learning method and those interested in or considering the adoption of it in foreign literature classes at higher education institutions in other parts of the country and across the world.

INTRODUCTION

Although I had personally helped my students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Ho Chi Minh City Open University (HOU) in Vietnam to organize successful drama programs first at school and then at the Drama Theater of Ho Chi Minh City since 2009, it was not until early June 2016 that I used the term 'Theater in Education' for the first time, after doing research on drama-based pedagogical activities in the field of teaching foreign languages in 2013, to partly name the English drama shows of a theater program funded by HOU in which my students of an English Literature class staged at the Drama Theater of

Ho Chi Minh City three popular literary works: *The Nightingale and the Rose* by Oscar Wilde, *Vanity Fair* by William Makepeace Thackeray, *Atonement* by Ian McEwan. The full title of this program was 'THEATER IN EDUCATION: *English Literature, 2016*'. The program continued successively in December 2016, May 2017, December 2017, May 2018, August 2018, November 2018. Three of these six programs in December 2016, August 2018, and November 2018 were held on a campus of HOU when I turned the classrooms into a theater for my students' performances with velvet curtains and wings, simple risers on the floors of the classrooms while the other three at the Drama Theater of the city with its professional facilities.

Since I was always working with hectic schedules for the back-to-back Theater in Education programs that have resulted in 52 plays since 2016 (not to mention the plays before 2016), I was unable to do any research study on those Theater in Education productions. Now that I have wished to advance the effectiveness of the use of the Theater in Education method in my own teaching context and to share my experiences with professionals who have been applying this method and who may be involved or interested in it in other corners of the world, I have rescheduled my work to start a series of research on the application of the Theater in Education method of my own at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of HOU. And this case study that aims at delving into how the students' creativity was promoted to develop the scripts for the plays they performed at the Drama Theater of Ho Chi Minh City in a Theater in Education program of an English Literature class in May 2018 is the first investigation out of the series. The choices of the literary works to stage in this class represented three different situations of working on a literary work that is not a play itself: 1/*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, a work that has been adapted into feature movies, 2/*The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde, a work that has been adapted into animated movies and simple plays in Vietnamese for children, 3/*Agnes Grey* by Anne Brontë, a work that has not been adapted into any other forms. Each situation was given a closer look so that a picture of the processes by which the students developed their creativity with the hard work of producing the scripts to stage those literary works would be revealed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework underpinning this study covers some basic notions of the Theater in Education method and creativity.

Theater in Education

Theater in Education is a foreign language teaching method by which professionals in drama present performances or help students to organize performances of plays about educational topics at a school (Šmardová, 2008, p.6). The organization of a play is a large project by nature which can be a full-length production with stage furniture, curtains, wings, lighting, sound effects, music, costumes, memorized lines in a theater, or a one-act play in an on-campus room within the limited time and budget of the class (Dodson, 2000, p.11; Šmardová, 2008, p.10).

The key elements of a Theater in Education project are the play, the actors, and the audience. To begin with, it is necessary that the students be interested in the content of the play, be it about everyday life situations, historical events, or literary works (Šmardová, 2008, p.15). The script of the play can be one written by a professional or amateur playwright, a script written by someone and modified by the students, or an original script developed by the participants (Šmardová, 2008, p.16). Besides, the second component of a Theater in Education program - the actors - must be the students when a theater company comes to a school to offer aid in staging a play (Šmardová, 2008, p.6). Last but not least, the audience who should be welcomed at a Theater in Education show include fellow students, faculty and members of the local community (Fujita, 2008, p.2).

The Theater in Education method has been highly valued in foreign language teaching (Aita, 2009, p.80) for its effectiveness has proven unquestionable (Aita, 2009, pp.71-72; Šmardová, 2008, p.6). Among its widely recognized benefits, that the Theater in Education method fosters a high level of students' creativity (Scheutz & Colangelo, 2004, p.384) is the focus of this study that is narrowed down to the development of the script of the play which is the very first element of a Theater in Education project.

Creativity

In most dictionaries, creativity is described as the ability to create something new using imagination which, according to Kerr in her interpretation in the article *Creativity* (last updated 2016) on Encyclopædia Britannica, can be “a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form.” As such, it is common knowledge now that although not everyone can be a Leonardo da Vinci or a Coco Chanel, creativity is for everyone as human beings are all able to be creative to various degrees (McCammon, Sæbø & O’Farell, 2011, p.216). However, to develop one’s potential creativity, it is imperative that one be encouraged to generate novel ideas and awarded for the ideas. Otherwise, their potential is likely to get stuck or be buried for good and all in an environment that is not supportive of their creative mind (Sternberg and Lubart, 2004, p.11). In education, instead of lecturing, teachers can help their students develop their creativity by choosing activities that require them to gain knowledge and develop skills by themselves (Lancaster, 2000, p. 8). Since a creative person is one who is able to direct themselves (Ericksen, 2004, p.1), students should be obliged to take part in projects where they are responsible for their own work and self-judgment with their analysis of what has been taken for granted by others (Entwistle & Hounsell, 2005, p. 2).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research question

This study aims at looking into the processes by which three groups of students of the English Literature class of semester 2 of the academic year 2017-2018 at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of HOU developed their scripts for the plays they successfully performed at the Drama Theater of Ho Chi Minh City in May 2018 in order to find the answer to the following question:

How was the students’ creativity promoted to develop the scripts for the plays based on the literary works they chose to stage?

In other words, with this descriptive study I wished to find out the answer to the question: What was/were the working process/processes by which the students’ creativity was helped to work to produce a new form of a literary work with their creative minds?

Participants

The members of the script-developing teams of all the three groups of the English Literature class of semester 2 of the academic year 2017-2018 at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of HOU and their productions were chosen to be examined.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were interviews. During the preparations throughout the semester from March 9th to April 27th 2018 and the extension later on for the final productions, the students' ongoing work on the scripts for their plays was observed without neatly recorded notes as the researcher was the very busy teacher teaching them the English Literature course who was also a contributor who made some contribution to developing the scripts and the organizer who dealt with too many matters of holding the program 'THEATER IN EDUCATION: *English and American Literature Classes' Performances, 2018*' (In addition to the three plays this study examines, the play *My Sister's Keeper* based on the novel of the same name by Jodi Picoult of a group of students of an American Literature class of the previous semester joined this program for the second public performance after its first successful show in December 2017). After the public performances that drew so much interest of the public and attention of different channels of the media in 2018, however, in March 2019 the script-writing teams of three groups were interviewed for detailed descriptions of, with reflections on, the processes they had gone through. The interviews were structured with the frame of 17 sub-questions developed from the main question 'How did you develop the script for the play of your group? Could you describe the process of developing the script you went through and the happenings in the process?' (See Appendix 1: Interview Frame.)

Data Collection

Ten months after the plays were staged at the Drama Theater of Ho Chi Minh City on three successive Saturday nights 19th May, 26th May, 2nd June 2018, the data collection of the study took place when the script-writing teams of the three groups of students were separately interviewed according to the following agenda:

| Date | Time | Interviewees |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| March 26 th 2019 | 9.30am 10.30am | The script-developing team of the play <i>The Happy Prince</i> |
| March 29 th 2019 | 9.30am 10.30am | The script-developing team of the play <i>Agnes Grey</i> |
| March 30 th 2019 | 2.30pm 3.30pm | The script-developing team of the play <i>Wuthering Heights</i> |

Especially, the interview with the script-developers of the play *The Happy Prince* was extended with the answers to the supplementary questions via email on March 30th 2019.

DATA ANALYSIS

The interviews with the three script-developing teams provided the images of three different situations:

Situation 1: Script development of the play *Wuthering Heights* based on the novel of the same name by Emily Brontë

The script of *Wuthering Heights* first relied to a considerable extent on the two-part British ITV television series in 2009 adapted for the screen by Peter Bowker and directed by Coky Giedroyc which is available with Vietnamese subtitle on the link <http://movies.hdviet.com/phim-doi-gio-hu-2009-wuthering-heights-2009.html#7d72mIwMBs9bz7bp.97>. Later on, however, it was gradually modified through the consultations with the teacher teaching the English Literature class under investigation and the director from the Drama Theater of Ho Chi Minh City who came to help. At first, the students decided on their own to cut out parts of the content of the work and the movie:

“Because we had to reduce the amount of time [of the performance], we cut some characters, we had less scenes, less characters. We omitted the second generation characters. We focused on the main characters Catherine and Heathcliff.”

(See Appendix 2: Extracts from the Interview with the Script-

Developing Team of the Play *Wuthering Heights*.)

Based on their first decision, during the consultations with the teacher and the director, encouraged with the total freedom given in the project and guided to “combine details into one scene” by the director, the students blended little of the material from the movie with the suggested ideas from the director writing such lines that are not found either in the novel or in the movie as the following:

“Hindley (*Pretending to invite Heathcliff a cigarette*): You smoke? It’s an Arabic cigarette, you’re not going to find it around here.

When Heathcliff is about to take the cigarette, Hindley drops the cigarette on the ground.

Hindley: Don’t just stand there, Heathcliff! Go and look after the horses!

Heathcliff: I’m not a servant, you know.

Hindley: Of course, you’re not. You are a gypsy bastard that my dad brought home. Do not misplace yourself with us. And since I’m back, I’ll make sure that you shall never be together with Cathy ever again!

Heathcliff: You have no right to do that!

Hindley: Remember that you’re just a bastard, I can get you out anytime. You know?

Hindley hits Heathcliff in his mouth. Heathcliff grabs Hindley by the shirt collar. Hindley punches Heathcliff. The fighting was going on when Earnshaw enters.

Earnshaw: Stop it, you two!

Heathcliff and Hindley are startled and stop fighting against each other.

Earnshaw: What the hell are you doing?

Hindley: Father, I’m home.

Earnshaw: Shame on you!

Hindley: I'm just setting your bastard straight. He must know that his place is only in the stable.

Earnshaw: I have told you over and over again. Don't talk to your brother like that. I found that child in the gutter and I promised that I shall raise him up to be a gentleman. Once I've made a decision, no one can change it.

Hindley: Why? Just because he's your bastard doesn't mean he's our blood. While mom was sick, you went out and cheated on her to have him. What kind of father are you? You're just like him, a bloody bastard, you know?

Heathcliff (*shouting like a roaring lion*): How dare you say so to father?!

Heathcliff slaps Hindley's face. The two young men resume the fighting.

Earnshaw (*shouting loudly, his face being distorted with rage*): Stop it! Stop it! Uh, please, please, my sons.

The old man collapses dying of a heart attack.

Cathy rushes in.

Cathy (*kneeling down to hold the old man, terrified*): Father! Father! (*Turning to Hindley and Heathcliff*): Hindley, Heathcliff, what's happened to father?"

Situation 2: Script development of the play *The Happy Prince* based on the story of the same name by Oscar Wilde

Unlike that of the play *Wuthering Heights*, the script-developing team of the play *The Happy Prince* did not have much to draw out from the simple play adapted in Vietnamese for children in Vietnam which is available on the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gUdnkfyptg> and an animated film by Murray Shostak and Wilde Michael Mills which is available on the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3RZh1yaqxM> that are both very close to the original story by Oscar Wilde. Besides, they also watched the video of the play *The Happy Princess* adapted from the same story with a princess in place of the prince of the *Oscar Wilde's Night* show I had organized for the students of two English Literature classes at the Drama Theater of Ho Chi Minh

City on November 23th 2012. In their first discussion, two students of the group suggested maintaining the happy ending of the original fairy tale but the majority did not agree with this solution for their play as they wished to make the play emotional to “touch the audiences’ hearts” (See Appendix 3: Extracts from the Interview with the Script-Developing Team of the Play *The Happy Prince*). After that, in a consultation with the teacher, they were in favor of the teacher’s suggestion that the statue of the Happy Prince would be smashed by big hammers in the final scene, which would be different from the ending of *The Happy Princess* in the *Oscar Wilde’s Night* show in 2012. The students agreed with the teacher that this detail would highlight the Happy Prince’s sacrifice which would be similar to Jesus Christ’s that saves sinful people and that the audience would understand the message conveyed and feel the climax of the play. A member of the script-developing team, inspired by a detail in the play named *Thuy Kieu* in Vietnamese, suggested that in the final scene the guardsmen would smash the statue when the Little Swallow was ready to give the Happy Prince a kiss. Therefore, she could not give him her last farewell before she died in cold (See Appendix 4: Answers to Supplementary Questions about Script Development of the Play *The Happy Prince*). However, this solution was not chosen. They let the Little Swallow kiss the Happy Prince, which created a beautiful image of perfection of noble love on Earth. The students interviewed reported the director’s suggestion of the opening scene for the play where ‘the villagers had to work very hard for the inauguration day of the statue.’ They said, ‘in order to make [the play] more logical and highlight the misery of the poor villagers, we decided to choose his idea.’ In the script, about the scene of the playwright living a miserable life with more details than the original story, the students said “[T]hat was our idea from the first time we discussed the script.”

Situation 3: Script development of the play *Agnes Grey* based on the novel of the same name by Anne Brontë

Above all, the script of *Agnes Grey* challenged the students the most as they had nothing to place reliance on but the original work as no adaptations of the novel they chose were found within their access. The students who wrote the script for their group to stage *Agnes Grey* by Anne Brontë started their work with the plan of cutting out a

number of details in the novel and organizing the details left in a logical fashion. They said, 'Because this novel is quite long, we had to cut out many scenes to make it shorter and we had to make [the scenes] connected and reasonable.' They added a lot of details to the original work:

'The original [story] is just a love story, so peaceful, nothing [shocking]. No person who is very cruel, evil. [...] [A student's name] contribut[ed] a lot about character Hatfield. In the original story, Hatfield is not cruel, but [the name of the student mentioned] want[ed] to make this character so cruel, different from Weston [...]'

(See Appendix 5: Extracts from the Interview with the Script-Developing Team of the Play *Agnes Grey*)

An interviewee admitted, "In the original work, Hatfield [doesn't marry] Rosalie, but I [suggested] that Hatfield married Rosalie and Hatfield had another woman and there would be a fight between the two women."

Below is an excerpt from their script of the scene where Rosalie comes to see Hatfield and his mistress that is not found in the novel by Anne Brontë:

'An area of the stage is lighted. Hatfield is gambling in the lighted area.

Hatfield (*Collecting the money*): I win

Cathy, Hatfield's mistress, leans in his chest.

Cathy: You are always the winner.

Hatfield slips the money into Cathy's bras. Rosalie enters having heard the conversation between Hatfield and Cathy.

Rosalie: It's your turn to be the loser now. Win her and you will lose me.

Startled, Hatfield stood up holding Rosalie's hands

Hatfield: I'm sorry, Rosalie. It's not like what you see.

Rosalie pushes Hatfield away.

Rosalie (*with damaged pride*): Too late. It's over.

Hatfield changes his attitude. He returns to his mistress holding her in his arms.

Hatfield (to Rosalie): Who do you think you are? Hmm...I'm bored with your face. Look at her, my beautiful, sexy mistress.

Hatfield's mistress looks at Rosalie, smiling to challenge her. Rosalie smiles painfully.

Rosalie (to Hatfield): Is it true? It's the kind of person you are? How dare you compare me, a rich and beautiful noble lady, with a doxy?

Hatfield (laughing): A rich, beautiful lady? No longer now.

Cathy (to Rosalie): You an ugly and poor haughty woman. Who do you think you are?

FINDINGS

The interviews have revealed the following realities:

First of all, the students were all interested in the literary works they chose with total freedom given for various reasons. They had high interest in a novel for its popularity and the convenience of having favorable references for both acting and conversational language with a feature movie in the case of the group that chose *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, in a short story for its simplicity that conveys a touching moral lesson when *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde was chosen, and in another novel for its relevance to their major in teaching career with the choice of *Agnes Grey* by Anne Brontë.

In the second place, after having participated in the program 'THEATER IN EDUCATION: *English and American Literature Classes' Performances, 2018'* all the students interviewed acknowledged they had had a great opportunity to train their minds to be creative with the hard work of developing the scripts for their plays to arrive at the new approaches to the literary works their groups had chosen. While the English Literature course officially lasted for only two months (eight weeks), the students interviewed underwent with their groupmates a hard working journey of three months to complete the scripts. Nevertheless, nearly one year later, they all expressed no regret or complaints but their pride and happiness for what they had done. They

identified the supportive factors that had helped them develop their creativity: 1/ the project-based learning method with total freedom given and learner autonomy required, 2/ the interest in the literary work they chose, 3/ the supervision of the teacher who was multifunctional as an organizer, a facilitator, and a contributor, 4/ the director's expertise in drama, 5/ the script-developing teammates' support, 6/ the groupmates' support, 7/ creative details in the adaptations of the works they chose, 8/ Theater in Education productions of the previous generation students of HOU. Exceptionally, only one script-writing team had thought about public recognition of their creativity while developing the script for their group and felt motivated with it. They were the script developers who had confidently challenged themselves the most with their play *Agnes Grey*.

Thirdly, the finished scripts for the Theater in Education productions under investigation all resulted from cooperation of three parties of a company of stakeholders: the students, the teacher, and the director. They kept discussing to exchange ideas about the changes they wanted to make to the original literary works. What the audiences eventually saw on the stage were the final decisions that had been agreed on after the continuous discussions open to all the members of the groups, not only to those in the script-developing teams.

Fourthly, the students learned a lot about exploiting creative thinking to transform a work of art into another genre from the teacher and the director who came to help with his expertise in drama. However, with their critical thinking and imagination working seriously, they were selective in working with the director. They appreciated his helpful instructions and suggestions, yet they did not embrace all of his suggested ideas. The students of the *Wuthering Heights* group did not take his idea of Heathcliff finding a rare flower on the hills for Cathy before she died as they did not find it relevant or appropriate in the setting. Likewise, the members of the *Agnes Grey* group rejected the director's suggestion that the two main characters would kiss in the first scene of the play. They believed a hug would be sufficient there. The students in *The Happy Prince* group did not accept the director's recommendation that the two guards would argue who would hit the statue of the Happy Prince first to make some fun in the statue-smashing ending scene. They maintained that detail would devalue the

climax of their play and ruin the audience's emotion.

Last but not least, despite the different situations, a common working process to produce a script that consisted of five stages has been identified as follows:

1/ First of all, the students in the group listed the literary works they were interested in and chose a literary work to stage with group discussions (and voting if necessary). After the group had arrived at the decision on which literary work to be staged, the script-writing team outlined the plot of their play. They made differences to the structure of the original literary work (and of the adaptations if any available for reference) with reasons based on their critical thinking.

2/ In the second place, the teacher offered consultation by which he gave comments on the students' initial outline and put forward suggestions for the students to consider. The teacher and the students discussed to make a second sensible tentative outline from the first one.

3/ Next, when the director came, he discussed the plot that the teacher and the students had agreed on, putting forward his suggestions. The three parties discussed to reach an agreement on a sketch of the play.

4/ After the three parties had settled on a logical sequencing of happenings to make the action of the play and how it should move, the students wrote the script.

5/ Eventually, during the course of rehearsals the script was subject to ongoing further modifications on details that could be exploited for more impressive effects on the audience's minds. Such modifications were generated by the teacher, the director, and the students themselves, but they were not put into practice until they had been agreed on by all three parties of the company of stakeholders after discussions.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings from this study suggest Theater in Education methodology ideally lends itself to foreign literature courses at the faculty of foreign languages of a university where students majoring in any foreign language are allowed to stage the literary works of their own choices that are not plays themselves. With the total freedom

given, different script development situations can take place to promote students' creativity in various fruitful manners but the stakeholders could go through the same working process as described in the findings of this study. Hence, a suggested five-step script-developing model, hopefully useful for those considering the adoption of Theater in Education methodology, could be drawn from this working process as follows:

Step 1: Initial outlining with reference to adaptations if any

Step 2: Second outlining in consultation with the teacher

Step 3: Third outlining in consultation with the director

Step 4: Script writing

Step 5: Ongoing modification

Whether or not the students rely on adaptations of any type of the original works to develop a script, they have a challenging but rewarding opportunity to be as creative as they wish and are able to with maximum learner-centeredness in an integrated learning environment where critical thinking and problem solving skills lay the foundation. On the other hand, however, the teacher in charge and the director who comes to help are both challenged to ensure an interactive approach where their assistance based on passion for and knowledge of literature and expertise or professionalism in drama, respectively, continuously inspires and cultivates students' creativity to varying degrees with no limit.

LIMITATIONS

For the purpose of investigation into the nurturing of creativity in the ways students have developed scripts for the Theater in Education productions, this study challenges immediately further research on at least other two realities. First, given that most of the students, since the first drama program at Ho Chi Minh City Open University was labeled with the term 'Theater in Education' in June 2016, in my personal observations over the years, have chosen literary works that have been adapted into movies such as *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, *Forrest Gump* by Winston Groom, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, *Atonement* by Ian McEwan, to name but a few, that case alone is worth giving a closer look. Second, it is a fact

that a number of other students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Ho Chi Minh City Open University have chosen plays with ready-made scripts to perform such as *King Lear* by Shakespeare and *The Patchwork Quilt* by Rachel Field. This study, however, has not addressed this case which should be examined to see whether students' creativity is promoted in such a case and how it is if yes.

CONCLUSION

The study, on a personal level, has helped me to get first insights into the adoption of the Theater in Education method in my teaching American and English literatures at a university in my Vietnam with respect to the promotion of students' creativity in developing the scripts for their plays. Consequently, it entails further investigations I should pursue that delve into other aspects of the application of this method. Hopefully, this first attempt of the series of studies I have just started, on a larger scale, offers professionals and academics involved or interested in Theater in Education methodology in other corners of the globe a working model for reference about this artistic project-based learning method.

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Appendix 1: Interview frame

MAIN QUESTION

- How did you develop the script for the play? Could you describe the process of developing the script you went through and the happenings in the process?

SUBQUESTIONS

1. Who chose the literary work for the group to stage? Why did you choose that work?
2. How many members were there in your script-writing team? How did you divide the workload within the script-writing team? When did you begin dividing the workload?
3. Did the other members of the group, apart from the script-writing team, have an equal opportunity to make contribution to the development of the script?
4. Were there any adaptations (animated film, feature film, theater production) of the literary work you chose for you to refer to? What advantages and disadvantages did you have if yes? What advantages and disadvantages did you have if no?

5. Did you make any changes to the original story for your theater production? Why and how did you make those changes if yes? Why not if no?
6. How long did it take you to complete the script?
7. Was the script completed before the first rehearsal and then it was kept unchanged until the public performance or was it continuously modified during the rehearsals? Who suggested the changes to the script during the rehearsals if it was continuously modified? And who made the final decisions on the modifications during the rehearsals?
8. Who did you consult in developing the script?
9. Did you consult your teacher? How often if yes? Why not if no?
10. Did you consult the director who was invited to come for help in staging the play? How often? Why not if no?
11. Apart from the teacher who taught you the English Literature course and the director who was invited to come for help, who else did you consult?
12. What was the role of the teacher in the process of developing the script? Was he an organizer or a facilitator or a contributor?
13. What do you think and how do you feel now about having joined the writing of the script for your group?
14. Do you think the writing of the script for your group helped you develop your potential creativity?
15. What were the supportive factors that helped you develop your creativity? Identify from the factors listed here what you think helped you develop your creative thinking in writing the script and clarify how they worked:
 - Project-based learning method with total freedom given and learner autonomy required
 - Interest in the literary work chosen
 - Creative details in the adoption(s) you referred to
 - Script writing teammates' support
 - Groupmates' support
 - Teacher's support
 - Director's support
 - Anticipated public recognition of your creativity
 - Others
16. Do you recommend the adoption of Theater in Education method for the following generation students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Ho Chi Minh City Open University? Why or why not?
17. Do you have any other recommendations?

Appendix 2: Extracts from the Interview with the Script-Developing Team of the Play *Wuthering Heights*

R = Researcher

S = Students

[...]

R: Who chose the literary work for the group to stage? Why did you choose that work? Were there different literary works suggested?

S: There were two literary works suggested: *Murder, She Said* by Agatha Christie and *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë. But we chose *Wuthering Heights* because it had a movie, which made it easy to develop a script and perform a play.

R: Any other reasons else? How about the content?

S: *Wuthering Heights* is a worldwide-known work.

R: So the second reason was its popularity?

S: Yes.

[...]

R: How many members were there in your script-developing team? How did you divide the workload within the script-writing team? When did you begin dividing the workload?

S: We had two members. After choosing the work, we followed the script of the movie and divided the play into 18 scenes. We divided a script of 18 scenes into two halves and each of us took 9 scenes. But it took a lot of time to write the script and add some speeches different from the movie, so we add[ed] some more members.

R: Did the other members of the group, apart from the script-writing team, have an equal opportunity to make contribution to the development of the script?

S: Yes. During the rehearsals, some characters suggested some more lines.

[...]

R: Were there any adaptations (animated film, feature film, theater production) of the literary work you chose for you to refer to?

S: Yes. We watched a movie.

R: Could you show me the link of the movie? ... Was it this link? Was it this film?

S: Yes.

R: What advantages and disadvantages did you have when there were so many adaptations and you relied on that adaptation?

S: It was hard for us to write the script because the movie had changed the novel. We [were] afraid some [details] of the movie were not exactly what is written in the novel. And the movie was divided into so many parts, but when we were directed by the director and shortened our script, it was hard for us to combine the details to make a scene.

R: How did you overcome the disadvantages?

S: [One member of our script-developing team] had read the novel, she had suggestions to make it close to the original story [...] The director helped to combine the details.

[...]

R: What were the advantages?

S: The cast could imitate the acting of the actors and the actresses in the movie. Most of the members of the script-developing team didn't read the novel. The movie helped.

R: Did you make any changes to the original story for your theater production? Why and how did you make those changes if yes? Why not if no?

S: Yes. Because we had to reduce the amount of time, we cut some characters, we had less scenes, less characters. We omitted the second generation characters. We focused on the main characters: Catherine and Heathcliff.

R: How long did it take you to complete the script?

S: Nearly three months. From the beginning [of the course] until one day before the performance.

R: Was the script completed before the first rehearsal and then it was kept unchanged until the public performance or was it continuously modified during the rehearsals?

S: It was continuously modified during the rehearsals.

R: Who suggested the changes to the script during the rehearsals?

S: The cast members, the director, and the teacher.

R: Were there discussions?

S: Yes, we had discussions.

R: Who made the final decision on the modifications during the rehearsals?

S: The director.

R: You agreed with whatever the director suggested? Did you ever reject his suggestions?

S: The detail of the male character finding some rare flowers on the hills in the end of the play...We didn't find it realistic. We found it weird.

R: Who did you consult in developing the script?

S: The whole group, the teacher, the director.

[...]

R: Apart from the teacher who taught you the English Literature course, who else did you consult?

S: The journalist who came to have a talk with us about the work and the characters from the perspectives of Buddhism.

R: What was the role of the teacher in the process of developing the script? Was he an organizer or a facilitator or a contributor?

S: The teacher was more like a consultant.

R: A facilitator?

S: Yes, of course.

R: Contributor?

S: Some details.

[...]

R: What do you think and how do you feel now about having joined the writing of the script for your group?

S: [We] feel very good, happy. Something [we] created turned into a play.

R: Do you think the writing of the script for your group helped you develop your potential creativity?

S: Yes.

R: What were the supportive factors that helped you develop your creativity? Number one: Project-based learning method with total freedom given and learner autonomy required?

S: Yes.

R: And factor numbered two: Interest in the literary work chosen?

S: Yes

R: Creative details in the adoption(s) you referred to?

S: Yes

R: Script writing teammates' support?

S: Yes.

R: Groupmates' support?

S: Yes.

R: Teacher's support?

S: Yes.

R: Director's support?

S: Yes

R: Anticipated public recognition of your creativity?

S: No.

R: Do you recommend the adoption of Theater in Education method for the following generation students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Ho Chi Minh City Open University? Why or why not?

S: Yes, of course. It's a good way to self-study, develop writing skills, creativity. The activity is cheerful.

R: Do you have any other recommendations?

S: No.

[...]

Appendix 3: Extracts from the Interview with the Script-Developing Team of the Play *The Happy Prince*

R = Researcher

S = Students

[...]

R: Who chose the literary work, *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde, for the group to stage? Why did you choose that work?

S: [One member was] the first [person] to put forward *The Happy Prince*... The first reason [this member chose] *The Happy Prince* [was] the simple story... the plot can touch people's hearts...

[...]

R: Were there any other suggestions?

S: Yes, of course. [We had] from [another member of the script-developing team]...*The Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare...Only two options.

R: How did you come to the agreement on *The Happy Prince*?

S: We discussed...and we agreed that *The Happy Prince* [would] be the most appropriate...

[...]

R: How many members were there in your script-writing team?

S: There [were] four people in [our] script-writing team...[the names were listed]

[...]

R: How did you divide the workload within the script writing team?

S: After we [chose] the play, we divide[d] the workload by lot.

R: So you divided the workload immediately after coming to the decision on *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wild. Did the other members of the group apart from four of you have an equal opportunity to make contribution to developing the script?

S: Of course...All the members of *The Happy Prince* [group] [had] an equal opportunity to make contribution.

R: You invited all the members to make contribution...How many members made contribution apart from four of you?

S: [We] remember there [were] two members [two names were listed]

R: Do you remember where, how, what they contributed to the script?

S: [The first one] suggest[ed] letting the poor villagers pull out the golden leaves from the Happy Prince... [The second one] wanted the final scene to be a happy ending... We discussed their ideas...We [thought] the detail the people pull out [the Happy Prince's golden] leaves [was] not necessary and and it [would be] hard to design the costume [for the Happy Prince].

[...]

R: Could you tell me why you didn't make a happy ending for your play?

S: We wanted to create a memory for the audience [with] a touching story.

[...]

R: Were there adaptations like animated films, feature films, or theater productions of the literary you chose for you to refer to?

S: We [had] *The Happy Princess* from the Oscar Wilde's Night in 2012.

R: And what else did you refer to?

S: We watched some animated films on YouTube and a drama adaptation of *Ngày Xưa Ngày Nay*

R: A play in Vietnamese language for children on TV?

S: Yes

R: With the Internet connection on your smart phone, I would like to check if you referred to this adaptation on YouTube. Did you refer to the animated film on this link and the play for children in Vietnamese language on this link? [Links were shown on a Samsung mobile and a laptop]

S: Yes, we did.

[...]

R: What advantages and disadvantages did you have when you referred to those adaptations?

S: Firstly, about advantages, we [could] refer to their lines and their acting and how they divide[d] the scenes.

R: And about disadvantages?

S: ...We must try to be more creative.

R: ...in order to not repeat them?

S: Yes

R: Were you afraid of the disadvantages?

S: [We] think [we were] not.

[...]

R: Did you make any changes to the original story for your theater production?

S: [...] the original work by Oscar Wilde is quite simple and short. Moreover, there are some circumstances [that] are not clear, logical. So we need[ed] to put them into climax in order to touch the audiences' hearts [...] we want[ed] the audience to see the sufferings [of the poor] [...] in the first scene of the inauguration day [of the statue] and the scene of the playwright.

R: How long did it take you to complete the script?

S: We completed the script in about one month.

R: Was the script completed before the first rehearsal and then it was kept unchanged during the rehearsals or was it continuously modified during the rehearsals?

S: [It] was continuously modified during the rehearsals, not unchanged. Sometimes it had some problems from the characters and [their] speeches. And the director gave us so many instructions to change some things. For example, we [had] to add more

speeches, more characters so that everybody had a chance to speak and act. [We] think how to keep the speeches easy to remember is very important. That's the reason why we had to consider carefully to make the alterations in the script.

R: When the director gave suggested ideas, did you discuss with him?

S: Yes, all members discussed with him.

R: You added more characters, such as...

S: ... the poor mother and her daughter, the match girl, the Mayor's two guards.

R: Do you remember some lines you added?

S: In the scene where the Little Swallow gave the last sapphire, the director asked us to add the line "I have fulfilled your wish, Your Highness."

R: Who did you consult in developing the script? Did you consult your teacher?

S: Yes, our teacher and the director...The director made great contribution to the script.

R: In your personal experience, what was the role of the teacher in the process of developing the script? Was he an organizer, a facilitator, or a contributor?

S: [Two teachers' names] were not only the facilitators but also contributors. [The American teacher invited to help in one session] helped us with intonation, pronunciation.

R: How do you feel and what do you think now about having joined the writing of the script?

S: [We are] so glad to be a member of [the] script-writing team. [We] had a chance to develop our creativity and reinforce our writing skills. [We] wrote the script as if [we] had been play writers. [We] could learn how to make a play script. It was a new experience...[We] developed creativity.

R: What were the supportive factors that helped you develop your creativity? Number one: Project-based learning method with total freedom given and learner autonomy required?

S: Yes

R: Number two: Interest in the literary work chosen. Yes or no?

S: Yes

R: Number three: Creative details in the adoptions you referred to?

S: Yes

R: Script writing teammates' support?

S: Yes

R: And groupmates' support?

S: Yes

R: Teacher's support?

S: Yes

R: The director's support?

S: Yes

R: And anticipated public recognition of your creativity?

S: No

R: But now you know that the public recognized the success of the play. Do you think the public recognition makes you motivated in trying to develop your creativity?

S: Yes [All members nodded].

R: Do you recommend the adoption of Theater in Education method for the following generation students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Ho Chi Minh City Open University?

S: Each student should take part in this opportunity because it is the opportunity to meet other people, make good relationships with our friends. That is a memorable experience...It is an opportunity for us to practice speaking English and pronunciation and develop our team work... And it is the best way to deliver the message from the [literary] work to the audience... It's beneficial.

R: Do you have any other recommendations?

S shook their heads.

[...]

Appendix 4: Answers to Supplementary Questions about Script Development of the Play *The Happy Prince*

1. What were the details of the happy ending suggested by [two students] who were the group members that did not belong in the script developing team?
 - [Two members] suggested that we should keep the ending of the original story. The Prince and Little Swallow should reunite in Heaven.
2. What was the ending [one of you] suggested in a consultation with [the teacher]?
 - [The mentioned student's name] found the inspiration from the play *Thuy Kieu*. [In] the final scene, when Little Swallow was ready to give him a kiss, the guardsmen destroyed the statue. Therefore, she could not give him her last farewell then she died in cold.
3. When [the teacher] put forward the idea that the statue of the Happy Prince would be smashed after the Swallow died, why did you take it for the ending of the play?
 - [The teacher] gave us an example in the Bible about the death of Jesus Christ. He had to suffer a disgraceful death penalty for saving people from sins. Then he brought the similar of their sacrifices to us. And we realized that the death of the Prince would be perfect with the dishonor and ingratitude of the Mayor. [T]herefore, our audiences would understand what we really wanted to deliver the message and they would feel the climax of the play.
4. [The] director had a number of suggestions for the script, didn't he? Did you take all of them? Why or why not?
 - [The] director suggested a[n] opening scene for the play However, we had chosen the suggestion of [the teacher], so we did not agree with him in the

ending scene.

5. What changes to the script did [the] director suggest when you presented the script to him in the first consultation with him? He proposed adding the details of poor villagers working too hard under the rule of the cruel Mayor and of the poor playwright owing a debt to the Mayor for his father's funeral, didn't he? Why did you agree to make those changes?

- The villagers had to work very hard for the inauguration day of the statue. He also had the same idea with [the two members mentioned before] that we should keep the happy ending for the play. About the opening scene, in order to make it more logical and highlight the misery of the poor villagers, we decided to choose his idea. In the scene of the playwright, that was our idea for the first time we discussed about the script.

6. What was the director's suggestion for the smashing of the statue in the ending of the play? Why did you not take it? Did you present your ideas about it to your teacher? Was the teacher supportive of your thinking?

- The director wanted to make the ending in a funny way, when the two guardsmen had a silly fight about who would be the first one smashing the statue. However, we thought this was not necessary and the climax would be stopped. However, it was hard to explain our opinions to him, so our teacher gave us a hand to support our ideas to him.

Appendix 5: Extracts from the Interview with the Script-Developing Team of the Play *Agnes Grey*

R = Researcher

S = Students

[...]

R: Who chose the literary work for your group to stage?

S: The member who chose the literary work for our group [was] [a student's name].

R: Was she also a member of the script-developing team?

S: Yes, at the last [minute]

R: You mean she didn't join the script-developing team until the last minute of the workload division?

S: Yes

R: [A student's name] suggested *Agnes Grey* by Anne Brontë. Did you have other suggestions?

S: Yes, of course. Some members suggest[ed] some options like *Romeo and Juliet*, *Vanity Fair*, *Hamlet*. But because all the members in our group were girls, it [was] very hard for our group to choose those works. That's the reason why our group chose *Agnes Grey*.

R: That was your first thinking. Because you thought that with *Agnes Grey* by Anne Brontë you would not need male characters. So in *Agnes Grey* there were no male characters?

S: My group didn't know because my group didn't read *Agnes Grey* before.

R: Who told you that there were no male characters in *Agnes Grey*?

S: [The name of the student who recommended *Agnes Grey*]

R: [She] told you so and you believed her?

S: Until we read it.

R: There were different suggestions for the literary work to stage in your group, namely *Romeo and Juliet*, *Vanity Fair*, *Hamlet*, and *Agnes Grey*. *Agnes Grey* was only one of the different works suggested. You chose *Agnes Grey* by Anne Brontë just because you believed there were no male characters in the work.

S: Another reason [was] this is the literary work not many people know. So this [was] a challenge for our group.

R: You chose to challenge yourselves.

S: Yes.

R: Courageous! You wanted to challenge yourselves. You wanted to do something strange, unusual. You wanted to choose a literary work that had not been well-known to the public. Oh, courageous girls!

S: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Vanity Fair*, Open University had performed [them]. That was the last reason.

R: Many students had performed *Romeo and Juliet*, *Vanity Fair*, *Hamlet* already. You wanted to make something different. You didn't want to repeat the previous generation students' work. Interesting! You were so self-confident! How did you come to the conclusion, the decision on *Agnes Grey* because there were many other suggestions? How did you come to the agreement on *Agnes Grey*? In what way?

S: We had an election. And *Agnes Grey* had the most votes.

R: That is you voted.

S: Also because of your words. You said that *Romeo and Juliet* had [been] performed before and it [was] excellent. And also *Vanity Fair*. You said "Can you try *Agnes Grey*?"

R: That is after having known that you were thinking of *Agnes Grey* I encouraged you. When I knew that you wanted to challenge yourselves I sent you encouragement. I encouraged you to stick to your idea. "When you challenge yourselves that way, you could develop your creativity." That was what I told you. When you voted, you thought more about the challenge than the content of the story?

S: The work is about a tutor. That is related to our major.

R: Ah, something about the content. Sorry to say that you didn't care about the content. Most of you major in English language teaching. So you chose *Agnes Grey* for different reasons. [...] Now we move on to question 2: How many members were there in your script-developing team.

S: Three

R: How did you divide the workload within the script-developing team?

S: At first, we discussed the script within our script-writing team and we divided into three parts and each member [chose] a part to write. Then we discussed with the members in our group. We asked them "Is this okay? Is it appropriate or not?" And then they [gave us] suggestions.

R: When did you begin dividing the workload?

S: In the first week

R: Immediately in the very first class?

S: Yes

[...]

R: Did the other members of the group, apart from the script-developing team, have an equal opportunity to make contribution to the development of the script?

S: Yes. When we had discussions with all the members, they often gave some good suggestions and everyone [was] active.

R: Do you remember some of their contributions to the development of the script?

S: [A student's name] contribut[ed] a lot about character Hartfield. In the original story, Hartfield is not cruel, but [the name of the student mentioned] want[ed] to make this character so cruel, different from Weston. And the scene where Rosalie came to see Hatfield and his mistress.

R: What for? To make her more evil or wicked or lovelier or...

S: More evil.

R: So many members in your group made contribution to the script development.

S: Yes, we [had] rehearsals and they watched and suggested ideas.

[...]

R: Were there any adaptations of the work for you to refer to?

S: No, we had only this book [a book was shown].

R: Only the original work, nothing else?

S: Yes

R: When you had no adaptations to refer to, what advantages and disadvantages did you have?

S: The disadvantages [were] we didn't have any material and we had to create a lot. The advantages [were] we were really free to make our own script.

R: Were you afraid of the disadvantages? Were you afraid of the disadvantage that you didn't have any sources to rely on.

S: Yes, of course. We were.

[...]

R: Did you make any changes to the original story for your theater production?

S: Yes

R: Why and how did you make those changes?

S: Because this novel is quite long, we had to cut out many scenes to make it shorter and we had to make [the scenes] connected and reasonable.

R: How did you make the changes?

S: Thanks to [the teacher's] suggestions, advice and the [director's]

R: Before consulting the teacher and the director, did you have any changes of your own?

S: Yes, [they came] from all the members. We had a discussion. [A member] showed the [other] members of the group this book. They knew the plot. [That member] told [the other members of the group] we had to make it different. The original [story] is just a love story, so peaceful, nothing [shocking]. No person is very cruel, evil.

R: Maybe that's the reason why there have been no adaptations from Hollywood or any theater in the world. You may be the first people to transform it into a theater production. Apart from [the member you have mentioned in the answer to a previous question], could you give me another example now of another member in your group making contribution to the script?

S: In the original work, Hatfield [doesn't marry] Rosalie, but [a member suggested] that Hatfield married Rosalie and also Hatfield had another woman and there would be a fight between the two women.

[...]

R: How long did it take you to complete the script?

S: Until the last minute.

R: How many weeks? How many months?

S: Nearly three months. March until May.

R: How long did it take you to complete the first draft?

S: Two weeks. After that we changed a lot.

R: Who suggested the changes to the script during the rehearsals?

S: The director and the teacher.

R: When the teacher and the director offered you suggestions to modify the script, did you agree with all of their ideas?

S: [The director] gave us a lot of suggestions, but some suggestions were very weird. We gave a lot of reasons to persuade him [to leave those out].

R: Do you remember any of his suggestions that you rejected?

S: The first scene where the two main characters, male and female, kissed [each other]. [We thought] just a hug [was] enough.

R: You discussed with the director to make the final decision.

S: Some members of our group disagreed [with the director as well].

R: You mean you opened the discussion to all members of your group, not only within the script-developing team and the director. Did you embrace all the teacher's suggestions?

S: We agreed with all [of his suggestions]. [His] points [were] great, interesting, logic[al].

R: How often did you consult the teacher? The director?

S: Every week. Every class. During the rehearsals.

R: Apart from the teacher and the director, who else did you consult?

S: No one else.

[...]

R: What was the role of the teacher in the process of developing the script? Was he an organizer, a facilitator, or a contributor?

S: All

R: What do you think and how do you feel now about having joined the writing of the script for your group?

S: How could we stage *Agnes Grey*?

R: You are proud of yourselves! Why?

S: Because the play was successful. All the members attended this [activity] for the first time. No one had [had] experiences.

R: You mean you didn't think you could go so far?

S: Yes.

[...]

R: Do you think the writing of the script for your group helped you develop your potential creativity?

S: Yes.

R: What were the supportive factors that helped you develop your creativity? Identify from the factors I am listing now what you think helped you develop your creative thinking in writing the script and clarify how it worked. Number one: Project-based learning method with total freedom given and learner autonomy required.

S: Yes.

R: Number two: The interest in the literary work you chose.

S: Yes.

R: Number three: Creative details in the adoptions you referred to.

S: No.

R: Number four: Script writing teammates' support.

S: Yes.

R: Number five: Groupmates' support.

S: Yes.

R: Number six: The teacher's support.

S: Yes.

R: Number seven: The director's support.

S: Yes.

R: Number eight: Anticipated public recognition of your creativity.

S: Yes [Laughing]

R: Do you have any other ideas about the supportive factors that helped you?

S: We watched some plays [of the previous generation students'] that had been performed before in the theater. They [gave] us motivation.

R: What plays did you watch?

S: *Brokeback Mountain, The Danish Girl, The Help, Lolita, And Then There Were None, Gone with the Wind, The Pursuit of Happiness, Safe Haven.*

R: Do you recommend the adoption of Theater in Education for the following generation students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Ho Chi Minh City Open University? Why or why not?

S: Yes. This is a new way of learning English in Vietnam. Only Ho Chi Minh City Open University can do it. We learn not only literature but also a lot of aspects of English language, like vocabulary, grammar, writing skills. It also helps us to learn acting like actors and actresses. Amazing! It makes us more confident when performing on a stage to the public.

R: What else?

S: We have a good memory, [develop] leadership skills. We learn about culture, problem-solving skills, working with sound effects, make-up, prop-making skills, teamwork, creativity.

R: Do you have any other recommendations?

S: No.

[...]

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TECHNOLOGY

SKYPE IN INTERPRETER TRAINING COURSES: FROM GUEST SPEAKERS' AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Skype has long been acknowledged as an effective tool in language teaching and learning with its extraordinary power to connect classrooms with the world outside, to give teachers and students amazing experiences, and to significantly build up students' confidence and foster their language ability. In interpreter training courses, students mainly work with videos or recorded tapes, and the curriculum requires not only students' language competence but also plenty of real experiences, confidence and interaction with the speakers. Skype is considered to offer a good solution for such those class situations. This paper will discuss the application of Skype in an interpreter training course at Hanoi Pedagogical University 2. The first part of the paper explains how this technological innovation is used to connect students with guest speakers outside the classroom. The second part is about the satisfaction survey conducted with invited speakers and students. With the very positive perception and the high percentage of satisfaction from the vast majority of the respondents, Skype is proved to be a very worth-using tool in interpreter training in the context of the study.

Keywords: *Skype, interpretation skills, interpreter training, real experiences, guest speakers, connect via Skype.*

INTRODUCTION

In today world of cooperation and communication, interpreting has emerged as an activity of enormous importance. Interpreting can be universally defined as an understanding speech of one language and rewording that understanding in another language. According to

Pochhacker (2004), interpreting is a form of translating in which a first and final rendition in another language is produced on the basis of a one-time presentation of an utterance in a source language.

The rapid development of technology has sharply shaped almost every aspect of life, and interpreting and translating training has no exception. It has become a topic of interest among a number of scholars and teachers worldwide to integrate Information Communication and Technology tools (ICT) into the language teaching and learning process in general, and in interpreter training in particular. It is undoubted that such changes have brought about an enormous improvement in students' academic achievement as well as substantial skills they are required to possess. Among the tools that have been used in interpreting practice, Skype is an increasingly popularly-used one. This is a telecommunication application software that specializes in providing video chat and voice calls from computers, tablets and mobile devices via the Internet to other devices or telephones/smartphones (Markton, 2014). The number of Skype users is on the rise and it has become a very useful tool in language learning and teaching (Branzburg, 2007).

With the extraordinary benefits it offers, Skype is a feasible solution for challenges that teachers and students of interpreting training courses are facing up with. Therefore, this study examines the effects of integrating Skype in an interpreter training course.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The practice of interpreter training

The two significant aspects involved in the process of interpreting are orality and interaction. There are two main types of interpreting: simultaneous interpreting and consecutive interpreting. In consecutive interpreting, the speaker delivers a part of his speech then stops in order to give the interpreter the chance to interpret. Simultaneous interpreting is carried out in real time, i.e. the simultaneous interpreter listens to the speaker, through headphones, and at the same time, interprets into a microphone.

Basically, interpreting is an inter-lingual and cross-cultural activity that requires a high level of competence in multitasking in cognitive

operations and immediacy in information processing and transference. The interpreters are demanded to have 1) command of the native language, 2) command of the source language, 3) command of the relevant world and background knowledge, and 4) command of interpreting methodology. Therefore, developing interpreting competence requires the great effort of both instructor and students. Students who are undertaking interpreting training programs are now commonly required to complete an adequate number of practicing hours (Wang & Ye, 2009). For instance, interpreting researchers (e.g., Moser-Mercer, 2000) estimate that achieving professional standards requires 3,000–5,000 hours of deliberate practice (including class activities, group work and individual work). Moreover, as mentioned earlier in this paper, one of the very essential aspects of interpreting is the interaction which basically means the opportunity for the interpreter to interact with the speaker for clarification or request on the speaking speed. With regards to these fundamental requirements, interpreter training should always try to be skill-based and profession-oriented, and the real-life features should be involved in the training process. However, though the classroom teachers have made a great deal of effort, there still exist the following issues that really challenge the interpreter training as identified and stated by Wang (2015).

The first issue is the insufficient practice hours. Compared to the demand of hundreds of hours of practice mentioned above, the number of hours working at the class offered in the training curriculum is way too insufficient.

The second issue is the lack of authenticity in the materials used and in the classroom activities. In the real interpreting situations, the interpreters are required to have the ability to cope with different problems arise and they may suffer a lot from the time constraint and pressure. Additionally, the different accents and the varying speed of delivery can cause them a lot of difficulties. Meanwhile, in the classroom, it is very difficult for the teachers to create activities and select materials which retain the same level of authenticity as the real-world speeches but appropriate to students' level of language competence. This results in a big gap between classroom practice and the real-life context.

The third issue is the lack of interaction in the activities carried out in the classroom. The fact that whether the interpreters have interaction with the speakers or not does have an effect on their performance. Interaction means that the interpreter can have the opportunity to communicate directly with the speakers for such certain purposes as to clarify information, or to ask for a modification of speed of delivery. However, in the classroom, the major materials that the teachers bring are recorded audio or videos taken from some certain sources. Students, consequently, have no interaction with the speakers at all, and this causes them some difficulty.

And last but not least, it is the lack of guidance for students' out-of-class practice. Students in interpreting classes are often required to undertake out-of-class practice but may not have access to suitable material nor know how to evaluate their own performance.

While the interpreter training requires both classroom instruction and students' self-directed practice, many training courses are still teacher-centered. That is to say, teachers remain as the sources of expertise and authority and play a major role in deciding what students should learn and how they should learn them. Specifically, teachers mostly decide what sources of materials to bring to the classroom and how students will work with those materials. However, the acquisition of interpreting skills requires not only professional guidance during the class sessions but also extensive practice and exposure to the real-world speeches.

The integration of ICT into interpreter training

There has been an increasing number of research studies conducted in the past few years with the focus on bringing ICT elements into the interpreter training course in order to boost students' academic performance and bridge the gap of the training and the reality. The following is the list of studies in this field proposed by Berber-Irabien in his dissertation (2010)

1. Bao (2009) deals in his article with the impact of technological development on translator and interpreter training.
2. Benhaddou (2002) discusses video conferencing and interpreting in his DEA thesis.

3. Blasco Mayor (2005), through an analysis of the experience with a digital interpreting lab, presents the challenges of interpreter training in the 21st century.
4. Braun's (2004) doctoral thesis focuses on the adverse communication conditions when interpreting in videoconferences;
5. Chiaro and Nocella's (2004) article describes their online study on the perception of quality in interpreting by the interpreters themselves;
6. de Manuel Jerez (2003b) in his article analyzes how new technologies are changing interpreter training;
7. de Manuel Jerez (2006) in his doctoral dissertation deals with the importance of linking professional reality and interpreter training, especially through the use of new technologies;
8. Djoudi's (2000) unpublished thesis concentrates on the assessment of the machine interpreter "Talk and Translate";
9. Kalina (2009) discusses the changes in interpreting brought about by new technologies, changes that could be a chance or a risk;
10. Koskanová (2009) in her MA thesis compares remote interpreting and interpreting without a direct view of the conference room from the booth;
11. Lang's (2009) article deals with online simultaneous interpreting, exploring WebInterpret, a French online interpreting company;
12. Moser-Mercer's (2005a) article explores how remote interpreting is one of the major factors determining poorer performance, mainly because of the early onset of fatigue;
13. Moser-Mercer's (2005c) article also explores remote interpreting, this time discussing the role of presence;
14. Mouzourakis (2006) in his article discusses the effects of the use of video conferencing and remote interpreting;
15. Sandrelli and de Manuel Jerez (2007), along the same lines, discuss CAIT (Computer Assisted Interpreting Training) in their art.

It is obvious that such a great effort has been invested in understanding the impacts of the integration of ICT tools in the interpreter and translator training program. However, up to now, there has not been any particular research that deeply investigates the potentials that Skype can bring about in the interpreter training program, though this tool has been prevalently used in language skills classes. Therefore, this is the gap that this current study aims at finding.

THE STUDY

Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- To establish a flexible and authentic environment for students to develop their interpreting skills
- To provide new experiences and activities in the interpreting training class.
- To build up students' confidence and essential problem-solving skills when doing the interpretation work.

Particularly, the study aims at answering the following questions:

1. *What do students think about the use of Skype in the interpreting class?*
2. *What do guest speakers think about the use of Skype in the interpreting class?*

The participants

The study was conducted in an interpreter training course consisting of 39 final year students. The name of this course is "Speech interpretation". The objective of this course is to develop students' memorizing and note-taking skills, techniques to interpret a complete speech, scientific reports, and strategies to handle easy to difficult language related to topics in life and work. Prior to this course, students have finished several introductory courses to translation and interpretation, sentence and utterance interpretation. This means that they are quite familiar with the work of interpreting and they are

equipped with some basic skills and strategies in translating and interpreting. According to the requirements in the training curriculum, the students should be at an advanced level in English. According to the description of this level in the Common European Framework of Reference, they are expected to be able to understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning, to express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions, and use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. However, the result of the proficiency test at the beginning of the academic year shows that the majority of them are at the upper-intermediate level and a small number are rated at the intermediate level.

In this course, students have six periods of in-class learning in two different days. Since it is very hard to get enough human resources for the project, students have two different sessions each week. The first session is the Skype-guest speaker project and the second one is to work with recorded tapes or videos. Due to this fact, this study does not aim at finding out the extent to which the Skype-guest speaker project can contribute to enhancing students' performance. The main purpose is to find out their feedback and evaluation on the project; therefore, the results are mainly descriptive.

In the recorded tapes and video session, the teacher follows the course syllabus to pick up videos of different topics and bring them to the class. Teacher plays the videos and stops after a set of sentences. After the pause, students have a little time to prepare and produce their oral translation. However, there are several problems with this teaching and learning method. First, teachers remain a very important part and are the deceive persons in students interpreting process. That is to say, the topics and the conducting procedure are heavily dependent on the teacher's choices.

In the Skype session, students are connected to a guest speaker outside the classroom. There are four guest speakers who are living in America are invited to work with students in 12 weeks. This means that each of them works with students three times. The guest speaker gives a talk on a particular topic which lasts from one hour to one hour and a half. Students are invited to take turns, interpreting the speech to others. In

order to set up the Skype session, the invitation is sent weeks before the class physically begins and sometimes students have to change the learning schedule to match with the speakers' preferred time zone.

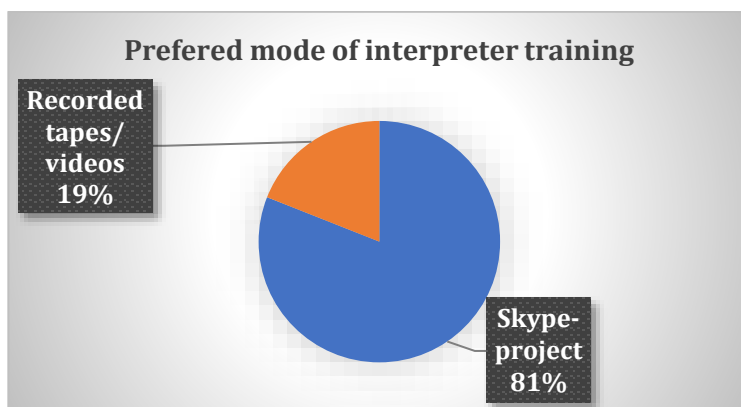
Data collection instrument

The study aims at collecting descriptive data in order to gain an insight into students' and guest speakers' perception and evaluation on the practicality and effectiveness of using Skype in the interpreting class rather than to measure the extent to which Skype contribute to boosting students' interpreting capacity as well as their language competence; therefore, two main data collection instruments were employed including a questionnaire with 39 final year students enrolling in the "speech interpretation course" and a structured interview via Skype with 04 guest speakers who willingly contributed to the project as well as the students' learning journey.

FINDINGS

The findings from the survey with both students and guest speakers show that this Skype project is effective to some extent in interpreter training.

First of all, with regard to the first question asking students' preference between the Skype-project and the recorded tapes/videos for interpreting training, the majority of students choose the Skype-project, as reflected in the chart below.



Moreover, 93% of the student surveyed said that this Skype project significantly helped them to build cross-cultural communication skills and mutual understanding. These skills are also considered very important in language learning in general, and in interpreting in particular. Among the four aspects which can be improved through this project as asked in the survey, *“confidence in interpreting”* is rated with the highest percentage (87%). Students state that they feel much more comfortable and confident when they can know something about guest speakers and talk to them before starting the interpretation. The pressure is also reduced as rated by 82% of the students because according to students, the fact that they can have interaction with the guest speakers and ask for clarifications when needed helps them feel much more relaxed.

With regard to the interpreting skills, 70% of student participation agree that the project is effective in enhancing their skills. To be more specific, students share that when they have the opportunity to practice interpreting for a real person, they can mobilize all strategies and techniques in interpreting in order to get the work successfully done.

Additionally, 90% of students reflect that this project is an interesting experience which helps to motivate them in learning. In their training curriculum, there is no project-based learning credits; therefore, the introduction of Skype in the classroom has changed the classroom conduct and brings a motivating atmosphere.

Additionally, the interview with guest speakers shows a very positive result. Each speaker has 4 weeks working with students; therefore, it is supposed that they can recognize the changes in students' performance. From the interview, all four guest speakers express their happiness when they can help to facilitate students learning and they can see the progress students make. Particularly, all guest speakers agree that Skype is an innovative and effective tool to be integrated into the interpreter training program. They share the same idea that students would benefit a lot from this form of learning, from developing their professional skills to building confidence and cultural understanding. One of their emphasis is *“Skype in the classrooms one of the most impactful ways I have experienced to connect what students are*

learning to the real life, and this is very important". Two others ascertain "students surely benefit from this form of learning as they can find interest and confidence" and "it is much more relaxing for students to handle the interpreting task when they can feel the smile or encouragement of the speaker through the direct interaction".

Therefore, from the above-mentioned results, it can be concluded that Skype-guest speaker project is to some extent effective in the interpreter training program.

CONCLUSION

From the results analyzed above, it is obvious that both students and guest speakers expressed very positive feedback on the integration of Skype in the interpreter training course. It not only changes the traditional form of teaching to boost students' learning autonomy and confidence but also contributes to developing students' cross-culture knowledge when they have opportunities to work directly with a foreign guest speaker. Skype also helps to tackle the challenges that the interpreter training programs face as mentioned in the very first part of this paper. Such challenges include the inadequate amount of practice time, lack of authentic material for practice, lack of active interaction in the classroom activities and lack of controled practice outside the classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Though the project is to a certain extent successful and it brings good experience as well as helps to strengthen students' professional skills, there still exist some limitations. First of all, the study could not find out the exact correlation between the application of Skype in the classroom and the improvement of students performance. It would be solved by administering the pre-test and post-test, keeping students' reflection and having more guest speakers so that they can more closely work with a certain group of students to evaluate their progress. Therefore, the author of this study recommends that a further experimental or quasi-experimental research is necessary to fully explore the impacts of Skype-integrated program on students' academic improvements and the cognitive strategy students use when following such program.

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APPLYING FLIPPED CLASSROOM APPROACH IN BUSINESS WRITING COURSES: A CASE STUDY AT HCMC UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In the digital era, IT significantly contributes to fostering students' curiosity and engagement in the ESP classroom, facilitates their performance, and compensates the limitations of traditional classrooms. This paper presents a four-week case study of the new teaching approach of "flipped" or "inverted" classrooms aiming at stimulating students' participation in language acquisition via authentic materials in the business sector at HCMC University of Education. Students worked with video lectures at home while their homework on process writing was done in the class. Data were collected through a survey, a discussion forum and students' portfolios. Results suggested flipped classrooms should be integrated into teaching Business English as they boosted students' performance, increased their motivation and critical thinking, improved learning autonomy and engagement, and developed crucial skills for students such as problem-solving, teamwork, time management and self-evaluation.

Keywords: *flipped, integrated, business writing*

INTRODUCTION

Along with the current trend of educational transformation, teacher-centred models of teaching have shown a variety of limitations in motivating students' engagement in academic classrooms due to austere and rigid principles. That teachers play a role as "formal

authority” or “a demonstrator” to deliver lessons to students may result in boredom and passiveness in knowledge acquisition. Hence, modern teaching approaches have been employed to maximize students’ participation in class to encourage their curiosity and enthusiasm in ensuring the effectiveness of lesson learning. The flipped classroom is considered one of the most significant approaches in active learning (Tucker, 2012). The key purpose of this approach is to provide an opportunity for students to prepare and investigate the lessons’ contents before the start of the classes to accelerate their curiosity from the given teacher-created videos and all learning activities related to practicing are conducted during class time (Bristol, 2014). As a result, students can get prepared to complete their exercises with the immediate assistance of their teachers.

In addition, the digital era has witnessed the increasing popularity of technological applications in the educational system. Thanks to the availability of CALL (computer-assisted language learning), EFL classroom has a tendency to integrate more practice-based teaching techniques and materials in teaching languages, which constitutes to the productivity of knowledge delivery in active learning methods. This paper attempts to analyse and assess the levels of integrating the flipped classroom approach in a business-related writing class with the assistance of ICT (information and communication technology).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of the flipped classroom approach

The idea of flipped classroom was suggested in 2007 by Strayer via the comparison between this modern approach and other traditional ones. It is claimed that flipped classroom can stimulate students’ active learning to take part in different in-class activities and there is a dramatic increase in communication between students and teachers or peer interactions. This approach aims to provide necessary assistance of videos and instructions for students to prepare the lessons outside the classroom (Milman, 2012). Therefore, class time can be utilized for discussion and lesson analysis to get more insights into the course content.

Furthermore, Bergmann and Sams (2014) declare that in the flipped

classroom, all traditional activities are finished at home to give time for homework to be done in class. It is a converted method which is wholly opposite to traditional approach.

In general, in traditional modes of teaching, teachers are always the centre of the class to draw the attention of students during their courses and students are obliged to be present in class for lesson delivery and homework is assigned to be completed at home. However, it is uncertain whether students actually absorb the entire content of the lessons or not, so they may find difficulty in accomplishing the assignment in the due time. Whereas, in the flipped classroom, lesson delivery is conducted outside the classroom. As a student-centred method, learners are in charge of their learning activities during the course (Bergmann, Overmyer and Wilie, 2011). Students are provided with access to the course curriculum through a series of videos and instructions. They are able to pause and play the videos several times at home to study at home, which reduces the time teachers have to repeat the lessons in case learners cannot follow. All they have to do is about preparing and there is the complete absence of homework. All exercises will be done in class with the guidance of the teacher.

The flipped classroom is supposed to be constituted by four key elements presents via the first letters of the following words (FLN 2014)

F- Flexible environment: Students are able to arrange the time and the place which are suitable for their studying

L – Learning culture: This modern method is a student-centred teaching approach in which students dominate classroom activities

I – Intentional content: Teachers do not only provide an opportunity for students to improve language competency but also enhancing learners' knowledge via the curriculum

P- Professional educator: There is the transformation of the teaching approach from conventional teaching models. Teachers play a role in guiding, evaluating and fixing students' learning process

The Flipped approach in EFL classroom

Thanks to the availability of this modern mode of teaching, a very large

volume of problems in the traditional classroom can be tackled. First, the flipped classroom approach contributes to the increase of flexibility of both teachers and students (Brown, 2012). When lesson instruction and videos are available to get access to, students are able to arrange their time to spend on watching the lectures and reading course guidelines in any place that is suitable for them. They do not have to tolerate the course when they are easily distracted, which can motivate the efficiency of lesson delivery. The more comfortable students feel, the better they can receive the lessons. Moreover, teachers can manage their schedule and plan for the course during organizing their lessons.

Second, students' metacognition and collaborative learning can be accelerated (Van Vliet et al., 2015). Primary preparation before class can bring about several positive effects on students' learning process through a general understanding of the lessons. Those activities stimulate learners' curiosity to dip down into the content of the course to figure out the root of matters. Language teaching is not only to boost learners' language skills but also to equip students with the necessary knowledge in globalization. On the other hand, homework can be done in class to drive peer interactions and cooperation among students during class time. Teaching models are transferred to be more of facilitators or delegators instead of conventional authority. Through in-class face-to-face activities, teachers' guidance contributes to assisting learners' necessities to finish their assignments.

Ozdamli and Asiksoy (2016) proposed that the most significant element of the flipped classroom approach is the transformation of teachers' and learners' roles in EFL classrooms. Students are required to take responsibility for their own learning process in both in-class and out-class activities (Bergmann and Sams, 2012). Moreover, students are allowed to communicate and interact to share and discuss with teachers and friends as well as receive or give comments on writing products. Consequentially, the learning environment is becoming increasingly dynamic and interactive.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In line with the increasing growth in the popularity of the flipped classroom approach, this paper aims at finding out the answer for the following question:

What is the impact of the flipped classroom approach on business writing courses?

THE STUDY

Settings and participants

The case study was carried out in a business writing classroom of 40 juniors who were at intermediate to upper-intermediate levels during four weeks at Ho Chi Minh University of Education. All students were provided with a series of six videos of instruction on the process of writing business emails of advertisements with detailed handouts. Learners were required to spend time on watching all videos and read the handouts carefully before class. Then, the 3-hour practice of email writing was conducted in class with the assistance of the teacher every week. As a part of the entire course, students were supposed to understand the fundamental steps of business writing.

Method

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was applied to the study due to a wide range of subjective and objective elements in the process of the survey.

Data collection

Portfolios: Through in-class observation during the time students were doing their exercises, the teacher took notes of students' mistakes and difficulties in completing their tasks on a following-up book, which was used to get insights into students' performance. Peer correction and teachers' feedback on students' assignments during the class time were also added and reported in the portfolios.

Discussion forum: An online discussion forum on Facebook was created as an additional platform for students to give extra comments or further questions that were not raised in the classroom on the supplied tasks of what they desired to work out and analyse for more profound understandings. Furthermore, students were asked to upload their products onto this forum after peer discussion and correction in the classroom as a reference source for other students. This tool was also a channel for the teacher to partially evaluate student participation and interaction.

Survey: A questionnaire of 15 questions related to students' perspective of the significance and impact of the flipped classroom approach on business writing was delivered to students after four weeks of introducing the new method. The survey factors have 15 observation variables, all of which having item-correlation coefficients greater than 0.3 were accepted. Besides, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was 0.907 (greater than 0.7). Additionally, the survey also had five open questions to explore students' further concerns about the course limitations.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

After a four-week implementation of the flipped classroom, students' learning outcomes were achieved. When assessing students' writing products according to the assessment criteria listed in the course outline including task fulfilment, organization, vocabulary, grammar, coherence and cohesion, the teacher was confident that the results of students' work satisfactorily met course expectation.

Moreover, teachers' observation proposes that applying the flipped classroom brings about many positive impacts on learning activities. Students were provided necessary materials to prepare for class beforehand, so they could get prepared with the themes of the lessons. Thanks to the flexibility of the time, they were able to arrange their time effectively to get through the lessons. Consequentially, they were not at a loss in following up with the teacher and other students. Furthermore, the reduction of the in-class lecture time led to an increase in students' practice time, which was necessary for writing skill development. Most importantly, immediate guidance via in-class assignments created an opportunity for teachers to help students point out the common mistakes that they might not have realised if tasks had been completed outside the classroom.

Another noticeable point is that students could collaborate with each other to discuss and share their personal opinions. In this way, they were able to engage more ideas into their writing exercises. Eventually, the quality of their writing products was not only ensured but also enhanced.

In addition to the in-class observation, the forum also displays active

engagement and participation in lesson learning, questioning, peer support and facilitation, and peer feedback and correction. For each post from the teacher or students regarding the exercise completed in the classroom or questions about the lecture content, the number of comments ranged from the highest number of 128 to the lowest number of 67.

Furthermore, according to the results of the survey, students' responses indicate their positive attitude towards the flipped classroom approach. After the investigation, the majority of students showed their strong agreement with the improvement of media exploitation, time management, and individualized learning pace at 75%, 82.5%, and 85% respectively. This means that students mostly agreed that the flipped classroom allowed them to utilize technological devices; therefore, the fluency of their skills was developed. At the same time, it was flexible for learners to arrange the time that fits their schedule to study and revise their lessons. Furthermore, the availability of learning resources helped students read, research, and review at their own pace.

Meanwhile, 65%, 67.5%, and 70% of the whole class showed their satisfaction in the increase in learners' learning autonomy, lesson understanding, and online assistance. In other words, the new approach encouraged students' self-study to prepare for the lessons before class time and helped them master the lessons. In addition, students could get support from teachers even when they were at home by sending emails or messages, posting an entry onto the class forum, and proposed questions as post comments.

Moreover, the percentage of learning elements including in-class communication, self-correction, peer correction, lesson engagement, and comfortable learning environment that received learners' positive rating was from 50% to 60%. These results indicated that an increase in class time for practice enabled students to interact with other participants via classroom discussion activities such as brainstorming, outlining, drafting, editing, and reporting. Meanwhile, students were able to fix mistakes for themselves and their teammates. Also, they got more interested and involved in tasks and felt positive about their learning environment in which they were the centre of the learning

process, having more freedom to contribute their ideas to the lessons, share their individual perspectives, and personalize their final products.

Additionally, learning motivation, collaboration with teammates, self-direction gained from 70% to 75% of the agreement while the proportion of task revision was 62.5%. Through the assigned topics, learners were able to independently identify and select their interested areas before class. After that, they could apply their knowledge and experience in such areas to the class assignments, which brought about their learning pleasure and satisfaction. As a result, they would be more confident to share, interact, and collaborate with their colleagues in accomplishing exercises. Accordingly, the active learning process provided an opportunity for students to be aware of the learning goals, make more effort towards their target, and finally achieve their bests. In general, more than half of the study participants acknowledged the positive changes after employing the flipped classroom approach into practice.

However, the five open questions revealed some difficulties in adapting to the flipped classroom. First, technology is a big challenge for those who are not used to electronic devices. It is unsure that all students are really competent in using technological application. Some students were confused about how to operate or activate the provided classroom materials. Second, some students were unable to interact with other students in discussion forum due to some external factors such as time arrangement, part-time jobs, or internet connection. Additionally, it was hard to follow all the post comments in the forum due to the enormous number of interactions. Finally, students proposed that it was essential to spend a longer time to adjust to this new method because of differences from the traditional one.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The application of the flipped classroom approach has created an opportunity for both teachers and learners to work effectively in classroom activities. In particular, this student-centred approach stimulates students' engagement and curiosity in language acquisition of ESP classroom. The provision of online videos and lesson material allows students to arrange their time effectively and enhances

students' learning autonomy via self-preparation for business-related topics on writing. They could investigate and explore further knowledge on their own, which equipped them with extensive and intensive business understandings. In addition, the flipped classroom approach encouraged the trend of student-centred teaching models. Learners are in charge of their personal learning process, in which the insights of their weaknesses are able to be uncovered. As a result, teachers can assist students with immediate guidance via in-class activities to eliminate common mistakes in business writing.

Furthermore, the flipped classroom approach accelerates learner's utilization of social media and electronic devices into practice to strengthen their language competency. The globalization has witnessed the significance of ICT in all aspects of daily activities. With the assistance of provided lesson material, students can study at their own pace to boost their personal confidence in language acquisition. Moreover, the approach contributes to strengthening students' relationships and peer interactions during writing activities. As a result, the level of communication and involvement among classroom participants can increase to some extent.

Due to the limited amount of time in only four-week period and the small number of participants, the results are restricted. Additionally, the content of the study only concentrates on business email writing. It is hard to assure the reliability of all sorts of business writing teaching courses. Therefore, more experiments should be conducted in the flipped classroom approach in practice.

CONCLUSION

It can be clearly seen from the study that the majority of students in a business writing classroom are strongly aware of the benefits of integrating the flipped classroom approach into the course. The findings showed that the flipped classroom model contributes to stimulating learners' engagement and interest via the utilization of ICT application and online interactions. It may encourage the modern trend of teaching models from teacher-centred approaches as demonstrators to student-centred approaches as facilitators during the learning process. The study was in line with the conclusion of previous researchers on the role of the flipped classroom approach.

Furthermore, this study satisfied its aim to investigate the importance of this new teaching method and create a sample classroom experiment in order that EFL teachers can apply in their classroom. It is also recommended that further research should be done to analyse students' difficulties in self-study with the assistance of provided materials as well as the degree of knowledge acquisition via this approach.

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ENGLISH TEACHERS' ROLES AND IDENTITIES IN THE ERA OF TECHNOLOGY FROM THE TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

In the digital era, English teachers' significant roles continue to be confirmed. However, they cannot avoid momentary confusion over their ultimately decisive roles in the process of teaching and learning. The focus of the study was to find out (1) whether there is any mismatch between the students' and teachers' perspectives on the English teachers' roles at the University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City (UEH) and (2) how the teachers shape and develop their own identities there.

The data were collected from structured interviews with thirty students and nine English teachers of School of Foreign Language for Economics, UEH. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to ensure that all the questions and responses were clear and thoroughly understood.

The data analysis revealed that there is a marked difference in the teachers' and students' evaluation of the importance of teacher's roles in the digital era. However, they all highlight the role of a facilitator or tutor. The results also indicated that the teachers have multiple perspectives and varied identities influenced by different factors like ages, experience and technology literacy. They also have to adapt and self-develop professionally to assert their identities in their workplace.

Keywords: *teacher identity, teachers' roles, digital era, perspectives*

INTRODUCTION

Surfing the Internet, English teachers can find insightful articles affirming their significant roles in the process of language teaching and

learning in the digital area. This has enhanced their belief and confidence that they have fulfilled their tasks and positively contributed to society. However, there have been moments they feel extremely confused when the students, with their smartphones, personal computers, iPads, etc. and Wi-Fi connection, seem to be able to acquire the language without their help or support. It is not the feeling of being less important / falling in status or the fear for their roles having been downplayed that counts. It is the deep concern that what roles the students expect from the teachers in the teaching and learning context where technologies have directly and greatly affected the process. The main aim of this study, therefore, is to examine the teachers' and the students' perspectives on the EFL teachers' roles as well as the teacher's identity in the era of technology. The following research questions guide the study:

(1) Is there any mismatch between the students' and teachers' perspectives on the English teachers' roles at the University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City (UEH)?

(2) How have the teachers shaped and developed their own identities in the new setting of learning and teaching?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of English teachers in the era of technology

One who wishes to become a qualified language instructor has to engage in initial teacher training and successfully satisfies all the requirements upon graduation. For teachers of English, whether majoring in TESOL or Applied Linguistics, having an in-depth understanding about English language teaching methodology is very important because this understanding not only supports their future work but also helps them identify their own roles in their job.

Teachers are multi-task takers in the teaching profession since they are responsible for different jobs from teaching to testing, marking and managing classes, etc. Within a traditional classroom, a top-down teaching approach in which teachers provide knowledge and students are the recipients seems to be favorable. Possibly, teachers may find this traditional type of 'sit-and-get' classroom safe to perform their job and feel comfortable doing so. However, when teaching was shifted to

the student-centered approach and learner autonomy is emphasized and encouraged, teachers are supposed to adopt new roles of a facilitator, counsellor, and professional (Lowes & Target, 1999, Nunan, 2003; Farrell, 2018). For example, English teachers, apart from teaching the language, are expected to be a cultural ambassador when working with immigrants and/or refugees. In the information age, as Antony (2012) holds, “the latest concept is that the role of the present teacher is neither teaching nor transferring knowledge, but he/she is a facilitator/a guide or a mentor.” (p. 229)

In the era of technology where wooden, flip-lid desks and blackboards have gradually been replaced by electronic devices, Cummins (2007) has supposed teachers to work towards a facilitator rather than a knowledge provider. As such, the role of English teachers as a facilitator is emphasized and strengthened within the language classroom. This proposal finds support in Lankshear & Knobel (2011), as cited in Labbas & Shaban (2013), who argued that with the availability of resources and modern technological tools, student learning can be better facilitated both inside and outside class. In this sense, it is important that English teachers of the 21st century be fully aware of the role and use of new technology in the language classroom. Whether they are avoiders, reluctant adopters, minimalists or enthusiastic adopters/participants in terms of digital literacy (Zur & Zur, 2011), teachers should be well-adapted and well-equipped to the new teaching environment to meet needs and expectations of both learners and the society.

Teacher identity

It is unlikely to find a uniform definition for the term “teacher identity”. Put into a framework, it is defined as the personal and cultural characteristics and experiences of teachers. Olsen (2008) describes identity as a label for the collection of influences and effects teachers have from the contexts they have experienced and the ideas/beliefs they have had on self, social positioning, and meaning systems. In more simple words, teacher identity provides teachers with a framework to construct their own ideas of ‘how to be,’ ‘how to act,’ and ‘how to understand’ their work and their place in society (Sachs, 2005).

Teacher identity is quite complex and multi-faceted, encompassing

different elements such as teachers' self-image, what they perform in the classroom and how they position themselves in relation to others within their profession (Pennington, 2015). According to Richards (2015), identity is connected to different social and cultural roles that teachers perform through the interaction with their students. Identity is influenced by personal factors such as teachers' age, gender, biography and the environment they are working in like the school and classroom culture as well as their working conditions. Olsen (2008) also suggests that the multiple factors affecting teacher identity include personal and professional experiences as well as current teaching contexts. Richards (2017) states that teacher identity is not fixed or static; it is also never completed and open to alteration. Identity is considered to develop through stages over time, although unconsciously and its construction and development is a lifelong process (Kroger, 2000; Reeves, 2017).

Teacher identity has been studied from the perspectives of their professional constructs given that the roles teachers perform in their profession help identify their own professional identity (Wright, 1987). For example, in their study investigating English teacher identities, Kalaja and Dufva (1997) found that the teachers' identities were constructed by different roles specifically related to their teaching responsibilities and that identity could either differentiate or unite members of the same occupation. Vesanto (2011) has also reported three main roles English teachers in Finland concentrated on, that of an educator, a subject teacher, and a cultural teacher.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The subjects of the study included thirty students and nine English teachers of School of Foreign Language for Economics (SLFE), UEH. The teachers were purposefully chosen from three divisions of SFLE: Department of Foreign Languages for General Purposes, Department of English Language Studies and Department of Foreign Languages for Specific Purposes (three teachers/department). These nine teachers were evenly divided into three group ages: under 35 years old (group 1), from 35 to 45 (group 2) and over 45 (group 3) with the assumption that age and experiences of using technology might have formative

influence on the teachers’ perspectives and the ways they shape and develop their identities.

Table 1. Background information about the teachers

| | <i>Age</i> | <i>Gender</i> | | <i>Degrees</i> | | <i>Years of teaching at UEH</i> | |
|----------------|------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| | | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>TESOL</i> | <i>Applied Linguistics</i> | <i>≤ 10</i> | <i>≥ 10</i> |
| <i>Group 1</i> | under 35 | 1 | 2 | 1 (M.A.) | 2 (M.A.) | 3 | |
| <i>Group 2</i> | 35 to 45 | 1 | 2 | 2 (M.A. & Doctor) | 1 (M.A.) | 2 | 1 |
| <i>Group 3</i> | over 45 | | 3 | 3 (M.A.) | | | 3 |

Thirty non-English major students who have had from one to five semesters studying English at UEH were randomly chosen for the interviews. They were ten freshmen, ten sophomores and ten third-year students. The senior students were doing their internship when the study was conducted, hence being unavailable for the survey.

Tool

Structured interviews for the teachers were conducted with ten questions raised in which the first two ones were for collecting background information (presented above). The other eight questions focused on the teacher’s roles, their applying technology in teaching, and teacher identity construction and development.

Nine questions were put to the students in other structured interviews. Delivering questionnaires to a big group of students was not in favor for in this study to be sure that the options were carefully chosen, and the questions were answered with full consideration.

The length of the interviews was around thirty minutes for the teachers and about twenty minutes for the students. The language used in the interviews was Vietnamese to ensure that all the questions and responses were clear and thoroughly understood. During the interviews, the teachers and the students could ask back to clarify the question(s) raised, and the interviewer gave more explanation about certain terms/concepts or ideas, especially ‘teacher identity’ one.

DATA ANALYSIS

Questions 3, 4 and 5 (for the teachers) and questions 4, 7 and 8 (for the students) focused on finding the answer for the question (1) of the study – whether there is any mismatch between the students' and teachers' perspectives on the English teachers' roles.

Questions 4 and 5 – support for applying technology in language learning and teaching

Over one-third of the students chose the highest level – level 5 (100% support) due to the fact that technology provided them with various ways of learning, and each learner could choose the appropriate one(s) for them. More than half of the students ticked level 4 (75%), explaining that technology applications helped make the lessons more interesting with abundant video clips and games. Therefore, the students could learn better (understanding the lessons more easily and retaining them well). However, the students stated that English teachers still played important roles in their learning process and it was necessary for learners not to let themselves become too dependent on technology. Three students voted for level 3 (50%) with the simple reason that interacting and learning with teachers were more interesting and productive.

Meanwhile, only one teacher chose level 2 (25%, since teaching needs the combination of many means and methods) and another one ticked level 4 (75%, because of the necessity of using technology in teaching and not being left behind but no complete denying for traditional method). The other seven respondents ticked level 3 (50%) with the explanation that relying too much on technology was not a wise decision. Again, technology could not replace teachers. Even when a student took an online course, he/she still needed a tutor. Moreover, learners had very different questions about right and wrong answers for which only teachers could give satisfactory explanations. For example, when studying online, the students could practice writing skill. However, they could not get helpful feedback and comments as well as detailed correction. In addition, there might be millions of resources on the Internet and other digital devices, but without the teachers' guidance and help, the students would be confused and failed to find the appropriate programs for their independent study. Reality showed that the students did not know how to exploit resources on the

Internet, which lead to a waste of time when they used ineffective programs or applications to do presentation and conduct games in class. The technology was good support when class hours were not enough for practicing and teachers could resort to online programs to enhance the students' skills.

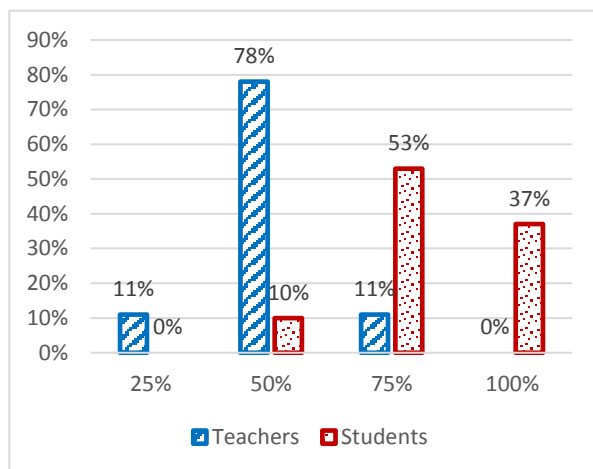


Figure 1. Support for applying technology in language learning and teaching

Questions 3 and 7 – the importance of teachers' roles in the era of technology

With three options for being less important than (A), as important as (B), and more important than (C) the roles they played in the past, more than half of the teachers agreed that they performed more important roles. The reasons listed were that technology and its applications could not completely replace teachers in teaching, not to mention that even though the students were digital literate, they mostly failed in identifying appropriate learning resources to assess to, and especially could not employ effective self-study methods with these resources. Therefore, the guidance and help from their teachers were essential when they studied either in class or online. Moreover, the nature of language teaching needed the interaction between teachers and learners to get good results. Therefore, teachers' roles became more important. The same reasons were given for option (B) based on the students' needs for teachers' orientation, guidance and motivation. The explanation for one tick for option (A) was that these days students could study online with many options for them to work with; therefore,

it seemed that the teachers' roles were not fully acknowledged. One teacher chose both (A) and (C) options, sharing the same opinions mentioned above. It is noticeable that the two teachers choosing option (A) are from group 1 (the teachers under 35 years old).

Meanwhile, four-fifths of the students stated that teachers played important roles as they had done in the past (choice B). Four students believed that they took more important roles (choice C) and only two students responded that less importance was laid on the roles of the teachers (choice A).

To support their choice (B), the students explained that they needed the teachers' help and guidance to use and learn with the applications. Especially, even though they were more responsive to new technology, most students failed to find appropriate learning resources for their levels. In addition, not all students could take advantages of and study well with technology applications. For choice (C), the teachers' roles even became more important for that fact that technology was created and developed by humans and it could not replace teachers. It was the teachers who guided and helped the learners to use and exploit the most and the best of it. The only reason for choice (A) was that the students could study by themselves with the applications.

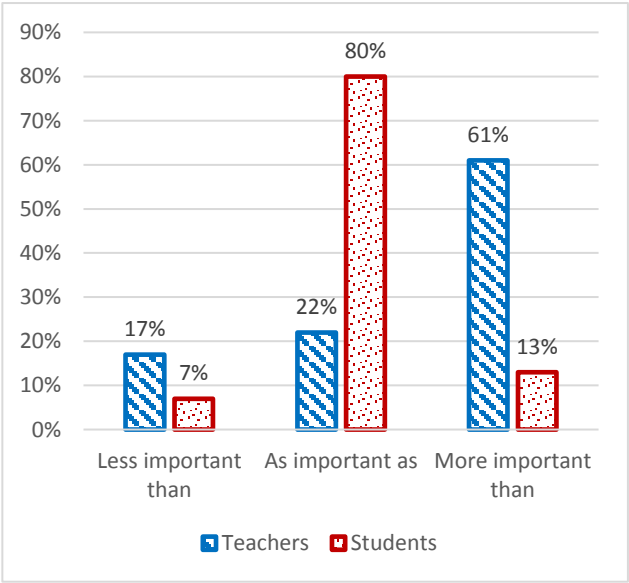


Figure 2. Evaluation of the importance of teachers' roles in the digital era

Questions 4 and 8 – roles highlighted and downplayed in the digital era

Focusing on the specific teachers' roles, the students expected their teachers to be a facilitator or tutor (19 students). They also had the expectation for the roles of being an assessor and a resource (10 students voting for each role). The least stress was put on the role of a controller (7 students). The explanations for these expectations were that the students needed teachers' coaching and tutoring to help them identify their learning paths, which was very important for their independent study. They needed teachers' corrections for their mistakes and teachers' guidance to use the resources appropriate to their levels. Especially, they believed that technology could not replace teachers because only teachers could have the right assessment and evaluation for their learning and levels. Furthermore, there was an opinion that sometimes only some pieces of advice from a teacher could trigger big changes in a learner. The high expectation for the role of the resource was again that the teachers could provide the learners with the most appropriate resources, which helped them save a lot of time. Then, the students could actively and independently learn with these resources. It was noted that the students still needed the teachers to control the class and organize activities. Obviously, one of the disadvantages of technology was that the students had a tendency to retreat to their own world with their mobile phones. Therefore, the teachers with their activities could help a lot in closely connecting the students.

Most of the teachers replied that the roles as facilitator and resource were highly appreciated, meanwhile the roles as controller and manager remained unchanged or might be even downplayed. Especially, four teachers placed the significance on the roles of being assessor and evaluator for the reason that only teachers could give specific feedbacks and detailed comments on students' work as well as more accurate evaluation and assessment on their progress due to frequent and direct working with them. These were the roles which could not be replaced by any software programs and/or applications.

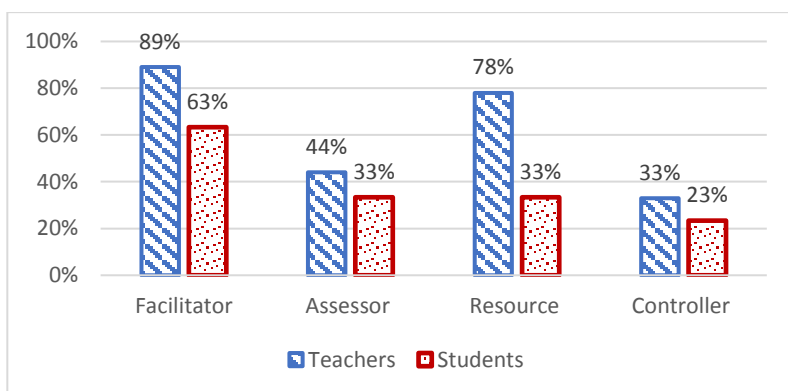


Figure 3. Teachers' roles highlighted in the digital era

Questions 6 and 8 (for the teachers) focused on finding the answer for the question (2) of the study – how the teachers have shaped and developed their own identities in the new setting of learning and teaching.

Question 6 – commonly used tools and applications in teaching

The result showed that all the teachers took advantage of power point and used the search engine Google to find information as well as learning and teaching resources on the Internet. More than half of them often used smartphones for games and activities. Besides, Facebook, YouTube and websites like Kahoot.com and Socrative.com were also in use to make the lessons more interesting and help the students learn better.

Question 8 – using technology in teaching to build and develop teachers' identities

The three groups had clear-cut answers for this question. The teachers in group 3 doubted the roles of technology in helping them construct identity and stated clearly that it was the tasks that teachers designed did help them build and develop their identities. Meanwhile, all the teachers in group 1 agreed that using technology in teaching would create high interaction between the teachers and the students and among the students themselves. Therefore, it helped them effectively construct and develop their identities in terms of positioning themselves in relation to others within their profession. The teachers in group 2 gave three different answers: definitely yes, completely no,

and yes & no. Definitely yes was because of the same reasons that group 1 teachers had mentioned. Completely no was due to the facts that technology was just a device or mean and that teachers created identities with their own teaching methods, exploration and communication with the students. Yes & No was because the teacher advocated the combination of traditional teaching and teaching with the support of technology. More explanation was given that sometimes technology was not completely used in teaching because it seemed not to bring effective results.

Table 2. Technology helps build and develop teacher identity

| | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Yes & No</i> |
|----------------|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| <i>Group 1</i> | 3 | | |
| <i>Group 2</i> | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Group 3</i> | | 3 | |

FINDINGS

The data analysis revealed that both the teachers and the students shared the same opinion that the students needed teachers’ help and support in their learning. However, there is a marked difference in the teachers’ and students’ support for applying technology in language learning and teaching as well as their evaluation on the importance of teacher’s roles.

- While the scale for students’ support ranged from 50% to 100% with the majority ticking 75% support, the scale for the teachers’ choices was 25% to 75% with the favor going for 50%. The fact that no teacher chose 100% support using technology, meanwhile one-third of the students did, has proved that technology is an integral part of their learning activities. With electronic devices being with them everywhere, the students can take maximum advantages of the applications. Therefore, they strongly support applying technology in learning and teaching English. It is noticeable that whatever degree of support they had for, both the teachers and the students agreed that teachers could not be replaced by technology in the teaching and learning process.

- As far as the evaluation on the importance of teacher's roles is concerned, there was a disparity in their choices for as important as (B) (teachers: 22% and students: 80%), and more important than (C) (teachers: 61% and students: 13%). However, the reasons for their choices were the same – the importance of teachers' help and guidance to access appropriate learning resources. The disparity shows that although both have been greatly affected by the changes in technology, the students simply consider and use technological applications as more convenient means for their studying, while the teachers acknowledge the importance and the effectiveness of identifying, applying and even creating the appropriate applications in their work with more weight on their role.
- There was also a similarity in both the teachers' and the students' opinion on the role highlighted - facilitator. It can figure out that despite holding different viewpoints about the importance of their general roles in language teaching, with the younger teachers placing less importance on their roles than the senior ones doing, the English teachers at UEH are fully aware of their key roles as facilitator and assessor. They totally understand that the students needed their help and guidance no matter how computer-literate the students are. This belief is based on the fact that only teachers can combine and properly balance traditional teaching methods with new applications in technology, exploiting effectively technology tools and applications in their classes. Most of the students agreed that the teachers should work as a facilitator or tutor in the era of technology. This expectation has completely matched with the trend in language learning and teaching in recent years and has precisely corresponded to the viewpoints of Lowes & Target (1999), Nunan (2003), Cummins (2007), Antony (2012) and Farrell (2018) on the new role of English teachers – being a facilitator rather than a knowledge provider.

As far as teacher identity is concerned, the responses from the teachers disclosed that factors like ages, experience and technology literacy greatly affect the teachers' perspectives on their roles as well as the ways they build and develop their identities. Generally, they perceive their key roles clearly but differently and construct their identities in various ways.

Although their focus on applying technology for teaching skills and related language fields may vary widely, the teachers are quite skillful in using and applying technology in teaching and constructing their identities. It is noticeable that the younger the teachers are, the more they employ technology in their teaching. They have a long time assessing and using technology and undoubtedly assert that using technology in teaching is a great way to help distinguish them from the other teachers. Meanwhile, senior teachers do not give credit to technology in establishing and developing their identities. They strongly believe that it is their experience and skill in determining when technology can be best exploited and applied that counted in this matter. To work more effectively, most of the teachers are willing to get more training and equip themselves with knowledge and computer skills, which help assert their identities in the workplace. The teachers' responses to the ways they shape and develop their identities are supported by Kroger (2000), Reeves (2017) and especially Richards (2015 and 2017), who assert that age, biography, personal and professional experiences as well as teaching contexts directly and significantly affect the lifelong process of developing and constructing the identity of a teacher.

CONCLUSION

The study indicated that there is no mismatch between the students' and the teachers' perspectives on the English teachers' roles at UEH. Despite their habitual use and day-to-day involvement in technology in English learning, the students do need teachers' help and guidance. This affirms that the teachers' roles have never been downplayed, but with changes in teaching and learning conditions, the focus is shifted from one to another or to a new one.

The rapid development and wide application of technology may put an extra burden on the English teachers because they have to meet new expectations. However, the teachers at UEH can detect and keep up with the prevailing trend. They are fully aware that applying technology in teaching is an indispensable part of their work. However, this application itself does not mainly form a teacher identity. It just plays a part in the process of creating it. With the variety in ages, experience and computer literacy, the teachers have built and

developed their own distinguished identities.

Industry 4.0 with its dramatic effects on education will lead to important changes in teachers' roles. This will pave the way for further studies on the roles of English teachers in the new teaching context.

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Appendix

Questionnaire (for the teachers)

This questionnaire is intended to collect data about the perspectives of the English teachers at the University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh city (UEH) on the construction and development of teacher identity in general as well as how they shape and develop their own identities in the digital era.

1. You have worked at UEH for

- A. less than 10 years ☐ B. 10 years + ☐

2. You got M.A. / Doctor degree in

- A. TESOL ☐ B. Applied Linguistics ☐

3. In your opinion, in the digital era, the roles of English teachers have become:

- A. less important than they were ☐
Reason(s):
- B. as important as they were ☐
Reason(s):
- C. more important than they were ☐
Reason(s):

4. Methodologically speaking, a language teacher performs different roles such as a facilitator, assessor, manager, evaluator, controller, and resource, etc. In the digital era, which of the roles do you think are highlighted and which ones are downplayed? Why?

.....

5. How do you support applying technology in language learning and teaching?

| Percentage | 0% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 100% |
|------------|----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| | | | | | |

Reason(s):
.....

6. Which tools and applications are commonly used in your teaching?

.....

7. From your experience and experiences, which language skills and related fields like pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and translation should be more focused on when teaching with the support from technology? Why?

- A. Listening ☐
- B. Speaking ☐
- C. Reading ☐
- D. Writing ☐
- E. Pronunciation ☐
- F. Grammar ☐

G. Vocabulary ☐

H. Translation ☐

8. Do you think using technology in teaching can help build and develop teachers' identities? Why or why not?

.....

9. In your opinion, do English teachers need to get more training in using and applying technology?

A. Yes ☐ Reason(s):

B. No ☐ Reason(s):

10. In your opinion, do English teachers need to be very good at or be an expert to become a good English teacher?

A. Yes ☐ Reason(s):

B. No ☐ Reason(s):

Questionnaire (for the students)

This questionnaire is intended to collect data about how the students at the University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City (UEH) have used and applied technology to support their learning and what are their perspectives on the English teachers' roles in the digital era.

1. Do you usually use electronic devices when studying English?

A. Yes ☐ B. No ☐

2A. To support your learning, which electronic device(s) is/are commonly used?

.....

2B. The frequency of using the electronic device(s) is:

A. Very often ☐ B. Often ☐ C. Not very often ☐

3. The purpose(s) of using the electronic device(s) is/are

A. Looking for new words' meanings ☐

B. Learning/practicing pronunciation ☐

C. Doing translation ☐

D. Learning grammar ☐

E. Practicing listening skill ☐

F. Practicing speaking skill ☐

G. Practicing reading skill ☐

H. Practicing writing skill ☐

4. How do you support applying technology in language learning and teaching?

| Percentage | 0% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 100% |
|------------|----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| | | | | | |

Reason(s):

5. Which tools and applications are commonly used by your teachers in teaching English?

6. In the digital era, what skills and/or language related fields do you still expect your teacher to support you in language learning? Why?

- A. Listening ☐
- B. Speaking ☐
- C. Reading ☐
- D. Writing ☐
- E. Pronunciation ☐
- F. Grammar ☐
- G. Vocabulary ☐
- H. Translation ☐

7. In your opinion, in the digital era, the roles of English teachers have become:

- A. less important than they were ☐ Reason(s):
- B. as important as they were ☐ Reason(s):
- C. more important than they were ☐ Reason(s):

8. Which role(s) do you expect your teacher to play?

- A. The controller or organizer ☐ Reason(s):
- B. The resource ☐ Reason(s):
- C. The assessor ☐ Reason(s):
- D. The facilitator or tutor ☐ Reason(s):

9. In your opinion, do English teachers need to be very good at or be an expert to become a good English teacher?

- A. Yes ☐ Reason(s):
- B. No ☐ Reason(s):

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AN ICT TOOL BASED TEACHING-LEARNING MODEL FOCUSES ON IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS AMONG TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS AT VAN LANG UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Today English has been playing a crucial role in both daily life and work. People all over the world have learnt it as a foreign language to better their communication. However, teaching and learning English at university might not fully meet the demand because of lack of methodology, time and supporting tools. Teaching experience shows that technology students at Van Lang University (VLU) can read technical documents easily but hesitate to speak out due to low frequent practice and mistake embarrassment. They are afraid of making wrong pronunciation when speaking. In this paper, the authors present a self-designed model that helps students overcome their problems, then better their speaking and listening skills. In the model, students use ICT tool (named as ReadOut) to self-practice at home, store their own learnt vocabulary list; teachers can give exercises and tests, then track self-study progress of each student via the tool. The strong point of ReadOut is that based on speech recognition engine, the tool can point out which part of students' speaking is incorrect that help themselves make pronunciation improvement. Initially, the research results concluded from the survey, by technology students at VLU, show that the model makes students be interested and helps them a lot on practicing and improving speaking skills, especially pronunciation.

Keywords: *teaching English, practice English, listening skill, speaking skill, communication.*

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of international integration, employers always require graduates to have English communication skills, especially speaking skill. Understanding the needs of society, universities always try their best to innovate training methods to help students develop these skills. However, teaching English at universities is facing many difficulties in terms of facilities and supporting technology. Classes are usually large-scale, from 40 to 50 students. Tables and chairs are often fixed, so it is difficult for teachers to create some activities for students to practice. Speaking activities need a lot of time to guide and correct mistakes. Meanwhile, the duration of the course is quite short, usually about 50 periods per semester, including teaching all of 4 skills and grammar. Besides, the final assessment is mainly based on paper tests. It can be said that students do not have a lot of opportunities to practice speaking skills, to develop their communication ability.

There are plenty of factors that influence English speaking. According to Pattaraporn Nuttawat (2008), difficult communication is caused by wrong pronunciation, wrong sentence stress or incorrect intonation which leads to the misunderstanding of the text when communicating. Another important factor is the feeling of losing face, especially in Asian cultures. Shumin (1997) in one of his studies found that adult learners often worry about making errors in speaking and losing face; thus, they usually hesitated to speak English.

The problem is that students need more time apart from its limited amount at school to practice pronunciation to be more confident in communication. On the contrary, they often feel reluctant to do some after-school activities or homework tasks. Therefore, the instructor needs more technology to manage students' self-study, which can provide timely feedback so that students can correct themselves. The teachers can also save time on correction when dealing with big-size classes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of the practice of listening and speaking skills

English includes all 4 skills but listening and speaking are considered the two most important skills to help students improve their communication skills. Speaking is the most difficult skills that learners

have to face, while teachers often spend most of their time teaching students to write, read and grammar, to help them pass multiple choice tests. (Bueno, Madrid and McLaren, 2006). Therefore, many students, although learning English for a long time, can be very good at grammar, but cannot speak English well. Listening skills, from Anderson and Lynch (1988)'s point of view, the main purpose of listening is to exchange information. Students who just speak well and do not understand what others are saying are unable to communicate. As a result, learning these two skills requires regular practice, in the classroom and even at home. They are emphasized in teaching methods, such as 3P approach and Task-based learning.

With the 3P teaching method (Presentation, Practice, Production), the presentation aims to provide sentence patterns, background knowledge or models for students to apply, with controlled practice in Practice and free practice in Production. Similarly, in Task-based learning method, teachers require students to complete tasks through group or pair activities. Students can complete the task, then report back to the class in speaking or written form. Teachers must give feedback to student presentations or compare the reports of the groups. With this method, students also spend most of their time practicing.

However, the fact is that students do not have many opportunities to use English every day, so it is easy to forget the pronunciation, the way to speak or making a lot of wrong pronunciation. Teachers themselves do not have enough time to regularly correct pronunciation mistakes for students in the class. It takes too much time and is not suitable for large classes at university. In addition, when asking students to practice after school, they often reluctantly do it or copy answers from their friends. Thus, it is necessary to have technical support to help teachers solve these problems. Students can practice at home, receive immediate feedback on their mistake through the technology tool used. Teachers can also monitor students' self-study, know how much time students spend on learning, practice and the results of learning. More importantly, when we learn to listen in class, we have to think about how to listen in the real world. Teachers must let students listen to different voices, with different situations in the real world that only technology can help, because they can provide a variety of voices, from different regions or countries for students to practice.

Technology support in teaching and learning English

Our students currently have neither appropriate environment for self-practicing nor motivation/ attitude for studying English that will cause lack of ability to use English at work after graduation. In the technology era (industry 4.0) there are a lot of tools/ software that help learner have a new environment to study and practice English with ease and attraction.

ELSA Speak is a good software tool that helps to practice English speaking skill. Its slogan is 'Pronounce English like an American through real-world conversation on ELSA'. It applies new technology named AI (Artificial Intelligence) for detecting mistakes and correcting automatically for learners. For practicing each sentence, the software pronounces the sentences first for learners to listen (also practice listening skill), then they repeat the sentences that will be recorded by the system. Based on AI technology, the system can point out which parts in the sentence are pronounced incorrectly and learners can say again for mistake self-correction. The strong point of this tool is that all exercises are well-prepared in advance to help learners boost their level step by step (see Fig. 1). Another good point is the software provides a lot of useful common idioms for learners in a real-world context.



Fig. 1. ELSA Speak demo screen

Similar to ELSA Speak, another supportive tool is Duolingo which is currently the most popular one in the world with millions of active users. By using this system, people who can speak 2 or more languages fluently can share their skills by creating an online course on this site (controlled and checked by Duolingo staffs). Learning process likes playing a game. For each exercise, learners have to fill in the blanks (see Fig. 2), dictate the listened words, and translate text from this language to another one. Then, the software will point out mistakes occurring during exercises.



Fig. 2. Duolingo demo screen

Another one which focuses more on practicing speaking skills is English Conversation Practice (ECP). This is an application (can be used on mobile devices) which helps improve our speaking skills by practicing well-prepared daily dialogues. The strong point is the software allows users to select a person to play role, ECP will act the remaining roles. One by one, learners and software speak the sentence follow the trend of the selected dialogue as shown in Fig. 3. Besides, the user can record the conversation for listening again later. The software help learners get familiar with the common conversation, but it lacks function for pointing out learners' mistakes.



Fig. 3. ECP demo screen

Regarding Speaking Pal, software that can understand and point out speaking mistakes, users have a good feeling based on well and carefully prepared interesting dialogues. When learners say a sentence from the conversation, the software can detect what and where the mistake is (see Fig. 4) and allows them to practice again later until they speak correctly (by giving high star for the correct one to motivate practicing). The pros are practicing on this software brings a lot of attraction to learners, and the cons are the exercise that needs to be prepared in advance by the specialists, and this is not free software for everyone, especially students.

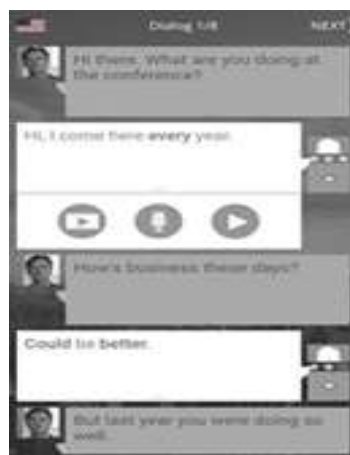


Fig. 4. Speaking Pal demo screen.

All software packages listed above are very good and useful tools that can apply for teachers to teach and help students practice their English skills. However, considering the English teaching and learning models currently in Vietnam especially in universities, there are some weak and strong points shown in the following table.

Table 1. Comparison between 4 software.

| <i>Software</i> | <i>Practice Listening</i> | <i>Practice Speaking</i> | <i>Mistake detection</i> | <i>Free</i> | <i>Common</i> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| ELSA Speak | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Duolingo | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| English Conversation Practice | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SpeakingPal | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |

Therefore, the authors would like to propose a new model for teaching and learning English that can reduce the current disadvantages. The heart of the model is a software tool that is free, easy to use, supporting practicing Listening and Speaking skills, and automatically give feedback on mistakes.

ICT TOOL-BASED TEACHING-LEARNING MODEL

The participants

The participants are technology students, especially students from the Faculty of Information Technology at Van Lang University. They are not good at English at the beginning of the course with low scores in their placement tests. They just focus on natural sciences subjects to pass the University entrance exam and pay little attention to English. In addition, most of them are from different provinces where they do not have good facilities to learn English. They often make a lot of mistakes in pronunciation. Therefore, they are not self-confident enough to speak in the class and only raise their voices when the teacher calls their names.

The model

In class, the teachers select a list of students who are having pronunciation problems. They ask students to practice from Controlled Practice to Free Practice as shown in Fig. 5.

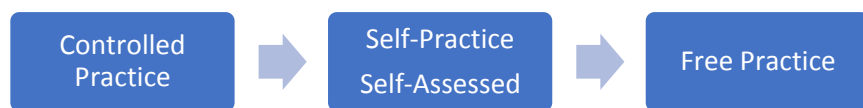


Fig. 5. The proposed teaching-learning model.

Controlled Practice: The teacher asks students to listen to the reading text available in the textbook and the tape script learned in the class. With the supporting of ICT tool, students can listen to the audio in different voices and imitate the correct pronunciation and intonation. Students can also choose the listening speed appropriate to their level. All practicing results are recorded and be available for the teacher to check out the next day in the class. With controlled practice, teachers are helping students to get familiar with the online practice. It is suitable to support some very weak students who are not accustomed to technology or they really need the teacher's consultancy.

Self-Practice: Students themselves can choose the source of their listening, or choose the content related to their major to learn. Regarding the selected sources, students can self-practice at home or any convenient places outside the classroom. In that case, the ICT tool plays the role of a supervisor who can provide feedback to students' practicing. Based on the feedback from the computer, the correct words will be highlighted in blue, students will know how many sentences they say wrong. Therefore, they can self-evaluate or self-assess your own learning process.

Free Practice: Students prefer to schedule their studies. Teachers only need to monitor the learning process of students through data from computers: study time, frequency, and results of each student. The teacher can also ask students to write a report of what they have done, what they have achieved when they practice online. By using the tool frequently, the software becomes a cyber-learning corner of the student where they can set their goal, monitor the results, store their vocabulary, and see their self-progress on learning English.

The survey

The ICT tool is the key technology for the proposed teaching-learning model. The tool provides the environment for students and teachers interacting throughout learning and training activities. Hence, the software needs to be built based on the requirements provided by students and teachers. The users' happiness when using the tool is the key success of the model. Based on this point, after letting users experience the tool then the authors do a survey to measure the friendly use, the need and the efficiency of the software. The results collected are analysed and transferred to new requirements for updating the software which will enhance the model also. The survey questions are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Survey question for users' experience on ICT tool

| <i>No.</i> | <i>Question</i> |
|------------|---|
| 1 | The layout of the website is clear and easy to use. |
| 2 | There are different voices for you to choose. |
| 3 | You can adjust the voice speed and accent to practice listening upon your level. |
| 4 | When you speak, it can well recognize your voice and let you know where you are right or wrong. |
| 5 | The listening function is good, and it has a clear and standard voice. |
| 6 | You want to practice English on this website. |
| 7 | You really enjoy this tool to improve English skills. |

The questionnaire is designed with a total of 7 statements relating to the usefulness of the website. It asks about the layout, the functions the website has and students' feeling. The students are required to answer by clicking their choices, measured by 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly disagree). It is delivered to students in the Vietnamese language in order not to make them confused.

The authors use the Google Form to create an online survey. Its link

will be sent directly to each student. The students are required to answer by clicking their choices. One advantage of the survey online is that when students miss some answers, they cannot submit the questionnaire. Therefore, they must complete all of the question items. Another advantage is that students like being online with a computer. They prefer doing it online to marking answers in the survey paper. The data is collected and updated automatically by a database worksheet in this application. For each question, the frequency of the options is counted to draw some conclusions necessary for further discussion. Students' answers will be collected and analysed.

IMPLEMENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Software description

Based on the proposed model, the supportive tool needs to have two main functions: allowing students to practice listening and speaking skills. For the first feature, the program should allow users to input any English text by typing or cutting and pasting content from any websites, eBooks or get news feed from popular sources, such as VOA, BBC or student specific study domain. With the given text, the tool should allow users to select which and where to read; allow to repeat any part, change the speed and voice as well, like male or female voices. After listening to the voice, students move to practice speaking by using the next feature of the software. Based on the same given text, the user can speak word by word and software can show how correct the speaking is. The tool can track which sentence is the current speaking, which word is pronounced correctly, and which one is not. Based on the real-time feedback, user can pronounce again the wrong speaking words or can listen again. Based on this, users themselves can check and correct easily from the dictionary.

Regarding the scenario above, the key features are speech recognition and speak synthesis. Fortunately, these technologies nowadays are mature and popular enough for authors to apply to the tool easily. We use API from Google, one of the biggest companies about that area. Besides, we also have other services provided by Microsoft or Amazon... That means we have enough alternatives if we want to switch the provider.

Software Implementation

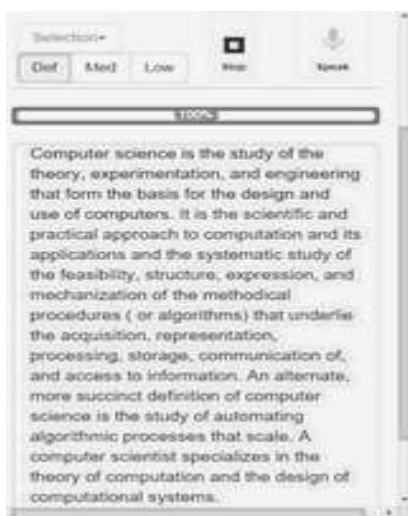


Fig. 6. Demo screen for practicing Listening.

Regarding the feature supporting practicing Listening, users can cut and paste any text into the textbox. The system can analyse and split the whole text into sentences. Then system will read aloud sentence by sentence (see Fig. 6). The current sentence will be highlighted for easy focusing. Besides, users can adjust the speed by 3 levels and select among 5 voices (UK, US, Male, and Female).



Fig. 7. Demo screen for practicing Speaking.

Similarly, users can practice Speaking on the same given text input in advance. They need to select which sentences to start then system will record and recognize the speech. Based on the recognized words, the system will match with the text and show which words are not matched as shown in Fig. 7. The mismatched words mean that the users speak in the wrong way that the system cannot detect correctly. Finally, the system highlights all mismatch words for users to focus and self-practice more. The number of correct words over the total number of words will show the result of practicing.

Data Analysis and Results

We have conducted the first survey – with questions shown in section III.C – on 21 students using this website and get some positive feedback as the data shown in Table 3. They are all students from the Information Technology Department.

Table 3. Results from the survey on IT students.

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Question 1 | 5% | 16% | 4% | 43% | 32% |
| Question 2 | 13% | 34% | 23% | 10% | 20% |
| Question 3 | 5% | 10% | 12% | 40% | 33% |
| Question 4 | 8% | 15% | 5% | 32% | 40% |
| Question 5 | 0 % | 4% | 15% | 33% | 48% |
| Question 6 | 2 % | 12% | 20% | 30% | 36% |
| Question 7 | 0% | 20% | 10% | 40% | 30% |

With the question "The layout of the website is clear and easy to use", 75% of students agree with this idea. They just need to go to the website link, type or copy a text, then press Play, they can hear the sound quickly. Some students with "Disagree" answer (about 21%) think it is more convenient to have its better version available on the phone. Currently, the sound on the phone is not as good as the computer.

Question 2 "There are 47% of students (Strongly Disagree and Disagree) claim that only 5 voice choices are available to them. The website should add a number of other voices from other English-speaking countries to give them more practice.

The remaining questions receive a very high rate with "Agree and Strongly Agree", always over 60%. However, there are some issues that need to pay attention to make the website better. For example, question number 4, "When you speak, it can well recognize your voice and let you know where you are right or wrong.", 23% of students disagree. When asked about the reason, they say that the good recognition of voice depends much on the internet connection. Question 7: "You really enjoy this tool to improve English skills", up to 70% of students think this tool is useful for their practice after school. Nonetheless, there is also 20% of disagreement, they suggest that if this website can become a phone application. It will be more convenient to use because some students do not have laptops or personal computers. Initial survey results bring very positive results and positive feedback. All things considered, based on student comments, the website should be further improved for more effective use.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we introduce our current work on proposing a model for teaching English for non-major students to be more efficient, especially on improving Listening and Speaking skills. By applying our proposed model, teachers (usually in universities) can monitor the learning progress of each student more easily and more efficiently. And students have new tools and environment to self-practice their Listening and Speaking skills which will help them a lot in their future career. Data collected from the survey shows that teachers and students have positive feedback on the model and the tool as well. They also show their willingness to apply in future learning. We will make great efforts to introduce phone application and apply in large teaching classes.

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Appendix

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY PAPER

Circle the correct numeric response to each question:

1 = Strongly Disagree.

2= Disagree.

3= Neutral.

4= Agree.

5= Strongly Agree

| No | Statement | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The layout of the website is clear and easy to use. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | There are different voices for you to choose. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | You can adjust the voice speed and accent to practice listening upon your level. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | When you speak, it can well recognize your voice and let you know where you are right or wrong. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | The listening function is good, and it has a clear and standard voice. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | You want to practice English with this website. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | You really enjoy this tool to improve English skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Any other comments:

.....

APPENDIX 2: The result of the survey (Numbers of students)

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Question 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 7 |
| Question 2 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Question 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 7 |
| Question 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| Question 5 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 10 |
| Question 6 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 8 |
| Question 7 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 6 |

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SPEAKING INSTRUCTION – READING INSTRUCTION – LEARNER STRATEGIES

AN ANALYSIS OF AN AUTHENTIC CASUAL CONVERSATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN TEACHING SPEAKING SKILL

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ABSTRACT

Both written and spoken language can be used to represent the same experience, however, the way they encode meaning are quite different. It is revealed from the 'spoken-written language continuum' introduced by Gerot and Wignell (1994, p. 161) that some spoken genres which are at or near the most-spoken extreme have more typical characteristics of a spoken text than those which are closer to the most-written extreme. Casual conversation - according to Burns, Joyce and Gollin (1996) - is at the most-spoken end of the spoken-written language continuum; therefore, analyzing it would benefit teaching typical characteristics of spoken language. This paper will present an analysis of an authentic casual conversation based on the background theory about characteristic features of spoken texts and afterwards discuss how to apply the results of the analysis to the teaching and learning of speaking skill in the English language classroom.

Keywords: *characteristic features of spoken language, casual conversation, teaching speaking skill*

INTRODUCTION

A variety of complicated approaches have been introduced and employed in analysing conversations such as sociological, philosophical, linguistic and critical semiotic approaches in an attempt to interpret the nature of spoken discourse (Eggin and Slade, 1997). Although the approaches present various perspectives from which an authentic casual conversation can be analysed in detail, it seems to be too challenging for many teachers to apply the approaches in their

language classrooms. Therefore, in this paper, a more practical way will be adopted in analysing a real daily conversation in terms of grammatical and lexical features, based on the theory about characteristic features of spoken texts presented by Burns, Joyce and Gollin (1996) and Cornbleet and Carter (2001).

The authentic casual conversation to be analysed in this paper is taken from 'Teaching casual conversation: topics, strategies and interactional skills' by Diana Slade and Lloyd Norris (1986). In the introduction of the book, it is confirmed that the book is a set of classroom materials based on collecting authentic samples of a casual conversation between fluent or native speakers of English. The selected conversation to be analyzed is marked '*Authentic Transcript*' in the book; therefore, its authenticity is firmly ensured.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Spoken language in everyday conversation is much more dependent on its context than written language since it is a kind of language in action (Gerot and Wignell, 1994). The contextual dependency of spoken language is closely related to four factors: the 'real-time', the 'face-to-face', the 'interactional', and the 'process' natures of spoken language (Burns, Joyce and Gollin, 1996; Cornbleet and Carter, 2001). Influence of the four factors causes grammatical complexity in spoken language which is clearly illustrated in the massive use of incomplete utterances, ellipses, false starts, overlaps, etc., and also causes lexical sparsity in spoken texts.

The real-time nature of spoken texts and its influence on spoken language

Everyday conversation occurs in real time; therefore, interlocutors have to think fast under time pressure, producing spontaneous, unplanned and unrehearsed language which reflects this (Cornbleet and Carter, 2001). In casual conversations, the spontaneous, unplanned and unrehearsed features of spoken language are clearly demonstrated in speakers' uses of hesitations, false starts, repetitions and redundancy. Moreover, due to the time pressure of real-time conversations, ellipses, substitutions, contractions, elisions are normally made in spoken language to cut down on language. In spoken

language, word order normally follows simple conventional patterns: Subject Verb Object (SVO); speakers do not have time to construct complex structures in real-time conversation (Cornbleet and Carter, 2001). In addition, spoken language is also marked by the use of simple general words and vague language. Normally, the core vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon origins predominates in spoken language rather than complex vocabulary having French or Latin origin (Cornbleet and Carter, 2001). Also, vague language (i.e. general words rather than specific or highly technical words) which downplays precision and refers to objects and events in general terms are preferred in spoken texts (Cornbleet and Carter, 2001). Furthermore, broken, incomplete, fragmented utterances in spoken language are linked together by simple co-ordinations such as 'but', 'and', 'because' and 'so'.

The face-to-face nature of spoken texts and its influence on spoken language

Besides, most conversations are conducted face-to-face. Face-to-face conversation enables interlocutors to convey meaning through paralinguistic features such as body language (e.g. eye contact, gestures), prosodic features, and even silence or laughter (Cornbleet and Carter, 2001; Georgakopoulou and Goutsos, 1997; Paltridge, 2001; Pridham, 2001). As the selected conversation for analysis is just recorded audibly, all of the clues of body language cannot be retrieved; therefore, only some paralinguistic features of the spoken text such as prosodic features (including variations in speed, intonation, prominence and key), and laughter will be analyzed. Besides, face-to-face conversation enables speakers to make a great number of references which might cause big difficulty in comprehension (Pridham, 2001). In face-to-face conversation, speakers share knowledge of the context in which the language is being used (Burns, Joyce and Gollin, 1996). Therefore, interactants can make constant reference to locations and processes around them, and all of them can perceive what is being referred to (Burns, Joyce and Gollin, 1996; Cornbleet and Carter, 2001).

The interactive nature of spoken texts and its influence on spoken language

The interactive nature of spoken language in everyday conversation

leads to overlappings and interruptions rather than distinct turns in spoken texts; and the very overlappings and interruptions - in turn - partly result in incomplete utterances in spoken language. (Burns, Joyce and Gollin, 1996). In spoken texts, speakers frequently interrupt and overlap each other. Besides, the interactive nature of conversational speech also results in the use of back-channeling in spoken language (Cornbleet and Carter, 2001). The most frequently-used back-channel signs in English are 'yeah', 'right', 'ok', 'mm'. Back channeling helps speakers show reinforcement and encouragement to each other, indicating that they are paying attention, or they agree with their interlocutors (Cornbleet and Carter, 2001). Normally, back-channel signs slide into the conversation smoothly without any interruption; therefore, they tend to overlap other turns (Cornbleet and Carter, 2001).

The process nature of spoken texts and its influence on spoken language

Another characteristic nature of spoken language is that the language '... represents phenomena as processes' rather than products (Halliday, 1985, p. 81). Halliday (1985) explains that while a product is referred to a noun, a process (i.e. something is happening) is referred to a clause. Moreover, the process form of expression may need more than one clause to convey the meaning of its equivalent 'product' form (Halliday, 1985). For example, the noun phrase 'slippery ice-covered ground' used in written language can be transferred to clauses - 'the ground is covered with ice and it is very slippery' - in spoken language. Remarkably, these clauses are strung together in meaningful ways which lead to the notion of 'clause complex' (Halliday, 1985). In short, spoken language - by its nature i.e. representing phenomena as processes - is constructed by numerous samples of clause complex rather than long complex sentences with embedded clauses.

Lexical sparsity in spoken language

The dynamic nature and context dependency of spoken language results in the less use of content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs; and the more use of grammatical words such as prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, pronouns and articles (Burns, Joyce and Gollin, 1996; Gerot and Wignell, 1994).

Halliday (1985) has the same opinion when stating that spoken language tends to be less lexically dense than written language and use more grammar words and more verbs phrases than noun phrases.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The analysis of the selected authentic casual conversation is conducted in answer to the two following questions:

- 1 To what extent does the language in the analysed authentic casual conversation contain most of the characteristic features of spoken texts as discussed in the theory?*
- 2 What teaching implications can be drawn from the results of this analysis in order to improve the speaking skill among English language learners?*

Analysis of the selected authentic casual conversation based on the background theory about characteristic features of spoken texts

The analysed conversation contains almost all of the characteristic features of spoken English mentioned in the theory, which is clearly illustrated by the following analysis results.

Hesitations

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Clause (22) | ah Monty Python |
| Clause (32) | but um : even that |
| Clause (33) | they put second rel : late release : like really low : sort of movies on |
| Clause (70) | did you see the : er : Dinosaur |
| Clause (114) | and ah – I’d just bought this new outfit |

Clauses in the table above reveal that the interlocutors make a lot of hesitations through using pauses and fillers such as ‘um’, er’, ‘ah’ to take time for thinking and to hold their floor. In the conversation, the fillers add little or no meaning to their utterances; the main purpose of using the fillers is to fill gaps in their speech.

False starts

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Clause (33) | they put second rel : late release: like really low: sort of movies on |
| Clause (61) | and Jo : it took Joanne an hour: to stop crying |
| Clause (75) | and that wasn't that great? |

The speakers make false starts when they say something and then change their mind midway. In fact, their speech will be reformulated right after false starts. Underlined words in clauses (33), (61) and (75) reveal that false start is a typical feature of spoken language.

Repetitions, redundancy

| Group A | |
|--------------|--|
| Clause (2) | boy I love that : that State Theatre |
| Clause (69) | they they overdid it |
| Clause (81) | see I : I quite liked : the the Hoyts Entertainment Centre |
| Clause (107) | but if : if I go to the State |

| Group B | |
|-------------------|--|
| Clause (7) | I love it my favourite |
| Clause (18) | I've always loved it |
| Clause (14) | oh no no : no |
| Clauses (44)&(45) | so the kids yapped //and yapped |
| Clause (52) | for the entire movie they were rapt // |
| Clause (56) | these kids were rapt |
| Clauses (84)&(85) | it was quite nice when it first opened |
| Clauses (98)&(99) | but when it first opened it was qui' nice |

There are two different uses of repetition and redundancy in the conversation. The first use demonstrates hesitation like in the examples in group A. The second is to place emphasis on something like in examples in group B. Take the samples of clauses (7) and (18)

for instance, speaker B said she loves the State Theatre and afterwards she asserts she has always loved it. This redundancy is to emphasize the fact that she really loves the theatre.

Ellipses

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Clause (16) | nothing beats the State really |
| Clause (72) | movie on before it? |
| Clause (22) | ah Monty Python |
| Clause (46) | all thousands of them |
| Clause (38) | and when I took the kids |
| Clause (62) | after we'd walked out |
| Clause (68) | and really sad in parts |
| Clause (124) | and pull the whole lot down |
| Clause (63) | because it was sad |

In clause (16), speaker A omits the noun 'theatre' after 'the State' since all speakers – in the context - can retrieve the meaning of 'the State' as a theatre from prior speech, not as a country for example. Similarly, elliptical clause (72) can be perceived as a full clause 'did you see the: er: Dinosaur movie on before it?' because speaker D continues finishing her previous clause after being interrupted by speaker A. Clearly. Clauses (22) and (46) are elliptical ones; only the subjects of the clauses are retained. Elliptical clause (22) can be retrieved as 'ah Monty Python is on there'; and clause (46) can be retrieved as 'all thousands of them yapped and yapped'. Meanwhile, adverbials of place are omitted in elliptical clauses (38) and (62). Clause (38) can be retrieved as 'and when I took the kids to the State Theatre'; and clause (62) as 'after we'd walked out of the theatre'. Similarly, the subjects of elliptical clauses (68) and (124) are dropped. Retrieving meaning from prior related clauses, listeners can perceive clause (68) as 'and it was really sad in parts'; and clause (124) as 'and I had to pull the whole lot down'. Sometimes, a main clause can be omitted like in the case of elliptical clause (63), the interlocutors can retrieve the meaning of clause (63) as 'it took Joanne an hour to stop crying because it was sad'.

Substitutions

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Clause (12) | been to the one in Wollongong |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|

We can understand from the context of the conversation that speaker D uses ‘one’ as a substitution for ‘theatre’. In this case, ‘one’ substitutes a noun. However, there are more ways of making a substitution. In the speech, ‘so’ can substitute a clause (e.g. ‘I think so’) and ‘do’ can substitute a verb phrase (e.g. ‘I’ll do’ which means ‘I’ll post the letter for you’).

Contractions

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Clause (8) | I’ve never been there |
| Clause (29) | but they’ve got a little theatre downstairs as well |
| Clause (48) | and then honestly you could’ve heard a pin drop |
| Clause (89) | now you’ve got all these young teenagers |
| Clause (11) | it’s got chandeliers and things |
| Clause (9) | it’s beautiful |
| Clause (86) | they’re good pinball machines |
| Clause (41) | it’s going to be so noisy |
| Clause (27) | I’d like to see |
| Clause (62) | after we’d walked out |
| Clause (114) | I’d just bought this new outfit |
| Clause (42) | I won’t even be able to hear |
| Clause (64) | I didn’t want to see it at all |
| Clause (109) | you can’t outdo the place |

Auxiliary ‘have’ in clauses (8), (29), (48), (89) are not pronounced fully, instead it is contracted to ‘ve. Similarly, auxiliary ‘has’ in clause (11) is contracted to ‘s. However, ‘s in clause (9) is the contracted form of ‘is’, not of ‘has’. ‘To be’ is normally not pronounced fully no matter whether it functions as an auxiliary (like in clause (41)) or a main verb (like in clauses (9) and (86)). Also, ‘d can be the contracted form of ‘would’ (like in clause (27)) or of auxiliary ‘had’ (like in clauses (62) and (114)). Generally, ‘not’ is not pronounced fully in conversations, rather

it is contracted and attached to auxiliary verbs like in clauses (42), (64) and (109). These are only some among numerous examples of contractions in the conversation.

Elisions

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Clause (1) | well I got the pictures tomorrow night |
| Clause (12) | been to the one in Wollongong |
| Clause (77) | all been changed |

Elision is the result of omitting particular sounds in connected speech (Harmer, 2001). Speaker A – in clause (1) – omits the sound of ‘ve, therefore, he says *I got* instead of *I’ve got*. Similarly, in clause (12) *I’ve* is not pronounced, as a result, speaker D says *been to the one in Wollongong* instead of the full form *I’ve been to the one in Wollongong*. Meanwhile, speaker C says *all been changed* instead of *all has been changed*, omitting *has* when she speaks fast. There are still more examples of elision in the language used by the speakers, which confirms that elision is a usual feature of daily conversations.

Simple conventional patterns: Subject Verb Object

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Clause (7) | I love it my favourite |
| Clause (11) | it’s got chandeliers and things |
| Clause (16) | nothing beats the State really |
| Clause (114) | I’d just bought this new outfit |
| Clause (120) | and then it had a black sash |
| Clause (121) | and I didn’t think anything of it |

All clauses in the table above have the pattern SVO and more examples of SVO structure can be easily found in the conversation. Generally, SVO and other simple patterns such as Subject-Verb or Subject-Verb-Complement predominate in the spoken language rather than complex structures.

Simple general words and vague language

| | |
|-------|---|
| (11) | it's got chandeliers and things |
| (25) | they never put things |
| (26) | if they put something on |
| (108) | I usually put on something a little bit better |

Rather than saying *beautiful decorations*, speaker B use *things* to convey her meaning in clause (11). Similarly, *things* exactly mean *films* in clause (25). Apparently, word *things* are widely used and have different meanings in different contexts. *Something* is another example of a vague language which is frequently spoken to refer to different objects or events. For example, in clause (26) *something* means *films* whereas in clause (108) it means *clothes*. In short, the lexis of everyday speech tends to be simple, general and vague.

Simple co-ordinations

| | |
|-------|---|
| (29) | but they've got a little theatre downstairs as well |
| (98) | but when it first opened |
| (107) | but if: if I go to the State |
| (48) | and then honestly you could've heard a pin drop |
| (118) | and then it was an overlay: with splits right up to here |
| (119) | and that was in silk |
| (120) | and then it had a black sash |
| (121) | and I didn't think anything of it |
| (63) | because it was sad |
| (125) | so I missed half of the film! |

All the clauses in the table above are connected to other clauses by simple conjunctions such as 'but', 'and', 'because', 'so'. In spoken English, speakers tend to use such simple conjunctive adjuncts to connect their utterances.

Speed

In the conversation, the interlocutors speak quite fast since they are participating in a casual conversation where topics of their talking are constantly changed, and informal language is used for chatting in order to reinforce the relationship.

Intonation

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rising/open tone for seeking confirmation in clause (3) - Falling/closed tone for providing confirmation in clauses (4), (5) and (6) | B oh isn't it beautiful?(3)// A yeah(4)// C yeah(5)// A yeah(6)// |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rising/open tone for background information in clause (107) - Falling/closed tone for closure in clause (108) | A but if: if I go to the State(107)// I usually put on something a little bit better(108)// |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rising/open tone for indicating incompleteness and for retaining the floor in clauses (118), (119), (120), and (121) - Falling/closed tone for closure in clause (122) | D and then it was an overlay: with splits right up to here(118)// – and that was in silk (119)// and then it had a black sash(120)// - and I didn't think anything of it(121)// till I had to go to the toilet(122)// |

In clause (3), speaker B raises her tone to seek agreement from her interlocutors, whereas the pitch level of clauses (4), (5) and (6) drops to indicate that speaker A and C express agreement with speaker B. In clause (107), speaker A raises his tone to indicate that the main information he wants to communicate will follow immediately, whereas his pitch drops with a falling tone in clause (108) to imply that he is finishing his utterance. Speaker D uses rising/open tone in clauses (118), (119), (120), and (121) to indicate that she has not finished describing the outfit and she wants to tell more about it. She lowers her pitch with a falling tone only at the end of clause (122) for a closure.

Prominence

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Clause (40) | : ooh there's thousands of kids here |
| Clauses (44) and (45) | so the kids yapped // and yapped |
| Clause (48) | and then honestly you could've heard a pin drop |
| Clause (54) | it was great |
| Clause (56) | these kids were rapt |
| Clauses (123) and (124) | I had to take the whole lot off// and pull the whole lot down |

According to McCarthy (1991), prominence is different from word stress. The author argues that word stress is produced in isolate pronunciation; meanwhile, prominence is the choice of the speaker to make particular words salient in their on-going speech. All of the bold words in the clauses in the table above are given prominence for emphasis. For example, Speaker C places the prominence on **'thousands'** in clause (40) to imply that there were a great number of kids in the cinema.

Key system in English

| | |
|--|---|
| High key for opening a new topic | D what's on there?(21)// |
| high key for indicating contrast | C oh no(13)// A oh no no: no(14)// look(15)// nothing beats the State really(16)// |
| Low key for closing a topic in clause (80) | D it was sort of animation(78)// done in plasticine(79)// it was very well done(80) |
| Low key for reiteration in clause (101) | B but when it first opened(98)// it was qui' nice(99)// you know nice place(101)// |
| Mid key for adding more information | D I remember once(112)// : I went to a film(113)// and ah - I'd just bought this new outfit(114)// - and it was long silky black pants(115)// that came up all in one(116)// |

Speaker D in clause (21) wants to shift the topic, therefore she raises her pitch significantly, using a high key to open a new topic. Meanwhile, speakers C and A in clauses (13), (14), (15) and (16) produce the high key, raising their pitch in order to express disagreement with speaker D's clause (12). To imply she is going to close the topic about the Dinosaur movie, speaker D's pitch drops to a low key in clause (80). Meanwhile, speaker B in clause (101) uses a low key to signal that she is saying the same thing as what she has already

said in clause (99) before. All clauses (112), (113), (114), (115) and (116) are spoken with a mid-key since speaker D has not finished her speech and she is going to tell more about the outfit.

Laughter

Shared laughter takes place frequently during the conversation and it reinforces relationships between interlocutors.

References

| | |
|--|---|
| 'it' in clauses (54), (55) refers to the film E.T. | it was great(54)// I bawled my eyes out in it(55)// |
| 'it' in clauses (78), (80) refers to the Dinosaur movie. | it was sort of animation(78)// it was very well done(80)// |

Reference to shared knowledge of the context in which the language is being used

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Clause (2) | boy I love that : that State Theatre |
| Clause (81) | see I : I quite liked : the the Hoyts Entertainment Centre |
| Clause (118) | and then it was an overlay: with splits right up to here |

Being habitants in Sydney, all the interactants know where the State Theatre or the Hoyts Entertainment Centre is. Therefore, the speakers use the definite article 'the' before 'State Theatre', and 'Hoyts Entertainment Centre', assuming that the others can identify which places they are referring to. More interestingly, only the participants at presence can understand what speaker D means by saying 'up to here' in clause (118). The speaker may demonstrate some gesture to describe the outfit while she is saying; therefore, other interlocutors can draw in their mind what the outfit looks like fairly exactly.

Overlappings

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Overlapping 1 | A yeah(4)// C yeah(5)// A yeah(6)// |
| Overlapping 2 | C oh it's beautiful(9)// B oh it's beautiful(10)// it's got chandeliers and things(11)// |
| Overlapping 3 | C this has been restored (19)// and everything (20)// D what's on there?(21)// |
| Overlappings 4 and 5 | B yeah but that's not as nice as the actual theatre(30)// A no no no(31)// but um : even that(32)// they put second rel : late release : like really low : sort of movies on(33)// B yeah(34)// |

Interruptions

D did you see the : er : Dinosaur(70)//
A but they do that(71)//
D movie on before it?(72)//

Being interrupted by speaker A, speaker D pauses for a while and then continue finishing her utterance.

Incomplete utterances

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Clause (20) | and everything |
| Clause (25) | they never put things (laughter) |
| Clause (35) | but oh well : Saturday night Monty Python |
| Clause (50) | : because they all |
| Clause (70) | did you see the : er : Dinosaur |
| Clause (91) | and its |

The speakers produce incomplete utterances mostly because they are interrupted (in case of clauses (20), (50), (70)), or they run out of breath (in case of clauses (35), (91)), or they think they do not need to complete a particular clause since all other people can guess what they are going to say (in case of clause (25)).

Back-channeling

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Example 1 | B oh isn't it beautiful?(3)// A yeah (4)// C yeah (5)// A yeah (6)// |
| Example 2 | B the whole place is just full of them now(93)// and you can't even(94)// C mm (95)// B walk through(94")// you got kids everywhere(96)// C mm (97)// B but when it first opened(98)// it was qui' nice(99)// C yeah (100)// |

In example 1, speakers A and C only use the minor clause 'yeah' as a back-channel sign to show that they agree with speaker B's opinion about the beauty of the State Theatre. Similarly, speaker C, in example 2, uses minor clauses 'mm' and 'yeah' to indicate that she is in agreement with speaker B without interrupting speaker B's speech.

Clause complex

Below is a clause complex of 13 clauses taken from the conversation, and these clauses present quite complex logical relations among them.

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Clause (36) | well I went |
| Clause (37) | and saw E.T. at the State Theatre |
| Clause (38) | and when I took the kids |
| Clause (39) | I thought |
| Clause (40) | ooh there's thousands of kids here |
| Clause (41) | it's going to be so noisy |
| Clause (42) | I won't even be able to hear |
| Clause (43) | what the movie's about |
| Clause (44) | so the kids yapped |
| Clause (45) | and yapped |
| Clause (46) | all thousands of them |
| Clause (47) | until E.T. started |
| Clause (48) | and then honestly you could've heard a pin drop |

The speaker uses this clause complex to tell her experience of going to the cinema to see the film E.T. Although her speech can hardly be divided into neat sentences, it is easy to understand her story because the clauses in the clause complex are logically related to each other.

Lexical sparsity in spoken language

All of the content words or lexical items in the extract will be bold for highlighting.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Clause (1) | well I got the pictures tomorrow night |
| Clause (2) | boy I love that : that State Theatre |
| Clause (3) | oh isn't it beautiful ? |
| Clause (4) | yeah |
| Clause (5) | yeah |
| Clause (6) | yeah |
| Clause (7) | I love it my favourite |
| Clause (8) | I've never been there |
| Clause (9) | oh it's beautiful |
| Clause (10) | oh it's beautiful |
| Clause (11) | it's got chandeliers and things |
| Clause (12) | been to the one in Wollongong |
| Clause (13) | oh no |
| Clause (14) | oh no no: no |
| Clause (15) | look |
| Clause (16) | nothing beats the State really |
| Clause (17) | it's beautiful |
| Clause (18) | I've always loved it |
| Clause (19) | this has been restored |
| Clause (20) | and everything |

There are 30 content words all together in the clause complex of 20 clauses. The number of lexical items in the text (30) divided by the number of clauses (20) gives us a lexical density of 1.5. This ratio is corresponding to the finding of Halliday (1985) that '... a typical average lexical density for spoken English is between 1.5 and 2' (p. 80).

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING SPOKEN ENGLISH

The most prominent feature of spoken English in the analysed casual conversation is that speakers use a lot of back-channeling to indicate agreement. Back-channeling is usually produced in the form of minor clauses such as 'yeah', 'mm', 'ok', 'right', 'exactly'. Therefore, teachers should help students to use the back-channel signs effectively when students need to express agreement and encouragement to their interlocutors. Although the back-channel signs seem to have no or little meaning, they play an important role in spoken language and their absence in any daily conversation can lead to a communication failure. When participating in casual conversations in English, English language learners should not present a total silence when they are listening to others; instead, they should produce back-channel signs to indicate that they are paying attention. This learning situation can serve as an enjoyable condition for learning other expressions showing agreement or disagreement (e.g. *I don't think so, In my opinion..., I see what you mean but..., I couldn't agree with you more, etc.*). However, teachers should not teach the expressions in isolation, instead, they should help to create contexts in which the expressions are used properly.

As spoken English tends to be simple in terms of vocabulary and follows simple conventional patterns such as SVO, SV, SVC, teachers should encourage students to speak simply, and at the same time still effectively. Often, learners are afraid of speaking since they think they do not have enough vocabulary and grammatical structures to encode their meaning. Most students learning English as a foreign language have a misconception that effective speaking requires using sophisticated language. Therefore, analyzing authentic casual conversations will show learners that they do not need to search for complex words or complicated structures in vain when they speak in English. Their speech should keep to simple language and, at the same time, can be effective.

Results from the analysis of the conversation above reveal that English speakers do not normally speak in full sentences; rather, they speak in broken, incomplete utterances and they link these fragmented segments by using simple co-ordinations such as 'but', 'and', 'because' 'so', producing many examples of clause complex. This reality does not

encourage learners to learn incorrect sentences or imitate any broken utterance. Instead, teachers should help students to realize that hesitation, false start, repetition, incomplete clauses, interruption, overlapping, etc. are the characteristic features of any spontaneous unplanned spoken text. Acknowledging reality can help English language learners speak in English more naturally without fearing that they are producing a bad language.

Moreover, learners need to learn how to cut down on language when speaking in English by using ellipsis, substitution, contraction and even elision. Sometimes, teachers and learners in a foreign language context have a tendency to use the full form of language simply because they place too much emphasis on grammatical accuracy. Consequently, they feel like using the full form, which makes their speech unlikely or odd to most of the native speakers. Therefore, teachers should provide learners with useful grammatical structures for producing ellipsis and substitution; besides, learners need to practice using more contractions in speaking English.

As the analysed conversation is just recorded audibly, none of the clues of body language can be retrieved and this causes limitation to the study results. Paralinguistic features should be paid enough attention to in language classrooms so that learners can use the body language, the prosodic features and other tools than the language itself to convey their meaning and emotion successfully.

CONCLUSION

Spoken language in everyday conversations tends to be grammatically intricate with the presence of a lot of hesitation, false start, repetition, incomplete clauses, interruption, overlapping, ellipsis, substitutions, back-channeling, variations in intonation or key, etc. The grammatical complexity of spoken language results from the four factors: the real-time, the face-to-face, the interactional, and the process natures of spoken language. In spoken language, the meaning is expressed through a number of clause complex rather than in neat complete sentences. The lexical density per clause complex tends to be low but the number of clauses per clause complex is normally high. Therefore, spoken language, in general, illustrates a lower lexical density than written language. All of the typical characteristics of spoken English

should be taken into account in any English language classroom so that learners realize and learn how to speak English naturally and appropriately in particular contexts.

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EXPLORING TEACHER VERBAL FEEDBACK ON POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN PRESENTATIONS IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore teacher verbal feedback content on postgraduate students' presentation performance in English. The participants were a Thai teacher, a Thai student, and two foreign students. The study drew on an observation with audio recording and taking notes focusing on the students' presentations and the teacher's verbal feedback content for the presentations. Moreover, the teacher was interviewed about linkages between verbal feedback content and each student's presentation performance. For analyzing the data, the audio-taped data from the observation and the interview were transcribed and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative approach addressed frequencies and percentages of the teacher's verbal feedback content based on eight presentation factors (content, structure, grammar, coherence, vocabulary, speaking skills, involving the audience (including visual aids), and self-presentation). Based on the quantitative data, a qualitative analysis of the transcripts was made to describe several occurrences of the teacher's verbal feedback content and consider differences or similarities of the content for each student's presentation performance. The findings may help teachers to reflect on their verbal feedback content for various students' presentation performance. They also help students with similar presentation performance to the students in this study to improve their performance by applying suitable teacher verbal feedback content for their presentations.

Keywords: *presentation factors, presenters' performance, teacher verbal feedback, higher education language.*

INTRODUCTION

Today Thailand needs citizens or students to be aware of the changes and equip themselves with well-developed 21st-century skills including skills, abilities, and learning dispositions that have been required for them to prepare for success in a constantly changing digital society, such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. This makes the education system evolve to produce graduates with the skills required in the current era. Consequently, students who are competent communicators can have great opportunities for success in the 21st century. Teaching and learning English, which have been playing an important role in education and in career paths, quickly adapt in a way that can foster the skills for learning and working in this age which is widely referred to as the 21st century skills. At the workplace they have to do various essential communication work, such as presenting project proposals, selling products and conducting professional seminars and meetings. For doing these tasks, they need to deliver an effective presentation. If students are able to offer a good presentation, this also can improve their confidence, increase their further study choices, and help them exchange what they have known with others. This is in accordance with Živković (2014) who believes that “learning presentation skill makes learners participate fully in their learning, demonstrate their ability to communicate and help them develop competencies in ways that can be beneficial for their future working places” (pp. 468-469). The most common problems when giving presentations are “weak structure, poor timing, unsuitable language, monotonous delivery, over-detailed visual materials, over-use of PowerPoint, undue reading from a script, unhelpful gestures” (GlobalPAD Open House, 2017, “presentations”, para. 4). In his study, Leichsenring (2010) reported that first year Japanese EFL undergraduate students thought that giving a presentation in English was difficult. They had problems with planning and preparing and worried about remembering presentation content. Ličen and Bogdanović (2017) mentioned that when students give a presentation, they normally do not give enough introduction and conclusion and do not use visual aids successfully. According to Simona (2015), language competence and communicative competence are to be developed in time based on a lot of preparation, practice and

feedback. For higher education, evaluating its learning outcomes has increased. Consequently, assessment has adopted a more important role in curriculum design and development including in instructional practices. Based on formative assessment, feedback is known as a powerful pedagogical tool supporting student engagement and deep learning. Noor, Aman, Mustaffa, and Seong (2010) stated that “feedback should be seen as a constructive approach on improving students’ performance” (p. 399). Similarly, Molloy and Boud (2013) noted that “feedback is seen as a key process in learning, providing information on actual performance in relation to the goal of performance” (p. 2). To have a better grasp of how feedback functions in practices, it is useful to explore the content of teacher verbal feedback on individual student’s presentation performance. This paper will explore the extent of the role of the teacher in enhancing students’ performance in presentations in English by providing appropriate verbal feedback content related to each student’s presentation performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance in presentation

Since delivering an academic, technical or business presentation is one of the keys to a successful career, improving performance in a presentation is important. Despite the variety of issues for effective presentations, there are certain elements that seem to be key to any account of a great presenter, such as good communication skills, planning, preparation, organization, and respect for the audience. Supartono (2017) suggested “presentation should incorporate four basic elements: state ideas clearly, explain ideas, support ideas with evidence from other sources, conclude/ restate ideas” (p. 18). Simona (2015) conducted a research on developing an English language course to improve presentation skills for engineering students. The results of her study showed that “students require language competence, very good communication and behavioral skills, self-confidence, respect and one’s motivation to work hard in order to accomplish one’s objectives” (p. 74). As shown on its web page, Stinson, a presentation design company, in order to make a presentation attractive it is a presenter’s responsibility. Stinson (2016) posted five basic attributes of a great

presenter who is proficient in presentations and knows how to communicate to audiences (Stinson, 2016, “5 characteristics of a great presenter”, para. 2) as follows:

- 1) Knowledge: Giving a presentation on something implies that you are the expert on the topic, so it is important that you know more than your audience does.
- 2) Confidence: A confident presenter commands attention and inspires action.
- 3) Self-awareness: People will tell you to be witty, be charming, be funny and be energetic. These are all great qualities to have as a presenter but what is most important is you are these things within your own ability.
- 4) Passionate: If your subject matter is something that you truly care about, turn this energy into excitement and use it to get your audience excited too.
- 5) Memorable: The presenter had a heartfelt story and you walked away feeling inspired.

According to Ličen and Bogdanović (2017), there are eight significant presentation factors designed to help both presentation training and assessment processes as follows:

- 1) Content: focusing on a single topic without digressing to other subjects/topic.
- 2) Structure: the basic introduction-body-conclusion organizational pattern.
- 3) Grammar: the use of grammatically correct sentences.
- 4) Coherence: a well-ordered and logical flow of ideas presented, as well as the need for the repetition, re-wording and summarization in individual organization units.
- 5) Vocabulary: selecting the most appropriate words in order to convey precise meanings, as well as in using a wider range of words and expressions to make the speech more vivid and effective.

- 6) Speaking skills: the voice/speech traits such as volume, intonation, fluency, expression.
- 7) Involving the audience: presenters should be encouraged to raise interest by offering examples, anecdotes, impressive statistics, interesting quotations, and the use of visual aids.
- 8) Self-presentation: several different presentation skills and aspects. First of all, there is the body language, gestures and eye contact.

Feedback

According to Molly and Boud (2013), feedback is seen as “a key process in learning, providing information on actual performance in relation to the goal of performance” (p. 2). It refers to “information describing students’ performance in a given activity that is intended to guide their future performance in that same or related activity” (Aggarwal et al., 2016, p. 221). In Ran and Danli’s (2016) study, they explained that suitable feedback can be seen as an important tool to improve students’ performance (p. 242). Evans (2013) suggested that effective feedback should provide “explicit guidance to students on the requirements of assessment and give clear and focused feedback on how students can improve their work including signposting the most important areas to address” (p. 79). Feedback should be facilitative and provide comments and suggestions to help students to make their own revisions. Boud (2002) explained that “a good feedback is given without personal judgment or opinion, given based on the facts, always neutral and objective, constructive and focus on the future” (p. 7). Thus, feedback should be seen as a constructive approach on improving students’ performance. Winne and Butler (1994) discussed that students can learn from feedback relating to their ability to make sense of and apply the feedback in order to further their learning. Consequently, before giving feedback teachers should consider students’ individual difference variables, such as ability and performance. There is a conclusion related to the importance of context and the relationship between feedback giver and receiver as follows:

There is no such thing as a single “magic bullet.” The “magic” of the bullet is highly context dependent, and so the bullets must

be fashioned according to local circumstances, the shooters and the targets. The university teacher... has to make “intelligent choices in complex situations”...under ever-changing conditions, government reforms and revised curricula. (Krause-Jensen, as cited in Evans, 2013, p. 94)

THE STUDY

Research questions

- *What is teacher verbal feedback content related to each student's presentation performance?*
- *What is each student's presentation performance?*

SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

A presentation course in an English language Master's program in a public university in Bangkok, Thailand was selected as the study's setting. The class, which met once a week for 180 minutes, was conducted using only English. The course included various activities, which were designed to help students improve their English presentation skills. Based on the researcher's learning experiences in this program, there have been problems on students' presentations when the program provided students with opportunities to present their work, particularly research, such as at the program's annual research meeting and at international conferences. For the participants, they were a teacher and three postgraduate students attending a presentation class. After the researcher gave informed consent forms explaining the topic and purposes of research, as well as the procedure of the study to the participants, all of them were willing to participate in the study. The instructor is an experienced EFL teacher who got a PhD in Translation Studies from the United Kingdom and has been teaching for two years at this public university. For the students, they were two foreign males and a Thai female. They ranged in age from 25 to 35 and their English study period ranges from 15 to 20 years. None of the students had previously studied presentation in English. All participant names are pseudonyms, so the teacher and three students were named as T, S1, S2, and S3 respectively.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The research tools used to collect the data in the study were an observation and an interview. The data were collected in the first semester of the academic year of 2018. The duration of the data collection was 18 weeks which was from the first week of August to the first week of December 2018. However, since the study's main purpose was to investigate the teacher's verbal feedback content on the students' presentation performance, nine weeks (W3, W4, W6, W7, W10, W12, W14, W17, W18) which the teacher asked the students to give a presentation were observed with audio recording and taking notes. For the other weeks which were for teaching and learning a presentation (six weeks) and were cancelled (three weeks), they were not focused on. For the role of observation, the researcher was a complete participant because the researcher intended to participate and be involved in every activity in this class as a student whose position is to do research (Foster, as cited in Tharawoot, 2016, p. 8). The second research tool was a semi-structured interview. The researcher conducted four interviews with the teacher and three students after the end of the course. They were interviewed in English. Since they were in the program in which English is a medium, communication in English was not their problem. The teacher was asked about her opinions and feelings about her verbal feedback content for each student's presentation performance. For the students, they were asked about their opinions and feelings related to their presentation performance. The interviews were recorded to ensure that everything said was saved for further transcription and analysis.

For the observation data analysis, the researcher listened to all audio files of nine weeks. Instead of analyzing the whole nine transcribed lessons, the segments showing the teacher's verbal feedback on the students' presentation performance were analyzed. These segments were transcribed by listening to the audio files and typing onto word files. For the interview data, they were transcribed. Then the researcher carefully read the transcribed interviews and marked themes which related to the teacher's opinions and feelings about her verbal feedback content for each student's presentation performance and the students' opinions and feelings related to their presentation performance.

FINDINGS

Class observation findings

Findings are divided into three parts: 1) teacher verbal feedback content for S1's presentation performance; 2) teacher verbal feedback content for S2's presentation performance; and 3) teacher verbal feedback content for S3's presentation performance. All sets of the findings are related to the first research question. These findings are summarized in the table showing teacher verbal feedback content for each student's presentation performance for nine weeks. Beside the tables, the content and examples of each teacher verbal feedback content are shown. Moreover, within the typical examples, the distinct clues that are regarded as the keywords, phrases, and clauses for each content are given in the bold and italic text.

1. Teacher verbal feedback content for S1's presentation performance

The frequency of teacher verbal feedback content for S1's presentation performance is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Teacher Verbal Feedback Content for S1's Presentation Performance

| Presentation Factors | W3 | W4 | W6 | W7 | W0 | W1 | W2 | W4 | W1 | W7 | W1 | W8 | W1 | FREQ | % |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|-------|
| 1. Content (C) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| 2. Structure (S) | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | 2 | 22.22 |
| 3. Grammar (G) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| 4. Coherence (Co) | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ | | 2 | 22.22 |
| 5. Vocabulary (V) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| 6. Speaking skills (SS) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| 7. Involving the audience (including visual aids) (IA) | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ | | 4 | 44.44 |
| 8. Self-presentation (Sp) | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 11.11 |

As shown in Table 1, S1 missed four classes (W7, W12, W14, and W17), so he gave a presentation for five weeks (W3, W4, W6, W10, and W18). Out of a total of five weeks of the teacher's providing verbal feedback following S1's presentation performance, 4 (about 44%) were IA, 2 (about 22%) were S, 2 (about 22%) were Co, and 1 (about 11%) was Sp. There was no teacher verbal feedback content related to C, G, V, and SS. In summary, the teacher gave verbal feedback based on IA which was 1 time more than S and Co. Moreover, it was 2 times more than Sp. The content and examples are shown.

1. Structure

Ex: ***You did put the outline out***, everything along the way. ***The structure is quite clear, and you concluded your presentation.*** (W18)

2. Coherence

Ex: ***I think you summarize that will recap that as well you did the recapping as well.*** (W3)

3. Involving the audiences (including visual aids)

Ex: ***You included the audiences like involved your audiences to your presentation, you ask them questions.*** You tell the story to lead into the presentation, it was quite interesting. (W18)

4. Self-presentation

Ex: ***Your first impression and body language and eye contact are okay***, they are good. (W3)

2. Teacher verbal feedback content for S2's presentation performance

The frequency of teacher verbal feedback content for S2's presentation performance is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Teacher Verbal Feedback Content for S2's Presentation Performance

| Presentation Factors | W3 | W4 | W6 | W7 | W10 | W12 | W14 | W17 | W18 | FREQ | % |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|----------|
| 1. Content (C) | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | | 2 | 22.22 |
| 2. Structure (S) | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | 3 | 33.33 |
| 3. Grammar (G) | | | | | | | | | | 0 | |
| 4. Coherence (Co) | ✓ | | | | | | | | | 1 | 11.11 |
| 5. Vocabulary (V) | | ✓ | | | | | | | | 1 | 11.11 |
| 6. Speaking skills (SS) | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | 5 | 55.55 |
| 7. Involving the audience (including visual aids) (IA) | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | 4 | 44.44 |
| 8. Self-presentation (Sp) | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 4 | 44.44 |

As shown in Table 2, out of a total of nine weeks, 5 (about 55%) were SS, 4 (about 44%) were IA, 4 (about 44%) were Sp, 3 (about 33%) were S, 2 (about 22%) were C, 1 (about 11%) was Co, and 1 (about 11%) was V. There was no content related to G. To summarize, the teacher gave verbal feedback based on SS which was 1 time more than IA and Sp. Moreover, it was 2 times more than S, 3 times more than C, and 4 times more than Co and V. The content and examples are shown.

1. Content

Ex: Key message is clear, somewhat clear. I think it's kind of clear I think you want to talk about this product. (W3)

2. Structure

Ex: I think you borrow most of the structure, so that's was a success. (W4)

3. Coherence

Ex: **You didn't recap. You didn't summarize why you want to sell this product?** Why this product is good? or why we should use it? (W3)

4. Vocabulary

Ex: **These phrases you can add it into your presentation a little bit one more.** You don't have to use all of them or use it all the time just use it appropriate and where that you think it necessary. (W4)

5. Speaking skills

Ex: **I think you did very well have maybe a clear pause, I mean you pauses quite clear. If you pause clearer, it will be perfect.** (W6)

6. Involving the audiences (including visual aids)

Ex: **Visual aids is good. It's clear. The color, it's clear. The font is clear so it's very good, and you used the video to explain. That's good as well because I understood much more after I watched it.** (W3)

7. Self-presentation:

Ex: **The first impression somehow okay. I mean you smile, but enormously body language and eye contact you did not really eye contact with us. I mean you try, but you didn't. Always look at your notes but you didn't look at us either.** (W3)

3. Teacher verbal feedback content for S3's presentation performance

The frequency of teacher verbal feedback content for S3's presentation performance is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Teacher Verbal Feedback Content for S3's Presentation Performance

| Presentation Factors | W3 | W4 | W6 | W7 | W10 | W12 | W14 | W17 | W18 | FREQ | % |
|--|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|
| 1. Content (C) | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 2 | 22.22 |
| 2. Structure (S) | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | 3 | 33.33 |
| 3. Grammar (G) | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| 4. Coherence (Co) | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | 4 | 44.44 |
| 5. Vocabulary (V) | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| 6. Speaking skills (SS) | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | 3 | 33.33 |
| 7. Involving the audience (including visual aids) (IA) | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 | 44.44 |
| 8. Self-presentation (Sp) | | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | 2 | 22.22 |

As shown in Table 3, S3 missed two classes (W3 and W6), so he gave a presentation for seven weeks (W4, W7, W10, W12, W14, W17, and W18). Out of a total of seven weeks, 4 (about 44%) was Co, 4 (about 44%) were IA, 3 (about 33%) were S, 3 (about 33%) were SS, 2 (about 22%) were C, and 2 (about 22%) were Sp. There was no teacher verbal feedback content related to G and V. To sum up, the teacher gave verbal feedback based on Co and IA which were 1 time more than S and SS. Moreover, they were 2 times more than C and Sp. The content and examples are shown.

1. Content

Ex: **You are not familiar with.** (W12)

2. Structure

Ex: **You have the basic things you all have introduction, body, structure, and conclusion.** (W14)

3. Coherence

Ex: **You can summarize your message. The message, the ideas remake the recap and repeat, and then again give a conclusion.** (W4)

4. Speaking skills

Ex: **Your voice can make it more louder, more passionate, more interesting, and make your audiences feel more interested in this topic, show your passion.** (W17)

5. Involving the audiences (including visual aids)

Ex: **You started with the quote, that's one thing you attract audiences' attention first.** (W10)

6. Self-presentation

Ex: **Body language, you adjust your post too often**, if it going to fall out, like you feel like it going to fall over. **So, some people they might just counting how many times when you adjust that fall.** And **you have eye contact.** (W10)

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Findings are divided into four parts: 1) the teacher's interview; 2) S1's interview; 3) S2's interview; and 4) S3's interview. These findings are related to the second research question.

1. The teacher's interview

According to the teacher's interview, the teacher explained her teaching goals as follows:

"my goal was to make students improve even a little bit because this presentation is a skill that you have to practice. And some people may be better at it or some are not good at. So, it just takes time to practice." Her explanation about the goal showed that she was aware of each student's presentation performance which could be similar or different. She tried to give verbal feedback content leading to improvement of each student's presentation performance. The teacher described the students' presentation performance as follows:

"I'm quite pleased with the presentation they gave. They have improved, all of them. For example, S1 is a native speaker, so he can adapt new techniques in his presentation quite easily, but S3 can do the voice better. The students are aware of these techniques and they try to improve. S2 also tries."

"Like S2, I think she's quite nervous. Her personality is not used to talk in front of the class, so it's quite difficult for her to be confident. So it's quite difficult for her to apply other skills like telling stories and other techniques to enhance the presentation. S1 and S3 got pretty much. They can apply every skill in their presentations. I was quite happy with their performances."

"At the final presentation, S3, his presentation is academic, but as I told everyone since the first class, it doesn't have to be boring. So, he could use these kinds of the story make it from a strict serious academic presentation into much more interesting presentation by including these techniques into his presentation."

2. S1's interview

According to S1's interview, S1 described his presentation performance that "I have a technical problem with the computer. The fonts are different from my computer. And I'm a teacher so I'm used to public speaking. So, that isn't issue for me." This showed that S1 was quite confident in himself to give a presentation. However, he also accepted that sometimes he had a problem about content, "Maybe content because sometimes. I tried to deliver the message, but it's difficult."

3. S2's interview

According to S2's interview, S2 expressed that she was commented on self-presentation the most, "I think self-presentation, like for example, body language and eye contact which were often commented as problems." However, the teacher commented on her presentations' content the least, "There might not have what I good at but if less commented might be about the content. When I presented, I focused on my topic which not went out." This showed that S2 had the problem about self-presentation, but she had the problem about presentation's content the least.

4. S3's interview

According to S3's interview, S3 explained his presentation performance and how to deal with problems during a presentation as follows:

"Yeah, sometimes I have a problem with the content that I prepared before because of the pressures and because of the audiences as well, because of lots of number of audiences. I try to make myself, confident and I just don't think a lot about the audiences. I just focus on the things that I prepared before and I try to speak for my topic. And I only focus on audience who are really listening to me because you know sometimes if we focus to the audience who are not interested with our presentation, it makes me feel nervous. So I try to focus with the listeners who really listen to me."

He also expressed that the teacher commented on his speaking skills and self-presentation the most,

"My most presentation problem that based on the teacher's feedback are speaking skills and self-presentation because for speaking skills you know, while I do presentation, I have a very low voice which make the presentation boring and do not attract the audiences." It can be concluded that although sometimes S3 had a problem about content, he knew how to deal with it. Based on the teacher's comments, he was lack of speaking skills and self-presentation.

DISCUSSION

Based on observations and interviews, it can be concluded that the teacher tried to provide verbal feedback content related to each student's presentation performance. For S1's presentation performance, among five characteristics of a great presenter (Stinson, 2016) S1 could be a presenter who has confidence because he was dared to interact with audiences. Therefore, the teacher provided teacher verbal feedback content was about involving the audience (including visual aids) the most. She often admired this performance of S1 through her verbal feedback and interview. For S2, she could be a presenter who had a little confidence as the teacher always commented about her speaking skills, involving the audience (including visual aids), and self-presentation. However, her

presentation content and structure satisfied the teacher. From teacher verbal feedback content, S3 could be a presenter who ordered his presentation based on the basic structure of a presentation well. However, he often had problems with his voice volume as the teacher mentioned in her feedback. One obvious presentation performance of S3 was to be passionate. He usually got good feedback on involving the audience (including visual aids). He could make audiences interested in his presentation content through his passion for the content. It can be concluded that when the students gave a presentation based on their own performance or characteristics, the teacher would provide verbal feedback content focusing on that obvious performance more than other characteristics or skills. The content can be used to support or admire students' good presentation performance. This makes students keep this performance. On the other hand, if their presentation performance is not effective, teacher verbal feedback content can provide suggestions and comments leading to improving it.

IMPLICATIONS

The study's findings have pedagogical implications for presentation in English courses; for example, teachers can reflect on their providing verbal feedback content leading to appropriateness for students' presentation abilities and performances. Moreover, this study could be a useful starting point for future research for other aspects of teacher verbal feedback.

LIMITATIONS

Since there is only one class in the semester (1/2018), the generalization of the study may be questioned. The researcher thinks that generalization depends on the relationship between readers' experiences and the study. The data from this research may help to expand and facilitate the readers' understanding of teacher verbal feedback content on English presentation in their own situations. Consequently, the generalization of the current study depends on the readers' acceptance of whether they can use some information from this study for their own situation or not. Nevertheless, the findings of this study suggest that teacher verbal feedback content is an important stimulus to students' presentation performance.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that in this setting, teacher verbal feedback content was related to each student's presentation performance because the teacher needed to admire the performance the students had and improve the performance they lacked through her verbal feedback content.

Since verbal feedback can allow teachers to increase or reduce students' abilities in presentation, it is necessary to choose the appropriate content to support students' presentation performance. It is necessary that teachers develop their use of verbal feedback that is suitable for students' abilities.

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS AN OUT-OF-CLASS COMMUNICATIVE TASK

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ABSTRACT

Communication has long been considered the target of foreign language education. This is the reason why language teachers around the world have put a lot of effort into developing tasks for their learners to practice conversational skills. One way to do this is that teachers can employ those beyond classroom context to give their learners opportunities to exchange information in the target language with a wide variety of speakers as they will do in real communication in the future. This paper reports an investigation into the attitude of 58 Vietnamese university students majoring in English towards an assignment in which they had to engage in face-to-face conversations with foreigners outside the classroom. Qualitative analysis of data collected through focus group interviews with the students has given some insights that teachers who would like to make use of similar tasks should take into account.

Keywords: *foreign language learning, attitude, out-of-class communicative task.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication plays an important part in language teaching and learning. In different foreign language programs, it has been considered both a tool and an aim. First, being able to communicate in a language facilitates language acquisition (Swain, 1995; Long, 1996; Gass, 2003; Gass and Mackey, 2006). Furthermore, people learn a foreign language in order to be able to use it to contact with those from other countries and “a principal goal of language teaching for several decades has been and continues to be speaking proficiency” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandel, 2001, p. 2). During this era of globalization

the need is more than ever urgent.

In the Vietnamese context, where English has been the most popular foreign language, Decision 1400/QĐ-TTg (2008) emphasizes the crucial role of being able to communicate effectively and confidently in a foreign language in the industrialization and modernization of the country and sets it as the goal for national foreign language teaching. Therefore, improving students' communicative ability serves not only the sake of language teaching and learning but also the need of the country. With that in mind, the researcher conducted the current study. It involves the participation of 58 English majors who were studying Listening Speaking 1. The course focused on communication skills and it aims to help the students reach the level B1 according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). The current study is action research where the researcher assigned the students to complete a communicative task outside the classroom to give them an opportunity to expand their practice beyond the classroom walls to a variety of English speakers, who they do not have access to in class. The study aims to answer the questions:

- *What is the students' attitude towards the out-of-class task?*
- *What can be done to ensure the successfulness of the activity?*

1.1. Working definition of important terms

1.1.1. Communicative task

A task is defined as “an activity which is designed to achieve a particular learning goal, especially in language teaching” (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 8th edition, p.1584). In this article, the two terms “task” and “activity” are used interchangeably. In this study, the participants were asked to carry out a task for communicative purposes. They had to work in groups and interview foreigners. Before the interview, they had to prepare questions related to topics of the units they had learned in the semester. They had to film the interview as evidence of the activity. They also had to comment on the work of other groups.

1.1.2. Out-of-class activity

Language learning, according to Pickard (1995) and Hyland (2004), can take place at any time and in any place. It happens both inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, activities outside the classroom are promoted by scholars such as D'iachenko (1991) and Bialystok (1981).

As Cortina-Pérez & Solano-Tenorio (2013) put it based on Benson's (2001) classification, out-of-class learning (OCLL) can be divided into two modalities, namely orientated out-of-class language learning and autonomous out-of-class language learning. The difference between the two is that in the former-the Orientated OCLL, "the teacher provides the learners with opportunities to improve their communicative skills out of the classroom" while in the latter-the Autonomous OCLL, "the learner him/herself decides which activities to involve in order to improve his/her communicative skills in the target language" (p.168).

In this study, as the out-of-class activity was assigned by the teacher, it belongs to the former modality.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication effectively in English is a complicated process. Communicative competence - a person's ability to communicate information and ideas in a foreign language - includes more than just the language. First and foremost, according to Nunan (2003), it involves:

- accurate production of sounds, e.i speech sounds. sound patterns, word and sentence stress, intonation patterns, and the rhythm;
- selection of appropriate words and sentences based on the social setting, audience, situation, and subject matter;
- meaningful and logical organization of thoughts;
- conveyance of values and judgments through English;
- fluent and confident use of the language.

Furthermore, Celce-Murcia (2007, p.45) persists besides Linguistic competence, there should be the involvements of other components, namely: Sociocultural competence; Discourse competence; Formulaic competence; Interactional competence; and Strategic competence. As Savignon (1997) puts it, "... it is only through performance that competence can be developed, maintained, and evaluated" (p. 15). Language learners need to work on communicative tasks in order to obtain the competence.

The need for interaction in order to advance communication skills has been pointed out by different scholars in the field of teaching and learning language. On the one hand, interactions expose the learner to the target language, and in that language environment, they may be contact language comprehensible inputs, which, according to Krashen (1985), enable learning. On the other hand, the Interaction hypothesis proposed by Long (1980) in his work "Input, interaction and second language acquisition", has pointed out the crucial role of conversations. To him, it is the modification of language in the process of sending their messages across to as well as negotiating the meaning of messages sent by their interlocutors that facilitates language learners' acquisition. In addition, interaction leads to output. This echoed Swain's (1995) Output hypothesis, which focuses on the production of language. Output benefits language learners in three ways: it has a hypothesis-testing function, a metalinguistic function, and a noticing/triggering function. In other words, learners' output allows them to test their knowledge of language against feedback provided by their interlocutors; it leads to the speakers' language knowledge internalization when putting the language into use, and it helps them, through communication breakdowns, realize the aspects that they have not known (Swain, 1995).

Interaction, after all, provides the opportunity where learners have contact with the language, practice what they have learned in a meaningful way, and develop their communication strategies so that they can perform effectively in conversations. That is the reason why many language teachers are trying to find ways to make the most of their classroom time to promote communicative learning of the language. They even find ways to give their learners practice after class.

So far, the notion “out-of-class communicative task” has been emphasized as an important part of language development, especially for communication skills. Bialystok (1981) suggests that it is in natural settings outside the classroom that the use of language for communicative purposes mostly happens. According to Ellis (2014), compared to in-class activities, those happen outside the classroom offer a wider range of conditions for language use and second language acquisition. His list of opportunities that learners can enjoy from out-of-class practice consists of:

- developing aspects of linguistic, communicative, and pragmatic competence,
- learning through interaction and negotiation of meaning,
- improving their levels of both accuracy and fluency,
- having extended contact with English,
- making use of multimodal sources of learning,
- developing skills of autonomous learning, and
- developing the use of communication strategies (p.15),

Furthermore, without meaningful experiences from out of class activities, efforts in improving the learners’ interactional skills seem difficult to fully succeed (D’iachenko, 1991; Ellis, 1994). As a result, finding opportunities for learners to use the language out of the classroom has become a strong need (Cortina-Pérez, 2011).

To this point, it is worth noting that now that the adoption of the use of English as a lingua franca in English language pedagogy has been proposed (e.g. Seidlhofer, 2002a; 2002b; Mauranen, 2008), being able to interact in English nowadays may not be the same as it was in the past. It is because though English holds one of the highest numbers of native speakers, many more people are using it as non-natives (Crystal, 2003). Meanwhile, differences in conversing with non-native compared to doing that with native speakers have been found (Lindemann, 2008; Lev-ari, 2015). Besides, learners learning English as a foreign language may also prefer an international variety of English to any of the standard English they are usually offered in formal lessons (Lepistö, 2004). Exposing students to the diversity of English

and raising their awareness of the value of the multilingual and intercultural nature of ELF communication should be crucial of language teaching (Matsuda, 2012; Bowles and Cogo, 2015; Galloway and Rose, 2015).

The concern of using out-of-class activities to intensify learner's learning through practicing, noticing, and exposing to different kinds of English has become a topic of research. So far, the positive effects of such activities have been reported. Examples are:

Chunsanachoti (2009) studied EFL Thai learners' use of activities outside the classroom to learn and practice English. Analyses of participant observation, field notes, interviews, self-reflection journals, and self-report activity diaries revealed that the learners were often involved in certain out-of-class activities; however, to their perception, not all of those helped them learn the language. This study concluded that activities outside the classroom may enhance language learning, and suggested that they should go with teachers' guidance.

Through a study where learners were engaged in communication in "English corner", a form of getting together for informal conversations with foreigners, Gao (2009) found Chinese mainland students' elements of autonomy developed after the activity. It was evident to also make changes in their self-identities.

In a quantitative study conducted in Taiwan, Gou (2011) investigated the level of students' language awareness before and after an out-of-class activity. The results indicated that it raised students' awareness of the English language available to them outside the classroom and enhanced their autonomy in learning.

Cortina-Pérez and Solano-Tenorio (2013) carried out an experimental research on the effect of out-of-class language learning (OCLL) in communicative competence in English within an EFL program on Colombian native-Spanish students. In the study, the difference between the two groups was the use of OCLL for the experimental group and all-inside the classroom for the control group. The participants' performance revealed from post-test showed that the differences between both groups were in favor of the treatment group.

Coşkun (2016) conducted a research with twenty-one first year university students in Turkey. The participants were encouraged to choose any out-of-class activities they would like to carry out for six weeks to improve their speaking skills. A survey of open-ended questions at the end of those six weeks showed that the chosen activities include the following: Fantasy Role-Playing, Continuous Story, Debate, Radio Program, Broadcasting on Periscope. It also revealed that all the participants thought the activities improved their fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and problem-solving skills as well. Besides, the activities were perceived to help their self-confidence, critical thinking skills and general knowledge.

In an investigation to the impact of out-of-class ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) communication activities on the knowledge of English in a global context of students in a university ELT course in Hong Kong, Sung (2017) collected data through the participants' reflections as part of the coursework. The study points to the importance of first-hand, out-of-class communication experiences in raising students' awareness of ELF. An increased awareness of ELF was found. The participants valued world Englishes while questioning the relevance of native-speaker norms. They also recognized the importance of communicative strategies in ELF conversations. In addition, the participants reported the benefits of the activities in increasing their confidence for communication and in building their intercultural friendships.

Bui Thi Thuc Quyen and Duong My Tham (2018) conducted a study with a group of Vietnamese freshmen majoring English in order to investigate the participants' attitude after conversations with foreigners as a required out-of-class task for a Speaking-Listening course. The interviews with the participants showed that the activity helped them overcome their fear of speaking English. Their attitude changed because they felt they were not criticized and their language, despite some required modifications, was comprehensible to other people.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research design

The research lent itself to an action research where the teacher tried to bring some new idea to the lesson to enhance the effectiveness of her teaching of communicative competence.

3.2. The setting

The study was carried out at a university in Ho Chi Minh City, one of the biggest cities in the South of Vietnam. The school is located near the center of the city. The curriculum of the English major has two phases. In Phase 1, students practice language materials, which are vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, and language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Phase 2 is for the teaching of specialized subjects in the field such as morphology, syntax, semantics, translation and interpretation, teaching methodology and so.

3.3. The participants

The participants were full-time English majors. They were freshmen, learning Listening-Speaking 1 as a required course. A few of them were from Ho Chi Minh City and the others are from other places. A summary of their background of learning communication disclosed through a short survey at the beginning of the course is as follows.

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of students | 58 |
| Exposure to the target language outside the classroom | 10 students |
| Frequent interaction outside the classroom with the use of the target language | 4 students (2 with relatives who live abroad, 1 with foreign teachers at work, and two with online foreign friends) |
| Confidence in speaking English | 10 students: confident |
| Their perceived level of communicative competence | 8 students: fairly good and above 24 students: average or low |

According to the program, students have to complete 6 levels of Listening-Speaking skills as a part of their training and need to achieve C1 level based on CEFR so as to pass the English proficiency exam as the program exit requirement. Especially for this course of Listening-Speaking 1, it is supposed that upon completing the course, students will be able to perform communication contours equal to level B1. The core material used is Q-skill Listening and Speaking skills book 3.

3.4. The task

As assigned by the task, the students worked in groups, interviewing foreigners using the topics they had learned. It was done as a co-curriculum activity with the ones they did. The students had to choose their members and prepare the questions that they were going to use in the task.

3.5. Data collection and analysis

Focus group interviews were used for data collection. The data were collected on the last day of the course upon the students' completion of the task. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to make it easy for the students to express their opinions. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and then analyzed qualitatively.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Some positive results were reported by the participants:

a The task benefits their learning of communication

The students reported they learned what it was like in performing real conversations. They said:

“We learn that learning by heart may not work, because unexpected situations may appear at any time” (Student 9).

“We learn to be flexible in conversations. We had to look at the interlocutors so as to provide appropriate adjustments to make them understand us. We also have to ask questions if we did not understand something” (Student 22).

“Well, I think I had a chance to see how different people from different countries use

English. It took me a while to be familiar with the ways they pronounce, but I learned something” (Student 16).

b The task increased students’ confidence

Confidence is one of the aspects the students reported increasing. As it is a factor that may obscure one’s willingness to speak the language (Sung, 2017; Bui and Duong, 2018, Coşkun, 2016), it is likely to enable more speaking from the learners later. Most of the participants agreed that they improved their confidence after the experience.

“I am often afraid to be corrected when I make mistakes. But the experience was different. My interlocutors didn’t say ‘you are wrong’. Instead, they asked question or used body language to show they did not get what I said” (Student 1).

“The people I spoke to were really nice. Once they agreed to take part in our interview, they smiled friendly; which helped calm down my nerves. Wow, I have the courage to speak to foreigners now” (Student 20).

“They asked me again, emphasizing the grammar point or word that they found incomprehensible, or used their body language which I assumed as signals for some problem in my language use. I did not know what it was but after explaining and successfully making them understand what I wanted to say, I felt I could speak the language” (Student 5).

“I had been so nervous when I knew that we had to go out and talk to foreigners. However, after completing the task, now I think I can do it again” (Student 24).

c The task was motivating

The students found the task interesting and motivating because of its realistic nature. They also valued the task thanks to the time hanging out with their peers.

“That was the first time I talked to foreigners. I like it because it was real” (Student 23).

“Well, I talked to people from different countries, not only English

native speakers. I am amazed that they speak English quite ok, so I try harder to make my language understandable. The task was interesting” (Student 32)

“We think this gave us a chance to see what real communication with foreigners is. It was fun. Besides, our groups had time to hang out with each other and tighten our friendship” (Student 54).

d The task developed problem-solving skills

The task required cooperation from the interlocutors. In addition, group work calls for many other skills namely negotiation, persuasion, and discipline. By carrying out the task, they improved those.

“For this activity, we had to work in a group. So, we learned how to do group work. We learned how to assign responsibilities among us, how to discuss and negotiate so as to reach agreements when there were disputes” (Student 40).

“I think we learned how to start a conversation with strangers. It is important because if we choose the wrong time, people will not be happy to talk to us” (Student 7).

“We learned how to persuade strangers to help us” (Student 8).

“We learned to be disciplined for the sake of the task. We had to be punctual and keep our words with other group members” (Student 47).

e The task provided sufficient preparation

Students agreed that they felt safe because they have some ideas, vocabulary, and structures related to the topics they were talking about.

“The preparation for the task was sufficient. I knew what to say and how to say things as I had learned the lessons before” (Student 3).

“We agreed with the preparation. We felt safe because we were equipped with some vocabulary through previous in-class lessons” (Student 58).

“With ideas and vocabulary from the lessons we had had, we had

something to talk with the interlocutors and understand them more easily" (Student 40).

4.2. Difficulties in doing the task

It is true that there are many tourists in our city; however, for different reasons, not all of them agreed to help. Challenges in working in groups were also reported.

a Foreigners' co-operation

"Not all foreigners agreed to let us interview. They looked at us with doubtful eyes. Maybe they were afraid of robbers or cheaters. It was a shame" (Student 29).

"Some foreigners didn't allow us to film them during the interview, even though we had explained clearly that this was just for our speaking practice" (Student 55).

"Foreigners who were on a tour tend to refuse to answer our questions because maybe they didn't want to miss any provided services" (Student 50).

b Group agreement

"My group faced difficulties in time agreement. As we reported, because we could not choose the time when all members meet, we had to split ourselves into two groups for interviews and then merged the videos for submission" (Student 30).

4.3. Suggestions for improvement

The students made some constructive suggestion as follows

a More out-of-class activities in one course

"We want more activities like this. We can do it two or more times in a semester" (Student 1).

"Maybe two times is better. One time is too little" (Student 10).

"One more time in the middle and one towards the end of the course is fine. It would not take too much time of us" (Student 52).

"Two times would be better so that we can have another chance to

practice” (Student 34).

b Supports from the teacher and the school

“We need helps from the school and the teacher. The teacher may join us, or school may hold exchange events between us and foreign students at our school so that we can expand chances to have conversations with expats” (Student 15).

“I think it would be better if the school have some kind of cultural exchange between us and foreign students who are studying at our school” (Student 14)

“I prefer [the teacher] to be with us during the activity. I think that would increase our confidence when speaking with strangers” (Student 20).

5 DISCUSSION

The students have a positive attitude towards the activities. The results of the study are in line with other studies out-of-of class activities. The enhancement of students’ self-confidence has been found in Sung (2017), Bui Thi Thuc Quyen and Duong My Tham (2018), Coşkun (2016). As the task required the students to work in groups, soft skills namely group work, negotiation skills, disciplinary were also reported being acquired. This has not been found by other studies; however, it is a common sense that as students tried to solve their problems to fulfil the tasks, they might have made use of different skills and developed them.

In terms of suggestion for improvement, a high number of students in the study suggested having more out of class activity. This indicates that learners acknowledged the benefits of the activity. Such attitudes might have resulted from the awareness of the complicated nature of real communication itself. It could also be due to good preparation. Now that the students felt safe and prepared, they were more willing to carry out the activity (Nation, 2000). Moreover, some students wanted more involvement with the teacher and school. This might be because they had encountered the troubles they had in finding interlocutors and obtaining their cooperation.

6. CONCLUSION

Positivity was found in students' attitudes towards an out-of-class communicative activity. The students appreciated the task due to its benefits and would like to have more opportunities like this. From the study, it is evident that such activities can be considered one solution for many schools, especially for those where there are no foreign teachers like the researcher's context. Notwithstanding the favorable opinions, obstacles in finding expat interlocutors were mentioned in the interviews. Therefore, teachers and schools should take this into account so that appropriate ideas can be added to the curriculum so as to facilitate students' development of competence for international communication.

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ELECTRONIC MEDIA EXPOSURES VIS-À-VIS READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS: THE CASE OF STUDENTS WHO ARE ENROLLED IN A LITERATURE COURSE

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is a cognitive process that allows readers to understand the written text. This study aimed at identifying the extent of the student-participants' electronic media exposures as a tool in developing their reading comprehension skills. The study used the correlational research design. The participants involved were the two hundred ten (210) students taken from the literature class of a private college in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines during the School Year 2018-2019. Data were generated through descriptive and inferential statistics. The results confirmed that there is a positive significant relationship between electronic media exposures in science fiction and adventure to student-participants' reading comprehension skills in terms of sequencing events, predicting outcomes, and identifying themes. However, a host of other factors may affect students' reading comprehension skill in noting detail. Based from the findings drawn, the study calls for the need to reinforce the use of electronic media in increasing students' reading comprehension skills. Moreover, the result of this investigation can be used as a baseline data in making instructional materials, which presuppose the integration of electronic media activities.

Keywords: *electronic media exposures, reading comprehension skills, literature course*

INTRODUCTION

The dictum of weaving technology into the macro skill of reading aids learners to extract meaning out of complexity. Reading, thus, revolutionizes the way students learn and facilitate learning. The

impressive development of technology cum reading skills has nevertheless become the track upon which the express train of education is heading toward its destination (Ajileye, 2007; Bahrani, 2012; Bedjou, 2006; Chinnery, 2005).

Being able to read comprehensively is one of the most rewarding preoccupations one holds in expanding his visions of experiences and achievements through ages. Mendoza (2017) inferred that reading comprehension skill increases the pleasure and effectiveness of students. It prepares them to discover the world of thought and imagination which enables them to acquire a clearer and deeper understanding of reality (Villamin, Salazar & Gatmaitan, 1987). In such pursuit, students must, therefore, take a great deal of effort and concentration as reading indeed calls for a deep application of the various skills involved. When reading is developed in recreatory type, it then becomes a tool for purposeful study across areas of discipline.

In this contention, a study-reading strategy is imperative in developing one's reading comprehension skills. Guiyab (2008), however, said that an effective approach to reading is the development of a suitable strategy. Considerably, one of a reading strategies that links to the reading comprehension skills of learners is the used of the electronic media (Costley, 2014; Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015; Higgins & Raskind, 2005; Lacina, 2006; Stearns, 2012; Wissick & Gardner, 2011).

Although these growing bodies of literature and studies proved to say an increase of reading comprehension while electronic media are employed; the researcher, being an English teacher, still observed that students are non-readers despite the availability of technology on their end. Moreover, in spite of the emphasis put in place by the Philippine educational system in developing student's reading comprehension skills from primary to tertiary level of education, this mandate does not seem to ensure that proficiency in reading is attained. The competencies in reading are still remained a challenge in all school levels. As a result, students are likely to be poor in expressing their ideas when being asked with a questions related to what they read. Also, the lack of reading comprehension skills affect their academic success. This observation is similar to Suarez's (2015) study stating that the worrisome problem of deteriorating English reading

comprehension skills of students is due to their inability to read articles, books, magazines and the like. This is especially true to their difficulty in noting details, making inferences and recalling previous knowledge to mention a few. Ihekhwoaba (2012) reckoned that due to technological advancements, the reading habits of students are changing; they spend more time on electronic media such as watching movies, browsing the net, and playing games.

Hooked to this reality, the present study looked into the implications of electronic media exposures to college student's reading comprehension skills in a literature class. The expected results of this study hope to confirm the extent of using electronic media in developing student's reading comprehension skills in English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is anchored on the thesis that students' exposures to electronic media increases their comprehension skills in reading. This assumption is grounded on the informal language learning theory of Stephen Krashen (1981). This theory espouses that language learning unconsciously occur outside the school setting. This refers to the exploration of learning the English language activities outside the classroom that would enhance the proficiency of the second language learners.

Accordingly, the development of language depends on exposure to some specific linguistic experience (Schmitt & Redwood, 2011). This linguistic experience covers the interactions of the second language learners towards the environment primarily in home, peers, media, technology and the like. In this study, language learning occurs via technological used. Hence, by playing games and watching television programs in English, learners are indirectly involved in the process of language learning (Pemberton, Fallahkhair & Mosthoff, 2004).

There have been a growing body of literature and studies that surmise on the positive effect of technology to language learning (Bahrani, 2012; Bell, 2003; Cabaj & Nicolic, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 2001; Pemberton et al. 2004; Rogers, 2004). These growing bodies of literature and studies have been the focus of previous researchers in yesteryears. As there could have been very few researchers that

investigate the implications of playing games and watching and viewing TV programs and movies in English, the existing research on electronic media exposures, therefore, illumines language learning through reading comprehension.

In Environmentalist Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1986), it postulates that environment shapes learners' behavior and learning as they make interactions with their surroundings. Anchored to this behaviorist view of language learning, the more learners are exposed to electronic media such as their exposure to playing games and watching TV programs, the more likely they develop their language skills, particularly, in reading. It is in this pivotal reason that the study is conceptualized.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study determined the relationship between the college students' electronic media exposures and reading comprehension skills.

Specifically, the study determined to answer the following questions:

1. *What is the extent of college student's exposures to electronic media considering:*
 - 1.1 *number of hours in watching TV programs;*
 - 1.2 *playing mobile games; and*
 - 1.3 *TV programs watched and mobile games being played?*
2. *What is the level of college student's comprehension skills in terms of:*
 - 2.1 *noting details;*
 - 2.2 *sequencing events;*
 - 2.3 *predicting outcomes; and*
 - 2.4 *identifying themes?*
3. *Is there a significant relationship between the student's electronic media exposures and reading comprehension skills?*

THE STUDY

The study used the correlational research design. The participants of the study were the two hundred ten (210) second year and third year students enrolled in XYZ College during the second semester of SY 2018-2019. These students were taken from the Literature class as it involved extensive reading of literary masterpieces. The purposive sampling was utilized in the selection of the participants under study. Hence, the entire population of the students in English 4 were taken as the participants. A researcher-made questionnaire was utilized to gather the data. It underwent a reliability test so as to assess its internal consistency on the constructs of the study being measured. The questionnaire on the student's electronic media exposures which was based on the concepts of Magallon's (2014) study yielded an alpha value of .892. This figure implies that the questions in every item are reliable. Meanwhile, a content validation was made in the instrument used to measure the student's reading comprehension skills. The interpretation of the participants' responses on both research instruments were coded using the following scales: 4.51 – 5.00 (Very Great Extent/ Excellent); 3.51 – 4.50 (Great Extent/ Very Good); 2.51 – 3.50 (Moderate Extent/ Good); 1.51 – 2.50 (Low Extent/ Fair); 1.00 – 1.50 (No Extent at all/ Poor). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to generate the findings of this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the participants' amount of time spent for watching television in a week. Findings showed that majority of the student-participants (80.95%) spent 8-15 hours in a week watching television to a high extent while (19.05%) of them at a low extent. From this finding, it can be observed that most of the participants spent their time watching television at home in most of their vacant and leisure time.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Amount of Time Spent for Watching Television in a Week (Maximum Time: 15 Hours)

| Range | Description | f | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| 8-15 Hours | High Extent | 170 | 80.95 |
| 0-7 Hours | Low Extent | 40 | 19.05 |
| Total | | 210 | 100.00 |

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the participants' amount of time spent for playing mobile/computer games in a week. From this finding, it can be gleaned that more than half of the participants (54.76%) of the study played mobile and/or computer games at a high extent while 96 (45.24%) of them spent less than five hours playing in a week. It can be inferred from this finding that the participants are likely using their phone to play when they are bored, waiting for someone, and for their leisure.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Amount of Time Spent for Playing Mobile/Computer Games in a week (Maximum Time: 10 Hours)

| Range | Description | f | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| 6-10 Hours | High Extent | 115 | 54.76 |
| 0-5 Hours | Low Extent | 95 | 45.24 |
| Total | | 210 | 100.00 |

Table 3 reveals the student-participants' electronic media exposures in terms of television viewing and playing mobile/computer games. Results indicated that the participants' viewing of science fictional program (M=3.79) was at a great extent followed by adventure (M=3.48) and comedy (3.24) at a moderate extent, respectively.

As regards to their exposures in playing mobile and/or computer games, results showed that they were likely inclined to play battle games (=M4.151) to a very great extent, while some of them were into playing puzzle (M=4.44) and competition games (M=3.51) to a great extent. This is evident to the participants playing of the games such

mobile legends, clash of clans, wordscapes, and soduko to name a few.

Table 3. Electronic Media Exposures (Both Television and Mobile/Computer Games)

| Media Exposures | Mean | SD | Description |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| TV Viewing/Programs | | | |
| Science Fiction | 3.79 | 0.74 | Great Extent |
| Adventure | 3.48 | 0.86 | Moderate Extent |
| Comedy | 3.24 | 0.79 | Moderate Extent |
| Mobile/Computer Games | | | |
| Puzzle | 3.51 | 0.92 | Great Extent |
| Battle | 4.51 | 0.61 | Very Great Extent |
| Competition | 4.44 | 0.50 | Great Extent |

Table 4 discloses the student's level of reading comprehension. Accordingly, the participants got a very good rating to their reading comprehension skill in terms of predicting outcomes (M=3.16), while they got a good rating to the rest of their reading comprehension skills such as identifying themes (M=3.72), noting details (M=3.13), and sequencing events (M=3.09).

Table 4. Student's Level of Reading Comprehension

| Reading Comprehension Skills | Mean | SD | Description |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Noting Details | 3.13 | 0.35 | Good |
| Sequencing Events | 3.09 | 0.37 | Good |
| Predicting Outcomes | 3.16 | 0.40 | Good |
| Identifying Themes | 3.72 | 0.77 | Very Good |
| Total | 3.28 | 0.47 | Good |

Table 5 illustrates the test of test of correlation between the participants' exposures to TV Viewing and Time in Playing Mobile/Computer Games and Reading Comprehension Skills. Based on

the findings, there was a positive correlation between the participants' reading comprehension skills except on the area of noting details. Specifically, the data confirm that there were significant relationships found between the participants' time in TV viewing and reading comprehension skills in terms of sequencing of events ($r=0.26$, $p=0.02$), predicting outcomes ($r=0.40$, $p=0.00$), and identifying themes ($r=0.26$, $p=0.02$). Also there was a significant association between their time in playing mobile/computer games and reading comprehension in terms of predicting outcomes ($r=0.27$, $p=0.02$).

Table 5. Test of Correlation between Participants' exposures to TV Viewing and Time in Playing Mobile/Computer Games and Reading Comprehension Skills in terms of Time

| Reading Comprehension Skills | Time in TV Viewing | | Time in Playing Mobile/Computer Games | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| | r | P | r | r |
| Noting Details | 0.12 | 0.31 | 0.20 | 0.09 |
| Sequencing Events | 0.26 | 0.02* | 0.18 | 0.13 |
| Predicting Outcomes | 0.40 | 0.00** | 0.27 | 0.02* |
| Identifying Themes | 0.26 | 0.02* | 0.16 | 0.18 |

*Significant at 0.05 level

**Significant at 0.01 level

Table 6 indicates the test of Correlation between participants' exposures to Viewing of TV Programs and Reading Comprehension Skills. Findings in this area explicated that there was a strong correlation in the participants' viewing of television programs and reading comprehension skills such as sequencing of events are associated to their viewing of science fiction program ($r=0.31$, $p=0.01$). Additionally, predicting outcomes were also observed to be significantly associated to their viewing of TV program in adventure ($r=0.28$, $p=0.01$). However, there was no significant relationships that were observed between the participants' reading comprehension skills and viewing of television with comedy programs.

Findings of the study may imply that when student-participants viewed science fiction and adventure movies or programs, they are likely to develop and increase their reading comprehension skills in sequencing events and predicting outcomes. These findings were viewed to be similar in Zhao’s (2003) study confirming that exposure to television lead to the development of language learning, particularly on reading comprehension skills in English, which offers the viewers the avenue to interact (Close, 2004) on the series of events of the story and, thus, infers on the resolution of a particular TV program. Given that the presence of television influences to working memory abilities, it could be that the link between TV exposure and reading comprehension skills is mediated by working memory, such that TV exposure affects sequencing events and predicting outcomes skills in reading, (Armstrong & Sopory, 2001).

Table 6. Test of Correlation between exposures to Viewing of TV Programs and Reading Comprehension Skills

| Reading Comprehension Skills | VIEWING OF TELEVISION PROGRAMS | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|------|
| | Science Fiction | | Adventure | | Comedy | |
| | R | P | R | p | r | p |
| Noting Details | 0.18 | 0.11 | 0.21 | 0.08 | 0.24 | 0.35 |
| Sequencing Events | 0.31 | 0.01** | 0.24 | 0.32 | 0.40 | 0.70 |
| Predicting Outcomes | 0.13 | 0.27 | 0.28 | 0.01** | 0.05 | 0.65 |
| Identifying Themes | 0.20 | 0.08 | 0.16 | 0.17 | 0.09 | 0.28 |

*Significant at 0.05 level

**Significant at 0.01 level

Table 7 shows the test of Correlation between exposures to Playing Mobile/Computer Games and Reading Comprehension Skills. Evidently, the data show that there was positive correlation to the participants’ playing of mobile/computer games and reading comprehension skills such as sequencing of events is significantly associated to their playing of puzzle games ($r=0.27$, $p=0.02$). More so, participants’ reading comprehension skill in predicting outcomes is

linked significantly to their playing of mobile/computer battle games ($r=0.40$, $p=0.00$).

Table 7. Test of Correlation between exposures to Playing Mobile/Computer Games and Reading Comprehension Skills

| Reading Comprehension Skills | PLAYING MOBILE/COMPUTER GAMES | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-------------|------|
| | Battle | | Puzzle | | Competition | |
| | r | P | r | p | r | p |
| Noting Details | 0.06 | 0.60 | 0.11 | 0.34 | 0.18 | 0.13 |
| Sequencing Events | 0.14 | 0.23 | 0.27 | 0.02* | 0.18 | 0.11 |
| Predicting Outcomes | 0.40 | 0.00** | 0.21 | 0.07 | 0.20 | 0.09 |
| Identifying Themes | 0.21 | 0.07 | 0.10 | 0.41 | 0.22 | 0.06 |

*Significant at 0.05 level

**Significant at 0.01 level

Based on the findings, it is implied that when student-participants played a battle and puzzle games such as mobile legends, wordscapes for example, they are likely to enhance and develop their sequencing events and predicting outcomes skills. In contrary, there was no significant correlations that were detected in the participants' reading comprehension and to their exposures in playing mobile/computer competition games. This may be due to the reason that when students are reading a text, they are not likely going to compete with each other.

Generally, these findings support the multi-modal presentation of text to support students' reading comprehension. Hence, Stearns (2012) reckoned that the interactivity available via computer and mobile games provides modes of presentation that printed books cannot provide. Lacina (2006) upheld that exposing one's self to playing mobile and/or computer games aids to the development of their interactive tools in planning, analyzing, organizing, and summarizing information. Evidently, these findings conclusively supported Krashen's (1981) delineation that technological exposures, as informal language activity, aid to language proficiency. Thus, Hanson (2017) conferred that language proficiency has been linked to reading recognition and comprehension.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The findings under study implied that electronic media exposures such as playing mobile or computer games and viewing and watching Television programs were imperative to develop the student-participants' reading comprehension skills in sequencing events, predicting outcomes, and identifying themes. This infers that such exposures promote learners to think, evaluate, imagine, and reason. As reading requires the fusion of meaning into chain of related ideas, it could be that mental activities such as playing mobile or computer games and viewing and watching television programs are augmented to simple recognition of events and outcomes to grasping, interpreting, and applying meanings and ideas.

This study only covers the exposures of electronic media (Magallon, 2014) in terms of playing mobile or computer games and viewing and watching television programs. Hence, this study does not represent all the electronic media that the participants are exposed to. On the other hand, reading comprehension (Mendoza, 2018) is only limited to noting details, sequencing events, predicting outcomes, and identifying themes. Furthermore, the study does not represent the other components of reading comprehension that are not covered in this study.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the impact of electronic media exposures to the reading comprehension skills of students who were enrolled in the literature class. It was concluded that there was a strong significant relationship between student-participants' electronic media exposures and reading comprehension skills in terms of sequencing of events, predicting outcomes, and identifying themes. This conclusion supports the idea that the more the student-participants would expose themselves in the electronic media, the more they are likely to develop their comprehension skills. This finding confirms Krashen's (1981) theory of informal language learning, which states that the exploration of learning the English language through technology would enhance the proficiency of the second language learners in reading. The study recommends for the need to reinforce the use of electronic media in increasing students' reading comprehension skills. Moreover, the

result of this investigation can be used as a baseline data in making instructional materials, which presuppose the integration of electronic media activities.

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NEWS SHARING SESSIONS: A CASE STUDY IN A READING CLASS

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ABSTRACT

Using newspapers as a teaching instrument in the classroom has long been adopted. Teachers have used this medium in various ways to complement and supplement their course materials. In this paper, the writer presents her instructional strategy in integrating news into the curriculum of her reading class for the third- year students majoring in Business English at the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City (UEH). With the implementation of the news sharing sessions, the instructor aims to provide students with meaningful experiences that do not only help them improve their reading skill but also develop communication skills through a broad exposure to live language from media, particularly in this case, utilizing online newspapers. This paper will give an overview of the use of news in education, then reports on the instructor's implementation of the news sharing sessions in class. The students' experiences, as well as the benefits and drawbacks, are analyzed. The writer also provides different instructional designs for carrying out news sharing sessions and potential applications in wide-ranging ESL/EFL classrooms in all four skills.

Keywords: *news report, reading improvement, news sharing, newspapers.*

INTRODUCTION

The mass media has long been exploited as a teaching instrument, especially integrating the reading of news into classroom activities has been welcomed by educators all over the world. Teachers have used this medium in various ways to complement and supplement their course materials. In this paper, the writer presents her instructional strategy in integrating news into the curriculum of her reading class

for the third- year students majoring in Business English at the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City (UEH). With the implementation of news sharing sessions, the instructor aims to provide students with meaningful experiences that do not only help them improve their reading skill but also develop other skills such as communication skills, etc. through a broad exposure to live language from the media, particularly in this case, utilizing online newspapers.

THE ROLE OF NEWS IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

The role of the newspaper in education has been noted since the late 18th century. According to Gardner and Sullivan (1999, p.11),

the earliest known reference to newspaper as tool for learning appeared in the *Portland Eastern Herald* of Maine on June 8, 1795 which stated the rationale that still substantiates today's use of newspapers in education: improves reading abilities; sparks interest; furnishes variety of style and content; provides context and anecdotal reference points; acquaints the reader with contemporary ideas; and gives the reader an introduction to specialized topics.

The value of newspaper-based instruction in contemporary research still validates the early claims on the rationale for using newspaper in education for 'building students' learning and thinking skills, growing their knowledge base, stimulating their interest in reading, and developing the tool for good citizenship' (Gardner & Sullivan, 1999, p.12). According to Vockell and Cusick (2010),

Students who read from many sources build the background knowledge necessary for them to understand progressively more difficult reading material. And in cyclical fashion, the better reader a student becomes, the more he or she will want to read.

Heitzmann (1986 as cited in Vockell & Cusick, 2010) also concedes that 'skillful and reflective use of the newspaper can stimulate a desire to read'. Furthermore, Monda, et al. (1988, as cited in Aiex, 1988) asserts that the newspaper can help with an individualized instructional program, since it appeals to students who are not easily motivated. Mysliwiec, Shibley Jr. & Dunbar (2003-2004) also maintain that assignments related to newspapers facilitate active learning in a

learner-centered classroom environment, and they also point out that one effective means of stimulating students' thought and engaging students in a discussion is including current events in the curriculum. As Gardner and Sullivan (1999, p.15) state, using news in the classroom can promote critical thinking, and "critical thinking abilities can only be developed if students are exposed to stimulating information about which probing questions can and must be asked, and if they are provided examples of critical reasoning as manifested in the printed word." As stated in an American newspaper in 1986 (as cited in Vockell & Cusick, 2010), newspapers also give students the opportunities to develop skills used in the classroom and to be exposed to more up-to-date information than that found in textbooks. Heitzmann (1986, as cited in Vockell & Cusick, 2010) found that the performance of students who were exposed regularly to newspapers exceeded the performance of those students who were not. Stone and Grusin (1991 as cited in Vockell & Cusick, 2010) also assert that students who read and use newspapers have better comprehension and vocabularies than those who do not. Students usually learn from what they see and do rather than from what someone tells them they should do. So the use of newspapers in the classroom can make a major contribution to the growth of ability and interest in reading. It is worthwhile for teachers to have the newspaper in the classroom and to use scaffolded instruction to show how to read and enjoy a newspaper.

THE APPLICATION OF NEWS IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

It is undeniable that the newspaper is a versatile teaching tool as it can achieve many things in an instructional setting with a wide range of topics covered, thus it can be effectively incorporated into course design to increase students' vocabulary repertoire. In addition, the newspaper records events that have meaning for students. Grace Faxon (1912, as cited in Gardner & Sullivan, 1999, p.12) suggested that educators devote 15 minutes each day to discussing news in class.

The early 1980s saw the advent of the 'Newspapers in Education' (NIE) national campaign in North America, which popularized the use of newspapers as an educational tool. As Aiex (1988) puts it, 'at the present time, about 600 newspapers in the United States and Canada participate in the NIE program, which involves approximately three

million students, 90,000 teachers, and 16,000 schools each year.' Furthermore, this initiative has been supported and followed exponentially worldwide. The continued growth of NIE programs can be found in South Africa, England, Norway, Japan, and many other countries. There have been various newspaper readership programs for both K-12 programs and different undergraduate programs in different countries.

For several decades, newspapers have been used in classroom instructions, many newspaper-based courses have been developed by educators around the world, and innovative teachers have enhanced instructions with newspapers. Hamrick (1981, as cited in Aiex, 1988) designed a 60-page activity booklet that is organized by sections of the newspaper to teach basic skills in a variety of subject areas. Rhoades & Rhoades (1985, as cited in Aiex, 1988) provided ways teachers can use newspapers to teach comprehension and critical thinking and to help students develop sensitivity and awareness of the self, the community, and the world.

On the other hand, English speaking newspapers on the Internet presents language teachers and learners with an enormous source for teaching-learning possibilities, as they can get access to this source easily, quickly and conveniently. The issue of using online newspapers is dealt with in some detail by Brown (1999) in his paper *Internet Treasure Hunts - A Treasure of an Activity for Students Learning English*. Brown says that he uses e-papers as the source of information, benefiting from the easiness of searching, the variety of articles from different parts of the world and their free character. Besides, 'Internet reading activity builds on students' reading skills, helps them to enlarge vocabulary, forces them to infer unknown words from the context, develops their writing and speaking skills in creating and delivering the presentation to the class, and finally enriches their cultural awareness' (Krajka & Mickiewicz, 2000).

CLASSROOM SETTING, RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

Classroom setting

The undergraduate program for students majoring in Business English at UEH has 6 modules for developing students' four skills. The class in

this study is a module 6 reading class, so the students are at an advanced level. The course book is *Advanced Market Leader*, 3rd edition by Iwonna Dubicka & Margaret O’Keeffe, Pearson Longman publisher. The course includes six weeks with twelve reading passages related to business topics. These are authentic articles from the *Financial Times*. There are 42 students in the class. They have one class meeting each week, which lasts for five periods (each period is 50 minutes).

Rationale and objectives

The long five-period sections of the reading course need some breaking activities. Moreover, sometimes the reading passages in the course book cannot make the students interested as the content is not very up to date or something that is not familiar to them. They may inevitably feel the content has nothing related to them, and do not pay much attention or are not very enthusiastic with the lesson.

The rapidly changing world today requires that teachers complement and refresh their lessons, and one of the greatest challenges teachers face is to keep their courses up to date. Never before have we been able to access information easily, quickly, and conveniently thanks to the advent of the internet. Nowadays, there are various electronic newspapers offering educators and learners a great chance for completing multi-purposes; they are easily accessible and virtually free. Therefore, the instructor would like the students to take advantage of this powerful and helpful source.

Although the students major in Business English, besides focusing on business English, the instructor also wants to build up comprehensive students since university students need comprehensive information. There is no way an individual student can read the enormous array of sources, so the students can learn from each other. The project is also to promote learner autonomy, for the students not only search information, take notes but also share information and knowledge through presentations and in-class discussion. The students can also develop their critical thinking through these activities.

Reality is that newspaper readership is declining among students. They have become to spend less and less time reading news for the sake of

knowledge and more time engaging in various forms of recreation, especially social networks and playing games. Sometimes they read the news, but not news in their native language that they come across when they are surfing the net. “Most people are interested in latest news” (Rider, 1992), so the intent of the news sharing session activity in this course is to bring up hot, new topics in the news to make the students keep up with the news.

Therefore, the news sharing sessions are implemented with threefold purposes: (1) to help students increase their vocabulary, especially make them more contact with real language of mass media; (2) to bring something practical, helpful, and meaningful to them while help them keep up to date with what is happening around them as well as in the world; (3) to help students improve their reading skill as well as other skills like presentation, communication, note-taking, and critical thinking. The instructor expects to develop a comprehensive course design, and also hopes that this activity can cultivate the good habit of reading news for the students.

There has been a lot of research on integrating newspapers into the specific curriculum. The writer undertakes the present study to find out the best ways to integrate newspapers into our current curriculum at UEH.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

Implementation of the news sharing sessions

The main task of this activity is for each student to prepare one piece of up-to-date news to share with their classmates in class. In preparation for the project, in the first week of the course, the instructor gives the students some kind of orientation. As the quality of the news sharing sessions depends very much on the students’ preparation and their enthusiasm in participating in the sharing session, the instructor has to communicate clearly about the benefits and the purposes of the task. Some instructions on how to read and take notes the information which are taken from the article *How to read a newspaper* by Walter Cronkite are also given because each student has to summarize one article or one piece of news in a paper in order to exchange the information with the others and to submit it to the instructor at the

end of the sharing session for marking. With the ‘inverted pyramid’ style of the reporter when presenting the news stories, which means they start with the end, the climax of the story, with the most important facts first, then building more details in order of importance, students need to sift facts and take notes with five key points ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘how’ and ‘why’. It is certain that some news articles do not provide all five elements, but the students are encouraged to try to analyze and find out the information complying with the five-element structure suggested. They are also asked to present the new words that they find unfamiliar in the article or the words that they think their classmate may need to know, at least one word. The students can choose news of any topics, but they are encouraged to choose interesting, up-to-date news and articles from native English speaking newspapers and channels like The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, BBC, CNN, etc. Each week, one student volunteers to give a short PowerPoint presentation on an article or a piece of news, which must be the up-to-date or latest news. The presentation is no more than 10 minutes. The presentation shows the headline, the five key factors including pictures and videos, the vocabulary items, and follow-up questions. The students will receive some bonus marks and gift for their voluntary act. If no student volunteers to give the presentation, the instructor will do that job.

The in-class procedures of the news sharing sessions are as follows:

- ‘Breaking news’ activity by the student’s PowerPoint presentation and/ or the instructor’s. Sometimes the instructor does the ‘breaking news’ by hosting a game with the headlines of some interesting news of the week in the form of fill-in activity.
- A short discussion on the student’s presentation and/ or the instructor’s breaking news
- Students’ exchanging their own news in groups. At this stage, the students are divided into different groups according to their topics such as economics, politics, society, technology, education, sports, music & movies, etc. The topics are liable to be mixed if they have few students. The students are required to take notes at least one piece of news from their classmates. They have to take notes the headlines, the key points as well as the name of

the students they take the news from into their paper.

- Students' voluntary reports on the most interesting news they have found in their group
- A quick follow-up discussion or responses for the reported news from the whole class
- Students' submission of their paper to the instructor for marking.
- The instructor's feedbacks on the submissions. The instructor shares more news if she catches other interesting news from the students' submissions.

The criteria for marking include two parts: the note-taking of their own news and the news they get from with their classmates. The purpose of the marking is to encourage and to ensure that all the students work during the group discussions.

The class has only four news sharing sessions for 6 weeks as we spend the first week on orientation and the last week on administrative tasks and tests.

METHODOLOGY

After the last news sharing session, the instructor hands out a questionnaire including seven questions. The first two questions are for the instructor to know more about students' habits of reading English news. The next three questions are to find out the usefulness of the news sharing session to the students, employing the Likert-type scale. The last two questions are to elicit students' ideas for improving the effectiveness of the activity. It is the students that experience the activity more deeply, so the instructor assumes that they will give deep ideas and suggestions on the project. There are 42 students in the class, but a number of questionnaires delivered are 40 (N=40) as two students are absent.

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND LIMITATIONS

Findings and analysis

Students' reading habits

For the first question: "How often do you read the news in English?", over half of the students say they occasionally read the news; nearly a third seldom read the news while only approximately a fifth claim that they often read the news. The results show that just a small number of the students frequently read the news while most of them do not have this habit. The finding verifies the urgency and the necessity of the action to promote readership among students.

Table 1. The students' reading habits

| Never | Seldom | Occasionally | Often | Very often | N |
|-------|--------|--------------|-------|------------|----|
| 1 | 11 | 21 | 5 | 2 | 40 |
| 2% | 27% | 53% | 13% | 5% | |

For the second question, the instructor wants to find out what newspapers, electronic newspapers or channels the students usually read. In summary, there are three types of sources they get news from: (1) Vietnam's e-newspapers in English like vietnamnews.vn, tuoitrenews.vn, thanhniennews.com, baomoi.com, VnExpress International, etc.; (2) native English speaking websites/channels like VOA, Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Forbes, The Guardian, The Independent, CNN, BBC News, etc.; (3) social networks like Facebook, Twitter, The Science Channels –YouTube, travel blogs, etc. There is a long list of electronic newspapers and channels that they can name, but the question is whether they frequently utilize these sources or not since their responses in the first question reveal that most of them just read the news from time to time.

The usefulness of the news sharing session

The third question deals with the level of the students' appreciation of the news sharing sessions. Table 2 shows that most of the students like this activity while nearly a third find it normal, and a small number of the students (10%) don't like it.

Table 2. The students' appreciation level of the news sharing sessions

| Not at all | Don't like | Normal | Like | Very much | N |
|------------|------------|--------|------|-----------|----|
| 1 | 3 | 11 | 22 | 3 | 40 |
| 2% | 8% | 27% | 55% | 8% | |

There is some correlation between the students' reading frequency and the degree they like the activity as well as the degree of the usefulness of the activity to them. Those who read the news more frequently state that they like the activity more and consider it as more useful than those who seldom read the news. It is understandable.

Table 3 shows how the students rank the usefulness of the news sharing sessions for them. The majority of the students (84%) value this activity as being useful for them. No one considers it as 'not useful at all' while one student states that he/she does not like the activity at all. With 10% don't like the activity, only 8% feel that this activity is not much useful. So it means that although they may not like the activity, they still think it is useful for them in some way. This assumption is supported when 27% choose the middle value (normal) for their favorite level of the activity but only 8% feel so for the usefulness of the activity as they move to more positive values (useful and very useful).

Table 3. The students' ranking of the useful level of the news sharing sessions

| Not at all | Not much | Normal | Useful | Very useful | N |
|------------|----------|--------|--------|-------------|----|
| 0 | 3 | 3 | 19 | 15 | 40 |
| 0% | 8% | 8% | 47% | 37% | |

Most of the students can recognize the benefits of the activity. They give a lot of explanations for their appreciation of the activity as well as the useful level of the activity is concerned. They claim that the activity helps them learn new words, keep up to date with the latest and interesting news, enlarge their knowledge, improve their skills, etc. As one student comments: "I can improve my knowledge, reading and writing skills by reading and brainstorming, summarizing the news, then improve my speaking skill when sharing the news with my

classmates.” Others say that they have the opportunities to read the articles in their favorite topics, learning and exploring at the same time. Another student asserts: “It gives us a motivation to read, helps me improve my reading skill and build a habit of reading the news.” Another confirms: “It keeps me active in reading the news weekly. I hope that the news sharing sessions will give me stimulation to read the news daily in English.” They also comment that the activity is interesting, and it is a chance for them to know something new. One student states: “Some news changes my way of thinking”, so the activity can really trigger critical thinking for the students.

With regard to the fifth question, the students evaluate how they like the activities carried out in the news sharing sessions. The findings are in table 4.

Table 4. The students’ favorite level of the activities in the news sharing sessions

| Activities | Not at all | Don't like | Normal | Like | Very much | N |
|---|------------|------------|--------|------|-----------|----|
| a. Looking for the news at home | 0 | 3 | 22 | 12 | 3 | 40 |
| | 0% | 8% | 54% | 30% | 8% | |
| b. Students’ Power Point presentations | 0 | 0 | 16 | 20 | 4 | 40 |
| | 0% | 0% | 40% | 50% | 10% | |
| c. Exchanging news with classmates | 0 | 3 | 10 | 22 | 5 | 40 |
| | 0% | 8% | 25% | 55% | 12% | |
| d. Students’ reports on news in front of the class | 0 | 5 | 16 | 15 | 4 | 40 |
| | 0% | 12% | 40% | 38% | 10% | |

As we can see, most of the students find looking for the news at home normal or they like this process. They admit this process takes time, but it trains them for persistence, pushes them to activate their reading skills. One student says: “Besides study, I’d like to know more about other kinds of knowledge in different fields.” The reasons some students do not like this process are given as “I have to search a plenty of sources to pick the best news” or “It is not my habit”. So it is because

of the students' laziness, and the teacher must do something to boost their morale and motivation.

Most of them like the PowerPoint presentations. No one states that they do not like this part. Regarding the news exchange with their classmates, the majority enjoy this activity. They claim that discussing with friends is so interesting, and that it is a chance for them to communicate with each other, which makes the class not boring with merely reading activity. They also assert that it helps them enhance their speaking skills. One student reports: "I can gain some interesting news from my friends; otherwise we can miss it." Another student confirms: "It helps enrich my knowledge; learning from classmates is really essentially important."

As for the students' reports on the most interesting news of their groups, there is a fall in the students' appreciation of the activity and a rise in the students' dislike, compared with other parts of the session although there are still approximately half of the students who like it. Some say that they are shy and scared. another reason is that this process is not much effective because many students do not pay attention to the oral reports which lack visual displays in comparison with the PowerPoint presentation at the 'breaking news' stage, and sometimes because of the students' accent, they do not understand the reports much. The reasons they give for enjoying this part are a chance to improve speaking skills, raising their confidence, and gaining more news.

In summary, in order to find their articles, students have to spend considerable time perusing newspapers. Most students find this part rather enjoyable. Ideally, they are establishing a good readership habit that will be useful for their study and their life. Student presentations provide a pleasant variety from class lectures, and students can really make very good presentations. They feel happy when they have chances to exchange information; they enjoy communicating with their classmates and bringing up new information or hot news for their friends.

The students' responses show that this instructional strategy has achieved its goals as the students themselves can recognize the benefits that the activity brings to them.

Ideas for the effectiveness improvement

Question 6 tries to elicit the students' ideas for improving the effectiveness of the activity. Many think that the present news sharing sessions are good. Some propose to limit the topics for each week so that the discussion will be more focused, but the instructor thinks it may not very effective because we cannot anticipate what topic will be of interest next week as we cannot predict the news in the future. One student propounds that we pick one student randomly instead of volunteering to do the report in order to make some lazy "stuck ass" get up and speak. They also want more games on the news.

Question 7 asks the students if they prefer to focus on business news only or on a variety of topics. 37 students (93%) prefer a variety of news; only 1 student (nearly 3%) prefer focusing on business news while 2 students (5%) give neutral ideas stating either way is good. The reasons stated for their preference for a variety of news are: broadening their knowledge in other fields, brings something fresh and new, and hearing about different news is more interesting and can attract more attention. They also affirm that business news is boring, and that because in our lives we do not focus only on business, we need to develop comprehensively. Two students stated: "It may be good if we focus on business news. However, news from a variety of topics will be more interesting", or "I prefer business, but other topics are interesting too."

DRAWBACKS AND LIMITATIONS

During the implementation of the news sharing sessions, what concerns the instructor is the students' ill preparation due to their laziness. Another concern involves the students' enthusiasm in group discussions as they may talk about something else or not speak in English. Other concern is that some of the students don't pay attention to the reports after the group sharing. It is important that the instructor find ways to keep their motivation.

A drawback is that the course is short. We just do four news sharing sessions during the course, and the instructor has to cut short the discussion for the matter of limited time.

One limitation of this project is that it is carried out in only the

advanced-level class. Further research can be done at different levels for comparative results.

SUGGESTIONS

Promoting students' motivation

To achieve the best results for this instructional design, the educator needs to promote students' dynamism and learner autonomy in actively grasping knowledge, creating and participating in the lesson.

The important thing is that the instructor has to state the purpose of the project clearly for the students to understand its benefits. One way to increase students' motivation is to give bonus marks or a prize for those who can find out the most interesting news for each sharing session and for the best presentation.

To keep students' motivation, the instructor has to require students to choose news that is interesting and up to date. The teacher also needs to teach students how to summarize the news and how to report the news in an interesting way.

To deal with the concern about students' enthusiasm, the instructor gives marks for their preparation as well as their note-taking for the in-group sharing in order to make students involved in the activity. As one student suggested in the findings, the teacher can sometimes pick one student randomly instead of letting them volunteer to report the news in front of the class in order to hold the interest of inactive students.

Adding fun, visual displays in the implementation

The teacher can add videos or pictures for illustration to students' reports by quickly searching on the Internet to find the piece of news the students are talking about. The teacher needs to spend more time on debating with some follow-up questions after the student's presentation as well as the students' reports so as to get students more involved in the activity.

The teacher also needs to add some fun and entertainment by designing games on the news. The game may be kind of finding out the answers to some questions about people, events or places, for example,

the names of some ministers or some well-known places, or something related to the hot news in newspapers during the week. Another game is finding out the missing words in a number of headlines from newspapers in the week. All the news must be up to date, and interesting to the students.

Encouraging high quality resources

The national newspapers from English native speaking countries are highly recommended. The level of vocabulary used in national newspapers is assumed more professional than the level of writing and word choice used in many local newspapers.

Deploying different scenarios suitably for different levels

With students at the lower level, the teacher needs to focus more on vocabulary exploration than the debates afterwards. At an advanced level, with more motivated students, the activity can be modified to make it more challenging such as asking the students to edit their own newspaper in English with different sections such as international news, institutional news in which they write about the school, book or movie reviews and quizzes on a web page in groups. The teacher must have a prize for the best one.

CONCLUSION

No one can deny the usefulness of reading English newspapers in the process of learning. If suited to the students' level, newspaper articles can be interesting to read and may trigger some in-class discussion, nurture students' intellectual curiosity, deepen their knowledge, enhance their skills. Besides being an authentic material to use, the newspaper is a versatile and effective teaching tool in helping cultivate a comprehensive student. Ongoing exposure to news will help students be updated and learn more vocabulary which they find useful and practical as it is live language from media. The age of information technology with the advent of online newspapers open new possibilities for both language learning and language instructions; therefore, teachers need to utilize this powerful, useful and helpful source. Integrating news into the curriculum can help optimize learning and serve the long-range goal that is to encourage developmental readers to make newspaper reading a part of their lives.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The questionnaire

Dear my beloved students,
In order to improve the quality of *the news sharing sessions*, I request your support by answering the following questions.

1. How often do you read the news in English? Tick (✓) in the box.

| Never | Seldom | Occasionally | Often | Very often |
|-------|--------|--------------|-------|------------|
| | | | | |

2. What newspapers or websites do you usually get news from?

.....
.....

3. How do you like the news sharing sessions that we did in class? Tick (✓) in the box.

| Not at all | Don't like | Normal | Like | Very much |
|------------|------------|--------|------|-----------|
| | | | | |

Can you tell me why?

.....

4. How useful do you think the news sharing sessions are? Tick (✓) in the box.

| Not at all | Not much | Normal | Useful | Very useful |
|------------|----------|--------|--------|-------------|
| | | | | |

Can you tell me why?

.....

5. How did you like these following activities when we did the news sharing sessions? Tick (✓) in the box.

| Activities | Not at all | Don't like | Normal | Like | Very much |
|---|------------|------------|--------|------|-----------|
| a. Looking for the news at home | | | | | |
| Can you tell me why? | | | | | |
| b. Students' Power Point presentations | | | | | |
| Can you tell me why? | | | | | |
| c. Exchanging news with classmates | | | | | |
| Can you tell me why? | | | | | |
| d. Students' reports on news in front of the class | | | | | |
| Can you tell me why? | | | | | |

6. In your opinions, how can we make the news sharing sessions more effective/ interesting?

.....
.....

7. Which one do you prefer: focusing on business news only or on a variety of topics? Why?

.....
.....

Thank you very much!

Appendix 2: The model note-taking format for students

Student's name:

Headline of the article:

- ❖ Who:
- ❖ What:
- ❖ When:
- ❖ Where:
- ❖ How:
- ❖ Why:

Vocabulary items:

Sharing session:

- From student 1:
- From student 2:
- From student 3:

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APPLYING METACOGNITIVE NOTE-TAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH READING LESSONS TO SECOND-YEAR ENGLISH MAJORS AT BINH DINH COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

Acknowledged as one of the most pivotal elements for successful learning, metacognitive strategies have been encouraged to be widely introduced to students to stimulate their higher level thinking. Metacognitive strategies help students monitor and control their knowledge, skills, emotions and actions effectively. Despite their potential merits, this term seems foreign to students in Binh Dinh province. This study investigated students' awareness of metacognitive strategies during the integration of Metacognitive Note-taking Skills (MNT) and their perceptions on the effects of MNT in English reading lessons. Thirty-five English majors at Binh Dinh College were trained how to use MNT in the pre-, while- and post-reading stages. A pre-test and a post-test on the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies were taken by the students before and after eight-week interventions where the instructions of MNT involved the impressive incorporation of note-taking and metacognitive reading strategies. The study findings indicated that the participants experienced remarkable changes in the use of metacognitive reading strategies. Besides, the results showed the participants' positive perceptions on the use MTN in reading lessons. This study hopefully provides students with innovative instructions not only to gain achievements in language learning but also to build indispensable skills for their lifelong learning.

Keywords: *metacognition, note-taking, reading strategies, metacognitive strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing students' self-direction is one of the most crucial aims of teaching and learning in the long run (Candy, 1991). Oxford (1990) states that training learning strategies enables students to take control of their learning efficiently and effectively. Metacognitive strategies have been regarded as powerful tools to promote students' planning, monitoring and evaluating strategies in their learning process (Bruning, Schraw, & Norby, 2011). Numerous studies have found that students with the frequent use of metacognitive strategies can monitor their knowledge, skills, affections and behaviours successfully (Boyle, Rosen, & Forchelli, 2014; Chiu & Kuo, 2009; Zhao, Wardeska, McGuire, & Cook, 2014). The competency of metacognition is closely associated with higher thinking levels, for example, reflective judgement, critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making (Zhao et al., 2014). Such high-thinking levels can foster learners' independent learning in actively acquiring knowledge and responsibly achieving learning goals (THEA, 2014).

In the English learning context at Binh Dinh College, although students compulsorily spend six semesters to practise their reading skills, students tend to passively complete tasks in three stages of reading instructions (pre-, while-, post-reading) designed by teachers or textbooks. They are still unaware of the effects of relating their previous knowledge to a new reading lesson, planning goals, selecting strategies, regulating their thinking and self-assessing their performance. Students, in reading lessons, are most likely to remember vocabulary, deal with comprehension questions quickly, summarize main ideas or repeat content-based knowledge in a superficial way. In other words, they do not take advantage of knowledge from texts for further practice or real communication. The term 'metacognition' and its values in learning seem to be foreign to students. Moreover, there has been no study to examine students' awareness of metacognition and the effects of instruction of metacognitive strategies into particular lessons at Binh Dinh College. This strongly provokes a need to conduct this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Metacognition

Metacognition is described as thinking about cognitive process (Bruning et al., 2011). German Wikibooks (2016) states that a human brain cognitively processes information by memorizing, encoding, retaining, rehearsing, retrieving and decoding. If cognitive processes fail, metacognition will give some support to achieve cognitive goals (German Wikibooks, 2016). Metacognition enables a person to activate schema, direct attention, and employ appropriate strategies. Additionally, it helps one organise knowledge in the long-term memory, recognise one's weaknesses and strengths of thinking and self-assess to complete a task (Boyle et al., 2014). Metacognition is regarded as executive processes including making plans, regulating their cognitive thinking and evaluating learning objectives (Zhao et al., 2014).

Reading and metacognitive reading strategies

Reading is a part of our crucial needs for information and pleasure; therefore, the instructions of reading skills are really vital for students to become successful readers (Pardede, 2008). Reading is a receptive process involving the combination between readers' understanding of printed materials and their prior knowledge to build meaning (Nunan, 1999). Based on the previous knowledge of linguistics or world, readers make guesses about the meaning of the words or the content of text (Barnett, 1989).

Nunan (1999) states that active readers should manipulate information not only with bottom-up approaches, from extracting written words to constructing their comprehension, but also with top-down views from activating their world knowledge to deciphering a reading text. The latter approaches engage students in stimulating their schemata that enable themselves to explain objects or events in a written text (Pardede, 2008). Strategic readers are believed to frequently employ metacognitive reading strategies (Vo, Luu, & Luu, 2014). Eilers and prinkley (2006) and Riany (2010) cite that metacognitive strategies would enhance students' reading comprehension. Metacognitive strategies also promote students'

interests, high self-efficacy and self-regulation in performing reading tasks (Riany, 2010).

Some guidelines for instructing metacognitive strategies in a specific reading lesson are mentioned in Ahmadi, Ismail, and Abdullah (2013); Djudin (2017); Laraba (2012) and Pardede (2008).

In the pre-reading stage, teachers encourage students to plan reading goals or objectives, which assist students in identifying their own reading purposes and understanding how well they have achieved their expectations at the end of lessons. Teachers provide texts in accordance with students' previous backgrounds of academic or cultural knowledge, interests and age range. Teachers let students allocate the time selectively, activate their schema, skim or preview a text to make guesses or questions.

In the during-reading stage, students should be guided to make predictions about what is to happen next. They take notes to show their comprehension and make questions for their own clarification or for the teacher's help. Students are encouraged to monitor their thinking to complete comprehension questions by selecting appropriate strategies such as chunking, pausing, rereading, scanning and clarifying a word meaning through contexts. They also use double-checking.

In the post-reading stage, students are engaged in a deeper analysis of reading, for example, relating what has been read to their prior knowledge or seeing into the writer's viewpoints. To check their comprehension, students can be encouraged to discuss in groups. They can evaluate the content, tone or style of text, and re-evaluate what and how they have accomplished desired goals and their learning performance.

Note-taking strategies

Note-taking is a process of writing down key information from texts, presentations or lectures in short forms (Mosleh & Baba, 2013). Haghverdi, Biria, and Karimi (2010) cite that note-taking is a critical practice to:

- 1 improve your attention or concentration
- 2 enhance your retention
- 3 organize the received concepts/ input
- 4 actively relate one's knowledge to new concepts

Forms of note-taking

Some popular forms of note-taking are presented in Massey University (2019).

1 The Cornell Method

The Cornell Method divides the paper space into two columns: the left-hand column recording keywords or concepts, and the other writing notes or descriptions that keywords or concepts are related to. The bottom of the page can be used to summarize or organize the information in the notes.

2 The Outlining Method

This method is based on recording a series of topics and sub-topics, and highlighting the note by indenting paragraphs, or using a number a dash or a bullet point for each idea.

3 Mind mapping

A mind map is a diagram showing concepts, ideas or images that radiate from a central concept. The working function of mind-mapping is considered as similar as that of human brain (Buzan & Buzan, 2010).

4 The Charting Method

A charting includes a table of rows and columns. Each column contains a specific category classified from a topic.

| Destination | Interests | Tour cost |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Quy Nhon | Seafood | 3,000,000 VND |
| Danang | Recreational park | 4,500.000 VND |

Empirical studies to support this paper

There has been no literature review of the use of Metacognitive Note-taking Skills (MNT) in reading lessons. Nevertheless, some empirical evidence from the prior studies on metacognitive strategies and note-taking can spur the pursuit of this study.

The improvement of learning performance

The instructions of metacognitive strategies in an undergraduate science classroom helped students increase their performances in their exams and be more critical in their learning (Zhao et al., 2014). Zhao et al. (2014) also asserted that metacognition knowledge entailed more durable, insightful and transferable learning to other courses. Metacognition awareness could promote students' proficiency in writing and attract them to the writing process (Al-Jarrah, Mansor, Talafhah, & Al-Jarrah, 2018).

The study in Mokhtari and Reichard (2004) indicated that when the first-language (US) and second-language (Moroccan) readers had problems in reading comprehension, they were both aware of the importance of frequent use of metacognitive strategies, for example, adapting to reading speed, guessing word meanings, re-reading, self-questioning, note-taking, highlighting, or using dictionary. Djudin (2017) claimed that the teaching models of metacognitive strategies enabled to improve students' problems in vocabulary and reading comprehension.

There have been numerous studies investigating the effects of note-taking in learning. Note-taking instruction assisted students in recalling and cognitively learning ideas (Kiewra, 1985; Piolate, Oliver, & Kellog, 2005). Furthermore, Kiewra (1985) and Boyle et al. (2014) proved that using note-taking stimulated short and long-term memories and supported students to process information efficiently. Note-taking also played an important role in promoting academic achievements (Haghverdi et al., 2010). Significant changes were seen in the use of strategy categories such as analysis, inference, evaluation, inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning before and after the implementation of concept mapping on participants (Cyr & All, 2009).

The enhancement of motivation

There has arguably been a positive relationship between metacognitive strategies and motivation. Participants in Zhao et al. (2014) reported that they felt more joyful and confident in employing metacognitive strategies after some interventions. A large majority of participants also acknowledged that they enjoyed writing activities in classes with the support of metacognitive strategies (Al-Jarrah et al., 2018). Although the scores of reading texts before and after interventions had no significant change, participants noted that they were interested in using metacognitive strategies in planning, monitoring, self-evaluating their reading strategy uses (Riany, 2010). The participants in the study of Haghverdi et al. (2010) responded that the application of note-taking increased positive attitudes in students' learning.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1. To what extent, are there any differences in students' metacognitive awareness of the use of strategies before and after the interventions of metacognitive note-taking skills?*
- 2. What are students' perceptions on the application of Metacognitive Note-taking Skills in English reading lessons?*

THE STUDY

Settings and participants

Reading subject is one of key components of tertiary curricula and is taught in five out of six semesters at college level. Thirty-five participants were recruited through the convenience sampling from the Foreign Language Department in the 20-25 age range. They were studying Reading 3 and had experienced some reading strategies. They volunteered to take part in this study from 110 second-year English majors of three classes, TA12A, TA12B and TA12. All of these participants were also attending the teacher training course for their future jobs as teachers of English. It is noted that their reading proficiency levels are mostly assessed through exams with popular reading tasks such as multiple choice, answering comprehension questions, filling the gaps and summarizing. Furthermore,

metacognition knowledge has not officially been instructed in any English language curriculum.

Data collection instruments

In this study, the instruments collecting data include a test package on the use of metacognitive strategies before and after the interventions, and a questionnaire on participants' perceptions on the integration of MNT in English reading lessons.

Classroom interventions lasted 8 weeks with a 70-minute lecture period per week. In lesson One and Two the teacher introduced the popular types of note-taking and instructed participants how to take note their comprehension effectively during their reading. The teacher stimulated them to deploy mind mapping. Also, the participants were guided to use key words, colors, symbols or pictures to emphasize their comprehension on their notes. In lesson Three, the teacher restated the values of some common reading strategies such as scanning, skimming, guessing words and using dictionary that had officially been presented in previous reading materials. Besides, the teacher explicitly helped the participants employ metacognitive reading strategies during pre-, while-, and post reading, for instance, setting their objectives based on the topic, headings or pictures. They were guided to control their learning, i.e., self-questioning for their clarification, improving their attention, keeping on their purposes, visualizing information, paraphrasing and evaluating the content or their self-regulated strategies. The teacher directed the students to identify their weaknesses and strengths in the use of reading strategies.

In lesson Four and Five, the teacher provided a guide for applying MNT (Figure 1) and directed them to use in their reading practice. This metacognitive note-taking model was adapted from the version designed by Faculty Innovate (2012). This model contained instructed questions which aided the participants in formulating, regulating and presenting their cognition on paper while taking part in class reading activities. After some practice, the participants were informed of the values of using this guide, and implicitly integrated the term 'metacognition' and metacognitive strategies. Next three lessons, the participants were engaged in freely employing the MNT model. The

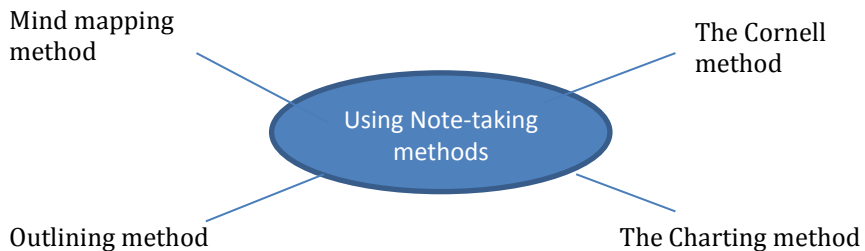
teacher involved the students in keeping their own notes and sharing in groups so that they could learn one another's thinking, evaluate their performance and advance their notes (Chiu & Kuo, 2009).

Beginning of Reading Class - Plan & Connect

Date:

Course:

Connections: What do I already know about this topic? How does it relate to something I already know about? What questions do I already have about this topic?



Middle of Reading Class – Monitor Learning

| Monitoring Learning | Notes |
|--|---|
| <p>-Create a left hand column for noting insights, confusions and questions that arise.</p> <p>- Record insights and “ah-huh!” moments. If you suddenly realize that you understand something, or you make a connection between the current material and something you already know (such as previous course material), make sure to write those thoughts down. You may also include feelings and other comments.</p> <p>- Write questions. Questions are the best evidence you have</p> | <p>(can use a variety of note-taking)</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>that you are actually thinking about the material.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note your responses to the questions you have. -What strategies you have used. - Pay attention to what is happening inside your head (metacognition). - Note items to follow up on. | |
|--|--|

End of Class – Reflect and Evaluate Learning

At the bottom of your notes for each class, write a summary. Below are some guiding questions to assist with writing.

1. What were the most important ideas of today's class session?
2. What did I hear today that is in conflict with my prior understanding?
3. How did the ideas of today's class session relate to previous class sessions?
4. What do I need to actively go and do now to get my questions answered and my confusions clarified?
5. What did I find most interesting about class today?

Summary: **(can use a variety of note-taking)**

Figure 1. A guide of Metacognitive Note-taking Skills

The test package was adapted from the Survey of Awareness of Reading Strategies (SARS) (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). Vo et al. (2014) claimed that the SARS package was clear and easy for non-native students to understand. The SARS had 30 items in terms of Global Strategies, Problem-solving Strategies and Support Strategies. Also, these items offered a wide array of metacognitive reading strategies in connection with planning, monitoring and evaluating strategies (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). A 5-point Likert scale in SARS test was used in the range from 5 (always), 4 (usually), 3 (sometimes), 2 (occasionally) to 1 (never) (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002).

Another questionnaire was developed by the researcher to examine the participants' perceptions on the effects of the use of MNT in terms of learning achievements and motivation. The questionnaire covered a 5-point Likert scale from 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (uncertain), 2 (disagree), 1 (strongly disagree).

DATA ANALYSIS

The participants completed the SARS Packet before the intervention of MNT as a pretest. After the intervention implementation, the participants took a SARS post-test and a Perception Questionnaire. The results of the pretest were not announced to the respondents. The quantitative data were put into SPSS Statistics Package. The Descriptive Statistic and the Paired-Samples T-test were processed in this study.

Findings and discussion

RQ1: Are there any differences in students' awareness of the use of metacognitive strategies before and after the interventions of metacognitive note-taking skills?

Table 1. Differences in participants' use of individual strategies of metacognitive reading

| Strategy items | Test (n=35) | Mean | SD | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------|-------------|--------|--------|-----------------|
| GLOBAL1 | Pretest | 2.5714 | .85011 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.3429 | .59125 | |
| GLOBAL2 | Pretest | 2.6286 | .54695 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.1143 | .63113 | |
| GLOBAL3 | Pretest | 2.6571 | .76477 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.2857 | .51856 | |
| GLOBAL4 | Pretest | 2.7714 | .68966 | .037 |
| | Posttest | 3.0286 | .45282 | |
| GLOBAL5 | Pretest | 1.8857 | .52979 | .083 |
| | Posttest | 1.9714 | .51368 | |
| GLOBAL6 | Pretest | 3.2286 | .42604 | .002 |
| | Posttest | 3.4857 | .61220 | |

| Strategy items | Test (n=35) | Mean | SD | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------|------------------------|
| GLOBAL7 | Pretest | 2.9714 | .61767 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.3429 | .48159 | |
| GLOBAL8 | Pretest | 3.0571 | .48159 | .006 |
| | Posttest | 3.3714 | .49024 | |
| GLOBAL9 | Pretest | 2.0000 | .48507 | .003 |
| | Posttest | 2.3714 | .64561 | |
| GLOBAL10 | Pretest | 1.9143 | .37349 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.5143 | .56211 | |
| GLOBAL11 | Pretest | 2.0571 | .23550 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.2000 | .58410 | |
| GLOBAL12 | Pretest | 2.2000 | .63246 | .083 |
| | Posttest | 2.2857 | .57248 | |
| GLOBAL13 | Pretest | 2.1714 | .61767 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.3143 | .58266 | |
| SUPPORT1 | Pretest | 1.9429 | .41606 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.8286 | .56806 | |
| SUPPORT2 | Pretest | 2.2286 | .42604 | .160 |
| | Posttest | 2.2857 | .45835 | |
| SUPPORT3 | Pretest | 3.1143 | .32280 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 4.1429 | .35504 | |
| SUPPORT4 | Pretest | 2.5429 | .61083 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.1714 | .38239 | |
| SUPPORT5 | Pretest | 1.8571 | .42997 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.2571 | .65722 | |
| SUPPORT6 | Pretest | 2.5714 | .65465 | .044 |
| | Posttest | 2.6857 | .67612 | |
| SUPPORT7 | Pretest | 2.2857 | .75035 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.2857 | .51856 | |
| SUPPORT8 | Pretest | 3.3714 | .54695 | .001 |
| | Posttest | 3.0286 | .16903 | |

| Strategy items | Test (n=35) | Mean | SD | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|------------------|-------------|--------|--------|-----------------|
| SUPPORT9 | Pretest | 2.8857 | .47101 | .002 |
| | Posttest | 3.1429 | .35504 | |
| PROBLEM-SOLVING1 | Pretest | 2.8000 | .47279 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.4571 | .50543 | |
| PROBLEM-SOLVING2 | Pretest | 2.8000 | .58410 | .044 |
| | Posttest | 2.9143 | .56211 | |
| PROBLEM3 | Pretest | 3.1714 | .45282 | 0.16 |
| | Posttest | 3.2286 | .42604 | |
| PROBLEM4 | Pretest | 2.8000 | .58410 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 3.2571 | .44344 | |
| PROBLEM5 | Pretest | 2.0286 | .29563 | .001 |
| | Posttest | 2.3429 | .53922 | |
| PROBLEM6 | Pretest | 1.8000 | .47279 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 2.9714 | .61767 | |
| PROBLEM7 | Pretest | 2.5714 | .65465 | .012 |
| | Posttest | 2.7429 | .61083 | |
| PROBLEM8 | Pretest | 3.0571 | .48159 | .044 |
| | Posttest | 3.1714 | .38239 | |

Table 2. Differences in participants' overall use of metacognitive reading strategies

Paired Samples Test

| | | Paired Differences | | | | | T | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---|-----------|---------|----|--------------------|
| | | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pair 1 | Pretest - posttest | -1.65429E1 | 5.30451 | .89663 | -18.36502 | -14.72069 | -18.450 | 34 | .000 |

Table 1 and 2 indicate data on whether there were any significant divergences in the students' awareness of strategy use between the two tests. Table 1 displays that there were significant differences in 27 out of 30 surveyed subscale items ($p \leq 0.05$) between the pretest and posttest. Despite 4 items including GLOBAL5 (reviewing text's length or organization), GLOBAL12 (guessing what's next while reading) and SUPPORT2 (reading aloud) and PROBLEM3 (adjusting reading speed) having no significant divergence, all means of 30 subscales in the posttest were higher than those in the pretest except for SUPPORT8 (translating from English into the mother tongue). This shows that the application of MNT brought positive impacts to the students. Dramatic increases in taking note while reading (SUPPORT1); paraphrasing (SUPPORT5) critical analysis and evaluation (GLOBAL10); checking understanding (GLOBAL11), and guessing unknown word meaning (PROBLEM 6) were reported. The respondents also claimed their greater use of highlighting information in the text to help remembering (SUPPORT3). Besides, 11 other subscales had the posttest mean range from a high of 3.25, namely GLOBAL1 (setting a purpose in mind), GLOBAL3 (guessing content based on an overall view), GLOBAL6 (scanning), GLOBAL7 (observing visual help in text), GLOBAL8 (identifying context clues to have better understanding), GLOBAL10, SUPPORT1, SUPPORT5, SUPPORT7 (making own questions), PROBLEM1 (reading carefully), and PROBLEM4 (paying closer attention). In spite of a rise in the posttest scores, 5 out of 30 subscales still fell in the low usage (mean below 2.5), comprising GLOBAL5, GLOBAL9, GLOBAL12, SUPPORT2 and PROBLEM5.

In comparison with the key features of metacognitive development, data analyses before and after the interventions reveal the participants' greater awareness of the strategy use largely associated with planning, monitoring and evaluating. Regarding planning strategies, the participants became more cognizant of setting goals and allocating time. They made guesses based on overall views or visual materials on text. They related their prior knowledge to the reading text. Taking turn to monitor strategies, they acknowledged they controlled their attention and used various strategies to keep their reading on track, for example, rereading, paraphrasing, pausing, asking questions, highlighting, taking notes or visualizing information. They

are mindful of applying both bottom-up and top-down reading processing (guessing unknown words based on context and thinking in both English and mother tongue). Data on table 1 also presented a higher use of evaluating strategies such as critically analyzing, evaluating information and comparing their guesses after finishing reading.

Table 2 illustrates a significant difference in the overall use of reading strategies made by the respondents between the two tests ($p = .000$). The findings support the research reports of Boyle et al. (2014); Riany (2010) and Zhao et al. (2014) showing that the explicit integration of metacognitive strategies into lessons can result in students' positive changes in manipulating metacognitive strategies.

RQ2: Students' perceptions on the application of Metacognitive Note-taking Skills

Table 3. Respondents' perceptions on the effects of metacognitive note-taking skills

| (n=35) | Frequency | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| | Strongly agree | agree | uncertain | disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1. Make the class atmosphere lively and attractive | 0 | 28 | 6 | 1 | |
| 2. Encourage students to share their ideas | 1 | 27 | 6 | 1 | |
| 3. Make students more confident to express their thinking on paper | 2 | 22 | 11 | 0 | |
| 4. make students more confident to orally present their ideas | 0 | 11 | 23 | 0 | |
| 5. Make students freely express their ideas on paper | 3 | 16 | 16 | 0 | |
| 6. Express their ideas in a creative way | 0 | 18 | 17 | 0 | |
| 7. help remembering | 2 | 28 | 5 | 0 | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|---|--|
| 8. Encourage students to relate their knowledge to new information | 0 | 29 | 6 | 0 | |
| 9. Stimulate students to use new information in meaningful communication | 0 | 6 | 29 | 0 | |
| 10. Extend attention span | 0 | 30 | 4 | 1 | |
| 11. Help students compare their thoughts before and after reading lessons | 2 | 29 | 4 | 0 | |
| 12. Increase reading comprehension | 1 | 18 | 16 | 0 | |
| 13. Increase their vocabulary | 3 | 29 | 3 | 0 | |
| 14. Make reading lessons more communicative | 2 | 19 | 14 | 0 | |
| 15. Help students advance their ideas | 2 | 23 | 9 | 1 | |
| 16. Identify their weaknesses and strengths in reading comprehension | 1 | 16 | 18 | 0 | |
| 17. Recognize their weaknesses and strengths in using reading strategies. | 1 | 19 | 15 | 0 | |
| 18. Encourage students to further reading | 1 | 18 | 16 | 0 | |
| 19. Engage students in communicating in English with friends | 0 | 14 | 20 | 1 | |
| 20. are useful for various English lessons and different courses | 2 | 16 | 15 | 2 | |

Data analyses of the five-point likert questionnaire showed the participants' positive attitudes towards the implementation of MNT in reading lessons. 80% of participants reported that the integration of MNT made the class atmosphere lively and attractive. The majority of the participants agreed that they were more confident to express their thinking on paper in a free and creative manner. Hanrahan (1998) states that proper learning atmosphere can create intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Learners in a desirable learning environment will increase their deep learning (Nunan, 1999).

More than half of the participants acknowledged that using MNT could make reading lessons more communicative (Question 14). It was seen that over 70% of participants expressed or compared their own their personal ideas on paper (personal communication). Despite just nearly 40% of the respondents noting that they were really engaged in English communication with friends, it was a positive point of class interaction in reading periods. Findings from Question 4, 9 and 19 (more than 20 out of the participants being uncertain) were a notice for the researchers to carry out further research for more exploration. It seems that the time length of the intervention was not enough to develop oral communication efficiently for all participants.

Question 7, 10 and 13 received high agreement (over 80%) on benefits of note-taking use from the respondents. The findings were consistent with those in Heidari and Karimi (2015) and Santa, Abrams, and Santa (1979) which show the positive effects of note-taking on learning vocabulary and retaining memory. Besides, this study results supported the advantages of note-taking in keeping attention span (Haghverdi et al., 2010).

The results showed the respondents' positive perceptions on the metacognitive strategy use that reaffirmed findings in Riany (2010) and Boyle et al. (2014) . A large number of participants implicitly indicated that they made guesses before reading (Question 8 and 11) and evaluated them when finishing texts. Also, it is noted that note-taking helped the students monitor their retention, attention span and the selection of strategies. More than half of the respondents revealed that they re-evaluated their comprehension and their use of reading strategies (Question 16 and 17). 19 out of 35 students reported they

were encouraged to further reading, and 71% of participants would like to advance their ideas on their notes. The explicit guide of using note-taking with given metacognitive questions positively affected the students' metacognitive thinking.

The participants agreed that MNT enhanced their reading comprehension. Although there was not a reading test to examine their comprehension during the study, their positive attitudes were a key predictor to stimulate their practice of 'frequent reading' (Riany, 2010, p. p.150). The findings contributed to strengthening the study of Laraba (2012) which attempted to apply monitoring strategies to develop students' reading comprehension. Interestingly, the majority acknowledged that MNT could be useful across various English lessons and courses. The data, in addition, reinforced the findings of Zhao et al. (2014).

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The study indicates that teachers should integrate the instructions of MNT to promote students' use of metacognitive strategies properly and efficiently. The study findings suggest effective initiatives to teach not only reading skills but also across different skills or courses. With the guidance and encouragement from teachers for the use of MNT, students are able to be conscious of prominent strategies which can promote their self-regulation and motivation in their lifelong learning.

The perceptions of the participants on MNT should be conducted with a mixed research method to explore more details. There need more studies on how to use MNT to develop students' presentations. It suggests that more studies can be done to explore the perceptions of teachers of English and EFL learners at different education levels.

Nevertheless, there exist some limitations in this paper.

Firstly, due to the small number of participants from one specific context at Binh Dinh College, the findings cannot be applicable to all population. Secondly, the researcher was the reading teacher of the respondents might influence the respondents' perceptions on the effects of metacognitive note-taking use. Next, the limited time for the interventions and practices can lead to surfaced conclusions. Lastly, conducting the single research of questionnaires can encounter the limited explorations

of the actual interventions and the results' credibility.

CONCLUSION

After the 8-week implementation of MNT, the participants reported positive changes in employing metacognitive strategies in reading. The students became more aware of their self-regulation, attribution and motivation during reading practice. This study demonstrates that metacognition is able to be teachable. Also, it is believed that the integration of MNT can be a pleasant experience that promotes students' deep and independent learning. It is proposed to widen the sample number of participants, research methods and the time length of practice to improve the research scale.

It is hoped that this study practically contributes to syllabus design and is selectively integrated into the present course. Further research can be carried out to strengthen the benefits of metacognitive instructions in different lessons and courses for EFL learners.

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CULTURE – PROJECT – BASED LEARNING

IDENTIFYING THE PERCEPTIONS OF EFL TEACHERS REGARDING THE CULTIVATION OF CULTURAL AND INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS IN READING CLASS: AN INTERVIEW STUDY

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ABSTRACT

When learners have a good knowledge of the cultural differences, they are provided with the opportunity to develop an appreciation of cultural diversity and to be more tolerant of cultures outside their own frame of reference. There has been an increasing amount of research into the question of how much cultural content should be included in English language teaching (ELT) textbooks. To date, however, there has been a scarcity of studies into how teachers perceive the promotion of cultural and intercultural awareness. This study endeavors to fill this gap in knowledge through in-depth interviews with ten senior-high school teachers from Thailand, who not only specialize in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) but also have extensive experience in the integration of cultural elements into ELT classes. The results of these interviews indicated that every one of the interviewees regards cultural awareness as an essential element of language teaching, for a number of reasons. On the other hand, their views of intercultural awareness were quite different, as they saw this higher level of culturally sensitive behavior as problematic for students whose educational level limited both their linguistic skills and their critical thinking capability.

Keywords: *teaching culture, cultural awareness, intercultural awareness.*

INTRODUCTION

It would be difficult to teach language without acknowledging the culture that the language comes from, as a result of culture and

language being inextricably linked. This interconnection has been the subject of a great deal of research literature, with Brown (2000) arguing that language and culture are so strongly interwoven that they cannot be isolated from each other without each losing some significance. When learners have a good understanding of cultural similarities and differences, they are able to develop a more positive attitude to cultural diversity, while this, in turn, promotes a greater sense of tolerance and appreciation for the differences between cultures. Sadeghi and Sepahi (2017) suggest that this awareness can lead to communication being more culturally appropriate and effective on an intercultural level.

There has been an increasing amount of research into the degree to which cultural content is included in ELT textbooks. Studies including that by Weninger and Kiss (2013) have considered cultural representations through the lens of the textual and visual materials in textbooks and have taken a critical approach. Meanwhile, Byram (1997) and Shin et al. (2011) suggest that teaching culture should go beyond presenting simple cultural facts since learners need to be given the opportunity to analyze cultural practices and their meanings. The role of the teacher should therefore go further than simply communicating factual information about the target culture and instead provide teaching that allows students to develop their skills in understanding the facts about the new culture that they will come across in the course of their study. Omaggio (1993) advises that such an approach will allow students to be better prepared for the new situations that they encounter with regard to cultural differences. In addition, language teachers' training should enable them to encourage students to understand the reasons behind the beliefs or actions of the cultural group whose language they are learning (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993). Similarly, Kelly et al. (2002) considers that the role of language teachers is vital in allowing students to develop a broader understanding of the world and to play an active part in it through the ability to communicate across the various cultural and linguistic boundaries. The opinions of these scholars are indicative of the important role that language teachers play in terms of disseminating cultural information, which strongly suggests the necessity of research into further aspects of cultural education in language classes.

Spending time raising the cultural awareness of students may be something that language teachers question; they may believe that simply teaching language and cultural knowledge and assessing the learning outcomes is sufficient. However, Hudson (1982) argues that culture is the facilitator of understanding foreign language content and that this is particularly the case for second language (L2) learners, as their background knowledge is frequently culture-specific, and they rely on content schemata to offset the limitations of their second language proficiency. Raising awareness of the benefits of understanding both local and unfamiliar cultures is therefore vital as differences in attitudes, values and beliefs constitutes a large proportion of the issues presented when learning a foreign language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A shift towards intercultural awareness in ELT context

Over the last few decades, cultural awareness (CA) has emerged as a significant element of hypothesizing the cultural dimension of language teaching. In other words, it is imperative that L2 users understand that L2 communication is a cultural process and they should be aware of the culturally-based communicative behavior of themselves and others, according to Baker (2011a). Baker (2009) also points out that inherent in cultural awareness is the ability to understand the effect of cultural contexts on communication and to ascertain the similarities and differences between cultures by comparing them. When cultural awareness is taught, this enables cultural perspectives to be reevaluated and relativized, resulting in the ability to moderate between different cultural frames of reference. Jones (1995) suggests that cultural awareness can be increased by understanding the social conventions and similarities and differences between different language community groups, as well as learning about language as culture, what is unfamiliar about a target language community, and linguistic groups' stereotypes and attitudes towards each other.

However, Baker (2009, 2011a) also argues that while cultural knowledge has a pivotal role in contributing to comprehending and relativizing cultural differences, it is important that this is combined

with an understanding that cultural influences in intercultural communication can be a dynamic and sometimes disjointed process that may not have definitive boundaries. It is therefore necessary that not only cultural awareness, but also intercultural awareness, is achieved through successful communication in English in order to find common ground. The definition of intercultural awareness (ICA) in relevant literature is having a conscious understanding of the role played by culturally-based practices and frames of reference in intercultural communication. According to Baker (2009, 2011a, 2011b), this definition should also encompass the ability to put these ideas into practice in a flexible way in real life, using a context-specific approach. Baker (2011a, b) proposes an ICA model that has basic cultural awareness as its foundation. This is then built on with a more developed understanding of language and culture, termed advanced cultural awareness, before intercultural awareness is finally achieved through the more flexible and synthesized understanding of cultures and languages that is necessary when using English in global settings.

Taking into account the critical role that language educators play in teaching about culture, as well as the current direction toward intercultural awareness, this study will endeavor to explore the views of language teachers regarding cultural and intercultural awareness in language classes. The subjects of this study are Thai EFL teachers who have a great deal of experience in teaching culture in language reading classes. The selection of language educators who teach reading was based on the fact that their exposure to cultural elements had been enhanced by the continual reading of exercises and passages that have allowed them to combine their knowledge of different domains with sociocultural aspects. The researcher believes that this will have helped to foster increased sensitivity and intercultural knowledge, thereby enabling the researcher to determine findings that will be of particular use to other language educators who want to improve their instructional pedagogy, despite the small number of participants. The research questions for the in-depth interviews are below:

- 1 *What are teachers' perceptions about increasing students' cultural awareness in reading classes?*
- 2 *What are teachers' perceptions about increasing students' intercultural awareness in reading classes?*

The participants' views regarding these two levels of awareness were investigated in relation to the topics discussed in reading classes. It should be noted that all teacher participants have been using the same set of textbook which embraces several aspects of international cultures including arts, ethics, values, beliefs and customs, as well as science and technology.

THE STUDY

Demographic profile of participants

Ten in-service senior-high school English teachers participated in this investigation, nine of whom were female. The participants were recruited from three private schools in the Northeastern region of Thailand. Their ages ranged from 47 to 58 and they had between 18- and 25-years' experience in teaching English. With regard to their educational qualifications, two of the participants had gained master's degrees in applied linguistics, while the remainder had bachelor's degrees in subjects including linguistics, secondary education, English language and literature and English education. Prior to becoming English teachers, all of the participants had received a professional teaching diploma. The participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in research since the study is qualitative and limited to those who had taught culture as part of English reading classes.

However, it should be primarily noted that this research is preliminary in nature. The data has not yet been completely collected for the reason that a number of other participants from the same schools has requested to reschedule the interviews. The researcher therefore decided to delay the interviews with these teacher participants to accommodate their academic loads. The preliminary sample (N = 10) may result in an imbalanced distribution of participants' gender and age-groups.

DATA COLLECTION

The researcher conducted the interviews individually in Thai, using a semi-structured format. The principal issues covered in each interview included: the participant's experiences of teaching about culture in English reading classes; their perceptions of cultural and intercultural awareness; and what motivated them to teach about culture. Further issues included what stimulated them to raise students' awareness about the need to understand different cultures, beliefs and values and the difficulties they found when attempting to boost students' cultural and intercultural awareness. Finally, the researcher asked the participants to describe the methods that they used to deal with unfamiliar cultural contents when teaching students.

Three of the interviewees requested a face-to-face interview, while the remaining interviews took place online. Prior to the interviews taking place, the researcher informed each participant about the anonymous and confidential nature of the data collection process, as well as the fact that they had the right to withdraw at any time. To ensure common understanding, the notion of cultural and intercultural awareness was clearly explained. The interviews were conducted in standard Thai and audio-recorded; each lasted approximately 30-40 minutes, with an average length of 34.5 minutes.

DATA ANALYSIS

The responses from participants involved in the interview were transcribed verbatim to create an accurate account of the interview contents. These written recordings based on participant responses were then returned to each participant to ensure that the scripts were accurate. This constant comparative method is applied from a systematic methodology known as grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). An investigation of the categories in the written data took place. The researcher and his assistant then attempted to account for these results. Patterns that repeatedly occurred in the data were established as results. This decreases the influence of potential researcher influence. The study implemented an inter-rater reliability assessment to ensure that the results were precise to mitigate the fact that the interviewees might express mixed responses across different categories. The second rater is currently a doctoral student in applied

linguistics, with a specific research interest in intercultural communication and cultural studies. This rater also has several years' experience of teaching English at a university in Thailand and his training involved a thorough overview of the meaning of the coding rubrics. There was sufficient reliability in the coders' agreement of the teachers' perceptions, with this stated as 0.84 and 0.88 respectively (k 's value).

FINDINGS

The preliminary findings are illustrated in the form of assertions that indicate responses to the two research questions.

Assertion 1: Increasing cultural recognition within education is extremely important for teachers that work in language classes.

This is because it allows school students to curtail potential judgement, to raise awareness of discrepancies between how people live, their morals, their faith, how they operate in society, and how they connect with others. This means students are engaged in their learning and are better able to adapt to a culturally-diverse society.

This assertion is in agreement with The Basic Education Core Curriculum (A.D. 2008) which highlights the importance of encouraging diversity in education and that Thai students ought to understand cross-cultural differences across the world. Additionally, school students are taught to understand and enjoy their own cultural identity and to portray this identity to the whole world (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Overall, the teachers' opinions highlighted that teaching students about a variety of cultures is vital in reducing the students' judgement that individuals from the United Kingdom and United States of America are exemplary English speakers. Many participants believed that educators ought to incorporate a more multicultural focus to encourage involvement from students who may be from a variety of cultures and to include space for the consideration of other cultures in the teaching of English. This would also allow students to investigate and gain a greater understanding of cultural narratives and information that is intrinsic to particular cultures across the educational curriculum, especially in reading classes.

‘A cultural identity is more than just having information about a particular country’s customs and beliefs. It is a way of life and a means by which individuals connect with one another. It is important to increase this sentiment within education in addition to emphasizing definitive markers of a culture which can aid individuals’ understanding of how to relate to and connect with each other’ (Teacher 7)

‘By educating students about cultural diversity in English classes, students are engaging with information on a global scale. It also helps students to move away from the idea that the United Kingdom and the United States of America are representative of the English-speaking world. Additionally, educators might have to construct their own learning content to encourage students to understand international diversity. This would stop individuals from believing that their own culture is superior to other cultures’ (Teacher 10)

The majority of participants highlighted that increasing cultural understanding and intercultural disparities helps students to understand key features of a culture, such as: religion, customs, familial expectations, how society operates etc. These discrepancies ought to be understood by students and appropriately explained to them. The participants also described that language educators commence a literacy class by requesting that students read, convert the language and understand the meaning of what they are reading. Sometimes, this means that the standards established by the teachers are met, but problems remain if the content of the reading material is so vastly distinctive to their own cultural beliefs that they are unable to understand the problems presented in the content that they read. If this occurs, students no longer remain engaged by these stories because they are not in keeping with their own cultural norms and cannot make a connection to their own culture. However, if the problems presented in the stories are explained thoroughly, this facilitates a positive understanding in the difference between cultures, which encourages students to remain engaged in lessons at school.

‘Whilst students are able to gain a greater knowledge of various facets of a culture, language teachers must provide more than a basic explanation of the written content. It is important that they describe why there are different international opinions and norms, especially the things that cultures have in common as well as discrepancies between the student’s own cultural practices and those of other people. If students are not aware of these discrepancies, it could lead to confusion and judgements being made. If this occurs, students may not be as eager to learn about cultural awareness when studying a foreign language’ (Teacher 3)

Assertion 2: Encouraging understanding about intercultural experiences when in a language class can be daunting. This is because it is difficult to increase an individual’s capability to think critically and analytically due to their limited knowledge on both mainstream and non-mainstream cultures which is a result of their own level of education, interest in other cultures, and complexity in culture-specific content.

The participants revealed that they respect the importance of increasing awareness of intercultural practices. However, this is difficult to achieve and is not always practical when in school because schools are limited by their own economic status and their ability to adapt to the curriculum’s content. Baker (2011b) describes the way in which intercultural practices are flexible and move beyond the scope of established boundaries. As a result, it can be difficult for students to understand the intricate nature of cultural practices, particularly students that do not have strong academic, critical and logical thinking skills in relation to world knowledge. Due to this, students may not remain encouraged or attentive when learning about these cultural discrepancies and do not have a basic understanding of ways in which cultures differ. This is problematic in reading classes where students are expected to critically analyze similarities and differences between cultures. In addition, the participants explained that the ability to think independently is difficult for students because they are accustomed to being taught via old-fashioned methods and do not have the mental flexibility to formulate their own opinions or raise questions about what they are learning.

'In school, students had to learn information across their whole curriculum using their memory, instead of analyzing the way in which information related to one another. When students took part in English reading lessons, they learned that cultural practices must not be retained within strict boundaries. It was hard for students to understand the narrative pertinent to the culture that had connections to different groups within society and regions' (Teacher 4)

'Many school students lacked a knowledge about a culture before attending classes. The students had only a basic knowledge about cultures other than their own. The students had not been encouraged to link the educational content with personal experience and to analyze the information taught to them by educational staff. I think that students can learn how to connect their cultural knowledge learned in classes with their own learning out with their school classes. In this way, the students would gain a greater awareness of the interconnectivity of cultural practices and norms, which would facilitate improved cultural understanding' (Teacher 2)

Assertion 3: Teachers can be intimidated when having to encourage students to have a more in-depth understanding of cultural complexity because the teachers must have experience and possess the ability to teach about many facets of other cultural norms. Participants portrayed that this is arduous and beyond their capabilities to create curriculum content to teach this international and cultural understanding.

Getting students ready to engage with intercultural awareness at school is not difficult to do, however, it becomes burdensome when teachers must create educational strategies that facilitate students' understanding and improve their language and cultural awareness concurrently. Additionally, many aspects of the curriculum's content surround a particular culture's history, religious beliefs and societal norms. A few teachers explained that when preparing the educational material, they struggle to establish a way in which to commence the lesson, despite knowing that they must create activities that make use

of interdisciplinary knowledge to improve students' understandings about culture. The participants also expressed that they do not have enough time to improve their own understanding of intercultural awareness and they must increase their own knowledge amongst their usual responsibilities as a teacher at school.

'Being able to get students to engage in the reading material is difficult. I am aware that cultural associations and implications within intercultural communication could be linked to definitive nationalities. However, it has been hard to express why there are similarities and discrepancies in various cultural aspects (social norms, beliefs, cultural narratives) due to my lack of knowledge in cultures out with my own understanding and experience' (Teacher 1)

'Sometimes, I often get lost and I am unable to think of ways in which curriculum content can be incorporated into school lessons. As a result, I told the students to create comparisons and discrepancies of cultural norms between the students' own beliefs and that of the culture in the text content. I think I must derive improved ways of creating educational tasks that will enable students to enthusiastically partake in lessons that depict the comparisons and discrepancies between the culture being studied and the students' own cultural practices. However, I was unable to establish this lesson plan because of the volume of work I have to do, in addition to my obligations at work' (Teacher 7)

The study also highlights the way in which teachers lacked further training opportunities to help teachers feel comfortable and competent when teaching about cultural practices. The participants mirrored the critique that many school guidelines overly-dedicate time on the importance of creating curriculum content and teaching methods, yet fail to support teachers when they need to revise their linguistic understanding and comprehension as well as the cultural implications of learning a language. The participants believed that training workshops that would improve their language awareness and understanding as well as interdisciplinary knowledge would help them

to implement engaging lessons for their students and facilitate the improvement in both their own and the students' critical, analytical and logical thinking skills.

'I was requested to partake in many training workshops, however, many of the workshops regarded the issue of how to excel at teaching, how to create engaging lesson content, and psychological techniques that could be used in a classroom environment. I am of the opinion that many schools dedicate a lot of emphasis on these facets of teaching. They must be honest about the fact that teachers have to supplement their own knowledge in order to keep abreast of current affairs. Teachers are susceptible to not remembering certain skills and techniques that they obtained when they first started their teaching career, and it is difficult for a teacher to be able to teach multiple subjects and areas of education. As a result, teachers should be provided with more training opportunities that have the purpose of increasing their knowledge about the educational content that connects different subject areas' (Teacher 6)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Overall, the preliminary findings from this study demonstrate that cultural knowledge and understanding is a key component of language lessons in schools. However, the participants did not appear to be greatly enthused by the prospect of having to encourage intercultural awareness and understanding due to the students having a lack of critical, analytical and problem-solving skills in addition to being restricted by their own level of education and background. This pessimistic view was further substantiated by the participants' limited experience and understanding of particular cultural norms and practices and subsequent limited training about such matters. Additionally, many teachers were unaware of how to commence creating curriculum content for these topics, which required both simple and more complicated input. This has been echoed in literature, which emphasizes how teachers are not made aware of the extent of time and effort required to create lessons that will help students to become engaged in

learning about other cultures (Mantle-Bromley, 1992).

Whilst it is essential for students to look at the discrepancies that exist within different cultures, it is important to be aware of the intricate links within a culture's societal norms, beliefs, historical and political landscape. The researcher proposes that participants who expressed a more pessimistic view of the complex nature of culture is not always inaccurate. However, it is important to note that a student's ability to relate to the information in the reading classes is reliant on their prior knowledge about a specific culture before engaging with the material in class. Moreover, prior culturally-specific knowledge assumed by the writer could potentially hinder readers' understanding and cause them to pay less attention in class (Awayed-Bishara, 2015). As a result, this could have negative consequences for teachers who try to have lessons about cultural practices. Neff and Rucynski (2013) posit that teachers have to supplement their own understanding and knowledge about cultures as books and educational materials rarely depict accurate connections between language and cultural practices. This means that teachers must create educational lessons that will inspire students. This could prove difficult because teachers have many responsibilities and obligations in addition to creating lessons, which will limit the time that is required to supplement their own understanding of cultural practices and norms.

In conclusion, this study illustrates that, in order to increase knowledge and understanding about other cultures, teachers must be provided with further training workshops that link the deeper aspects of foreign cultures, such as the historical, political and geographical components of another culture. This study also highlights the importance of language teachers conducting a baseline assessment so that they are able to gain an overview of the students' current cultural knowledge and awareness prior to lessons beginning. Teachers should also encourage lessons in which students can express their opinions to facilitate improved independent, critical and analytical thinking skills in their students. This study is limited because it only investigated teachers' perceptions about cultural teachings and a small sample size was used. In the future, research must focus on triangulating teachers' perceptions about ways in which they can further enhance and improve their understanding of intercultural awareness.

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AN EVALUATION OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING DESIGNED TO INCREASE STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING FLUENCY AT HONG BANG INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

How to increase Vietnamese students' English speaking fluency is a big concern for most English teachers at HIU. Project-based learning (PBL) seems to be an effective way to enhance students' fluency, and the effects of the use of PBL are what the researcher is willing to discover in the study. Instead of learning English in traditional classrooms, fifty-eight freshmen learning English as a Foreign Language were guided to work in groups to create and show their artifacts to their classmates in English. The PBL learners selected their favourite topics, asking questions, looking for information, using materials, and answering the questions. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used to conduct the research at HIU, and the findings show that PBL really enhances the development of students' fluency in speaking English. Some positive effects were found on PBL students: a significant increase in motivation and engagement in English study, and high development of essential skills, such as communication, critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration. It is hoped that due to the light of findings English teachers at HIU will study further the use of PBL implemented in English teaching in order to improve students' speaking fluency at university in Vietnam.

Keywords: *Project-based learning (PBL), spoken fluency, English as a Foreign Language.*

INTRODUCTION

In the current trend of globalization, more and more people are concerned with learning foreign languages. English is considered an

essential tool to support employment and other daily activities. In Vietnam, particularly in the big cities, English has attracted a high number of students. Also, English has become a compulsory subject in most schools. However, English competence has not much improved. Although a large number of Vietnamese students spend seven years learning English from primary to high school, they are unable to speak English fluently at college and university. More seriously, many students graduate from university, with their English speaking skill failing to meet the demands for employment. Many factors affect the problem, and the teaching method is one. Recently, a large number of notable researchers around the world have explored methods to improve teaching and learning English. Among the methods, Project-Based Learning (PBL) is one of the successful method in English learning and teaching (Damiri, 2012; Larmer, 2011; Hunter, 2011; Gorsuch, 2011; Ramawaty & Hermagustiana, 2010). In light of the literature of the above-mentioned research and experience in teaching English at HIU for many years, Project-Based Learning is a suitable method to develop English skills, especially spoken fluency. The main objective of this study is to investigate the effects of the use of PBL on developing fluency. The findings of this study must be of great help to Vietnamese students learning English as a Foreign Language. However, in the context of Vietnam with different cultures, backgrounds, and other obstacles of materials, curricula and administration, this method is challenging for both teachers and students. It appears that PBL must be carefully studied and evaluated for effective implementation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Project-Based Learning is unfamiliar to Vietnamese students because they do not have any experience of this method. They are familiar with traditional instructional methods in Teacher-Centred classrooms. Therefore, it is difficult to convince them to trust the effectiveness of PBL when they first experience it. They suffer doubt, and feel uncomfortable with its challenges.

What is Project-Based Learning?

Damiri (2012) defines Project-Based Learning as an innovative method emphasizing contextual learning through complex activities. In addition, Lamer (2011) explains that “Project-Based Learning is a

systematic teaching method that engages students in learning important knowledge and 21st century skills through an extended, student-influenced inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and learning tasks” (p.5). PBL students instructed, by their teachers can choose suitable projects and engage in asking questions, looking for information, using materials, and answering the questions. Also, using PBL students can plan and time their work, use feedback to improve their work, create high-quality products, and show the products to the public. In PBL, students are the key focus while the teacher still acts as a manager and a facilitator of learning. The evidence as follows supports PBL as a good model for English teaching and learning.

Positive effects of PBL in English teaching and learning

Larmer (2009) indicates that PBL is an effective and enjoyable way to learn because it engages learners’ hearts and minds in their learning activities. Students are more active and engaged in doing meaningful work to create high-quality products because PBL provides real-world relevance for learning. Students retain what they learn in PBL longer than what they learn with traditional instruction. PBL students are able to adapt what they know to authentic situations because they deeply understand the content. Moreover, PBL experience helps students gain more confidence and take responsibility for their learning, as they can develop the skills of problem solving, collaboration, communication, and especially innovative and critical thinking.

PBL students are able to learn significant content, important knowledge and key concepts by investigating and responding to complex questions, problems or challenges. Moreover, PBL provides an effective way to address standards of real-world application of knowledge, and helps students build valuable competencies and essential skills, especially technological skill because they have more opportunities to use tech tools to find resources and information, connect with experts and partners around the world, and create high-quality products.

PBL students focus on open-ended questions, and they themselves recognize that they have to acquire enough knowledge to understand concepts, and apply skills to discover the questions. Furthermore,

project work generates interest and curiosity in the students and advances their frames of exploration.

Naves (2009) concludes that PBL students are well motivated to achieve the target language in authentic contexts. Furthermore, Krechevsky & Stork (2000) maintain that PBL students are given more opportunities for communication and collaboration with their peers and teachers on their common goals. When students have opportunities to use foreign language for authentic communication, their foreign language skills are considerably improved (Fried-Booth, 2002).

In PBL, teachers have more time to work closely with students. In many cases, teachers may rediscover the joy of learning alongside their students. Additionally, PBL gets students engaged in deeper learning through projects (Larmer, 2009). In light of the literature, the researcher uses PBL to improve students' speaking skills, especially spoken fluency.

Spoken fluency

Segalowitz (2010) defines fluency in three types: cognitive, utterance and perceived. Firstly, cognitive fluency is connected with the speaker's ability to efficiently execute his or her speech. Second, utterance fluency is connected with aspects of speech, including breakdown fluency, speech fluency and repair fluency. While breakdown fluency is measured by the continuous flow of speech, speech fluency is measured by the rate of speech, and repair fluency is connected with false start, self-correction, and repetition in speech. Third, perceived fluency refers to the impression that a speaker conveys to listeners in a speech sample.

Lennon (1990) further defines fluency broadly as an overall speaking proficiency, but more narrowly as the ease of oral linguistics, smoothness, rare repetition, self-correction and hesitation.

It appears that achieving spoken fluency is really challenging for Vietnamese students learning English as a foreign language. It takes time and requires other necessary factors, especially an effective learning method. It is believed that the PBL method, with the positive effects found in the previous literature, enhances speaking fluency. In this research, fluency as narrowly defined is explored.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. *To what extent does Project-Based Learning help students at HIU develop speaking fluency?*
2. *What are the effects of the use of PBL on developing fluency?*

THE STUDY

The research is aimed at investigating the positive effects of the use of PBL on spoken fluency development as well as its disadvantages in a Vietnamese context. Using PBL to motivate students to spend more time speaking English to develop their spoken fluency is an innovative approach with Vietnamese students who are accustomed to training by traditional methods.

Students are unable to speak English fluently at university even though they are good at grammar and have adequate vocabulary. In fact, many factors are involved, but the following major explanations must be considered: First, students are not well motivated to engage in their lessons in Teacher-Centered classes with traditional instructions. Therefore, they rarely practice English and fail to speak it fluently. Second, they spend little time improving their speaking skills because their spoken English is rarely tested in the exams. Moreover, another important consideration is the problem of large classes in Vietnamese schools. Students have few chances to practice speaking in classes with forty to fifty students, and with limited time. Therefore, they require a method like PBL to engage their minds and hearts in English learning and enable them to overcome the above-mentioned obstacles. The positive effects of PBL motivate students to learn English in an effective, creative, critical and enjoyable way (Larmer, 2009).

One project was titled “What are your favourite things?” lasting twelve weeks with one class of four hours each week (four 50-minute periods a week). The students taking part in the project are freshmen at HIU studying English as a foreign language.

In this project, students worked in teams of six. Each team discussed and selected one favourite topic in units in Four Corners Book (Jack C. Richards & David Bohlke, 2013). The following topics were chosen by the teams: Team one “What are your favourite photos?”, Team two “

What are your favourite shops?”, Team three “ What are your favourite dishes?”, Team four “ What are your favourite jobs?”, and Team five “ What are your relaxing activities?”. Each team had to collect information, create their artifacts, and then give a presentation on their products in front of the class. The project was implemented in the following stages (Korosidou & Griva, 2013):

First, to speculate on the topic, the teacher introduced the Project-Based Learning method to students, provided the project title, and guided students in the discussion and selection of their topic for the project. The first stage lasted two weeks.

Second, to structure the project, the teacher helped students plan for how, who, when and where they could get the information to create the artifacts. The teacher provided them the addresses of English clubs with native speakers, instructed them in how to use Skype, and introduced them to native English-speaking teachers being ready to help them. The second stage lasted four weeks.

Third, to conduct the project, students had conversations with native speakers of English, taking notes, retelling the content in groups, collecting information and creating artifacts. Then, they prepared for their presentations by sharing their artifacts with other teams. The third stage lasted four weeks.

Fourth, to evaluate the project, students gave presentations and shared their achievements, experiences, and reflections on the project. They offered recommendations to improve the next project. Lastly, the teacher gave comments on the work of each team, pointing out what the teams had achieved and what they needed to do better in the next project. The teacher gave two rewards to the two best teams to encourage them. It took eight periods in the final two weeks to evaluate the projects.

In the project, the teams were required to collect information by having conversations with native speakers through Skype, cell phone, face to face in classrooms or English clubs. They retold what they had learned from the conversations with their foreign friends, teachers and relatives. The retelling technique was used as an effective way to improve spoken fluency (Rachmawaty & Hermagustiana, 2010). Team

one collected the interesting information on their families, friends, and relatives, and on famous cities around the world such as London, Sydney and New York. They created a good collection of their families' photos and beautiful postcards and photos of the famous cities. Team two had a video clip made while they guided two English students around the shopping centre in Ho Chi Minh City. Team three brought ingredients to class to instruct other teams to make hamburgers and fruit salads. Team four gave a presentation on their favourite jobs in Vietnam. Team five used a projector to make a presentation on interesting winter sports in America and England. To explore the effects of the project on developing speaking fluency, action research was conducted.

METHODOLOGY

Research Methods

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used to conduct the research because a combination of both methods enables the researcher to fully understand different aspects of a problem (Efron & Ravid, 2013). The quantitative study helped the researcher explore the common problems of spoken fluency that students had faced while the qualitative study helped the researcher explore the effects of PBL and expand the results from the research. Tests, interviews, observation check-lists, journals and student evaluations were used as tools to collect data from teacher and student participants. Each of data instruments has certain advantages and disadvantages, so the researcher combined the tools to take advantage of each tool to obtain reliable data for the evaluation. Richards (2001) indicates that tests are criterion referenced because they are able to provide a direct measurement of achievement on student performance. However, changes in learning are not always a teaching result because they are linked to other factors. Interviews, observations, journals and student evaluations are required for further investigation. It has been suggested that interviews can provide in-depth information on specific questions though they are time-consuming, and data is limited to a sample of student and teacher interviews. Therefore, student evaluations are aimed at obtaining feedback on a wide range of topics from large numbers of students. Objective observations can support

further investigation into observable aspects of the innovation. Apparently the combination of the above tools provides valuable data for this research.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Teachers

The researcher worked as both researcher and English teacher. The researcher had certain advantages as a teacher having introduced the innovation in his own classroom to explore its full effect and problems, what worked as well what needed improving. Two English teachers were invited to work as examiners in Pre-test and Post-test. They were native speakers who could best discover students' problems of speaking fluency before the innovation, and assess how much their speaking skill was improved after the projects.

Students

Fifty students in two classes participated in the research: Class A of thirty students was instructed by the PBL method and Class B of twenty-eight students was taught by the Teacher-Centered method with the traditional instruction. Both classes took Speaking Pre-test and Post-test. Data from test results was collected from both classes, and the results were compared. An observation checklist, a teacher-researcher journal, student evaluations, and an interview with students were conducted with the PBL class for further investigation into the factors affecting the change in Class A.

Data Collection

The data was collected from test results, student evaluations, teacher-researcher journals, observations, and interviews in a twelve-week course. The researcher focused on the impact and evidence of success from the use of PBL to develop students' speaking skill.

The students in two experimental classes took a speaking pre-test on February 11th, 2018. The test was aimed at identifying the students' problems with spoken fluency and assessing their speaking skills before using PBL to improve their spoken fluency. The factors related to speaking fluency, consisting of speech rate, speech flow, smoothness, oral language ease, hesitation, repetition, self-correction, text length,

and communicative competence, were emphasized and considered as the criteria for assessment. A core band from one to ten was used to assess students' speaking fluency in the two classes.

Additionally, two student observation checklists were used: one for class A with PBL, and another for class B with Teacher-Centered methods. The items on the observation checklists, which were the predetermined categories from literature review and research questions, were correlated with the effects of PBL on students' spoken fluency. Furthermore, student evaluations and a journal of the learning process of students in Class A focused on their motivation, attitude, and challenges to English learning with the use of PBL during the course.

To assess the progress of students, compare the results of the two classes, and explore the effects of PBL in the research, an oral post-test was carried out at the end of the course. Two native English teachers were invited to work as examiners to gain valid data from the testing and assessment.

The post-test was followed by student interviews. After identifying students having problems with spoken fluency from the test results, in-depth interview questions were used to explore other possible factors causing their problems. The student interviews were conducted in Class A. Four students who had problems with speaking fluency, but made good progress or little progress were selected for the interviews. Open-ended questions were used to help students feel comfortable expressing their attitude, understanding, and thoughts of English learning methods. The researcher deeply explored the effects, experiences and challenges for the students in PBL by using open-ended questions.

Data Analysis

A two-phase design was used to analyse the research data. Quantitative analysis was followed by qualitative analysis. Efron and Ravid (2013) suggest that this design is a good method to analyse data.

First, the scores on a pre-test and a post-test were processed and analysed by IBM SPSS Statistics 20. The result showed the effects and evidence of success of use of PBL in the research. Examining the test score, the researcher identified the students with spoken fluency

problems and selected them for interviews.

Second, qualitative data analysis was used to understand students' thoughts, and experiences of the project. Data from interviews, student observations, and journal and student evaluation records were coded into the predetermined categories from literature review and research questions, and the particular categories in general patterns were emphasized.

Before the analysis began, the predetermined categories from literature review and research questions had been identified. The categories of the benefits of PBL, such as spoken fluency development, student engagement, and positive attitudes to English learning through PBL were especially emphasized. Moreover, the problems of the innovation were carefully considered. The researcher located the segments belonging to each category and organized the predetermined categories. Next, the researcher looked for the themes comprised each of the categories, arranged themes logically, and ordered the categories according to their relationships. Then, the researcher added quotations that represented each category. Colour coding was also used in this step.

The process of data synthesis and interpretation followed. The researcher identified patterns by examining the relation of categories, their frequency, sequence, rationality, and cause and effect in context. The researcher explained the relationship to the research questions and literature review, and drew conclusions. Efron and Ravid (2013) suggest that these steps are a logical and effective way to analyse data.

FINDINGS

Positive effects on PBL students at HIU were found from the test, observations, journal, student evaluation, and interview data.

Pre-test and Post-test scores

The results from analysing the test scores by IBM SPSS Statistics 20 showed that PBL really helped students improve their spoken fluency.

TABLE I**MINIMUM, MAXIMUM, MEAN AND STD.DEVIATION (INNOVATION CLASS)****Descriptive Statistics**

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Pretest | 30 | 5.00 | 8.00 | 5.9667 | .92786 |
| Posttest | 30 | 6.00 | 9.00 | 7.5333 | .97320 |
| Valid N | 30 | | | | |

TABLE II**MINIMUM, MAXIMUM, MEAN AND STD.DEVIATION
(TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION CLASS)****Descriptive Statistics**

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Pretest | 28 | 5.00 | 8.00 | 6.3571 | .91142 |
| Posttest | 28 | 5.00 | 8.00 | 6.8571 | .80343 |
| Valid N | 28 | | | | |

The scores of the Pre-test in both classes at the same level were nearly equal. The Mean of Class B was even higher than the Mean of Class A. After three months, the scores in Post-test showed that Mean of Class A was much higher than Mean of Class B. This shows that PBL really worked in Class A. Depending on the evidence from the quantitative analysis, a qualitative analysis of observation, journal, reflection and interview data followed.

The observations, teacher-researcher journals, student evaluation and interviews were aimed at determining the effect of Project Based Learning on enhancing spoken fluency. Furthermore, the students' motivation and attitude towards English learning were not neglected. Four students were selected for the face-to-face interviews in English

at the end of the course. However, some answers in Vietnamese were also accepted, in order to have a full understanding of participants' thoughts regarding PBL. The following categories were created from literature review and research questions: spoken fluency development, engagement, attitude, and PBL problems. Moreover, their own subcategories were identified in the following table.

TABLE III
CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES

| Categories | Subcategories | Findings after coding and analyzing the data |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Spoken fluency development | Speech length development | These factors are closely related to spoken fluency, so PBL can enhance speaking fluency development. |
| | Hesitation and pause reduction | |
| | Repetition reduction | |
| | Speech rate increase | |
| Engagement | Increase in the interaction between teachers and students | Obviously, PBL engages students in these learning activities enhancing important skills of collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. |
| | Effort into PBL activities | |
| | Participation in retelling, conversation and discussion | |
| | Participant in presentation and evaluation | |
| Attitude | Enjoyment in speaking English | It is proved that PBL motivates students to learn English in a joyful, responsible and autonomous way. |
| | Interest in exploring the questions | |
| | Interest in creating and showing the product | |

| | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Problems | Management | These problems affect the success of this innovation and need careful consideration. |
| | Quality of instructions | |
| | Lack of PBL experience | |
| | Lack of time | |
| | Lack of essential skills | |
| | Lack of PBL material and facilities | |

Colour coding was used for coding the data from interviews, observations, teacher journals and student evaluations. Each category is assigned a different color: Spoken fluency development is yellow; Engagement is blue; Attitude is green, and Problems are pink.

Next, the researcher began to code the data from interviews, observations, journals and self-reflections, picking out and aggregating individual bits of information into categories and their subcategories. Colour coding was used in this research. Hinchey (2008) suggests that this technique is useful for coding data. After coding and analyzing the relations of categories and their own subcategories, the following findings show the positive effects of the use of PBL in the innovation.

Firstly, spoken fluency was seen to improve. In the interview, Student one stated that “I can speak longer sentences and I can speak faster than I used to do”. In addition, Student three remarked that “I can speak better though I sometimes pause for searching words and correct grammar”. The data from observation, teacher’s journal and student evaluations also showed students increased speech length and speech rate, reduced pause, hesitation and repetition, and that the students spoke English more easily and smoothly in the conversations and presentation after the innovation.

Second, the data in the categories showed that PBL really engages students in asking and answering the questions in English on their favourite topics as well as other activities during the project. In the interview, Student three explained that, “I have chances to participate

in many activities and practice speaking with foreigners and teachers. I can ask them the questions on the favourite topics.” Moreover, PBL helped them develop essential skills in communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Through Skype, telephone, and face-to-face conversations with native speakers, students’ speaking skills were significantly improved. Furthermore, the retelling technique contributed to the development of speaking skills, especially speaking fluency.

Thirdly, the data from student evaluations, observations, and journals also showed that students had a positive attitude to English learning through PBL. In the interview, Student one expressed that “I really like PBL.” She further stated that “What I like best about this method is it is fun to create slides and made presentations to share with my friends”. Thy An also wrote in her self-reflection that “We focused on our favorite topic. We had many chances of speaking English about the topic, and especially we all participated to prepare the presentation. That is our own work, so we love it and enjoy doing it.”

The findings showed that students are eager to explore the questions, gain knowledge of their topics, and have a deeper understanding of the topics. Their communication competence was highly improved. Students found more fun when speaking in authentic situations and tended to be willing to speak at length in a reflective and critical way. Through authentic tasks in the project, students had more chances to speak English, increasing speech rate and speech length, and reducing hesitation and self-correction because of vocabulary and grammar. Students became more autonomous and responsible for practicing speaking English through the activities during the project. Additionally, they were more confident and found it easier to speak English to classmates and teachers because they had wider knowledge and deeper understanding of their favourite topics. They were proud to present their creative products to their teachers and classmates in English.

However, students faced certain challenges in PBL. They were familiar with the Teacher-Centred Method with traditional instruction, copying and learning by heart what their teachers said and wrote on backboards, so they found it difficult to conduct a project, planning,

timing, collecting information, synthesizing and presenting of the final product. Ten percent of students disliked the innovation, but preferred the traditional methods. Furthermore, students spent little time studying English at school because they had a tight schedule with their major, so they lacked time for the project. Additionally, a small number of students lacked the essential skills to execute the project.

DISCUSSION

The major issues arising from the innovation

While conducting the research, the researcher faced ethical issues and the practical difficulties of Vietnamese context. To solve the problems, the researcher carefully prepared and considered the factors related to conducting this research. For the issue of informed consent, Vietnamese students had not had experience in taking part in research. Conducting educational research was not popular at schools in Vietnam, so students were reluctant to take part in this research. They were familiar with traditional teaching methods, so they doubted and failed to welcome the innovation. It was difficult for the researcher to convince students to trust in the method. The researcher had to spend much time explaining and showing students articles, journals, books and PBL websites, especially “bie.org”. Also, the researcher spent much time providing them with sufficient information on the research, explaining possible risks and benefits of the research to student participants. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that there was not any retaliation against the students who did not take part in the research. However, the researcher encouraged the students to participate in the research by showing the potential benefits enhancing their English study. Consequently, all students in two classes agreed to take part in the research.

Furthermore, working in groups and making presentations to the public were challenging to first year students. Some students lacked IT skills to support the project, so the researcher spent a lot of time helping them use the software programs to support their tasks. Consequently, they were able to create PowerPoint files to make presentations in front of the class. Moreover, time was another big problem in conducting the research. Students were busy with a tight schedule with many subjects at school. They only attended English

class once a week, so the researcher had to consider how to plan and arrange time for data collection to avoid wasting their time. Finally, all steps for conducting the research were well timed.

How the innovation worked and failed to work?

The above findings correspond with the discussion in the literature review. PBL helps students develop English skills effectively, especially spoken fluency. The research results show the evidence of success in using PBL to develop speaking skill.

The positive effects of PBL indicate Vietnamese students improve their speaking fluency in English. Besides helping students develop spoken fluency, PBL enhances the development of other essential skills. The skills are extremely important for Vietnamese students entering the international labour market in the age of globalization. Vietnamese students are used to the passive learning style influenced by the traditional instruction, especially the Teacher-Centered Method, and will need to change old habits and attitudes, and improve their English competence to catch up to friends around the world.

Challenges that affected the success of the innovation

Although there was positive evidence of the success of the innovation, the challenges in the use of PBL in a Vietnamese context should be discussed. First, it is not easy to convince Vietnamese teachers and students to change their traditional learning style to the innovative one, and believe in the new method while their inexperience makes them doubtful and uncomfortable with the challenge. In addition, it is seriously challenging for PBL teachers and students to win Vietnamese administrators' approval and belief in PBL. Another challenge affecting the success of this innovation is the context of Hong Bang University, with students majoring in various subjects, not only in English, and therefore spending little time studying English. In additions, the problems of management, evaluation, lack of PBL experience and effective instruction need more careful consideration.

To overcome the challenges, PBL teachers need to prove that PBL is really able to assist students with their aim of developing their English skills, especially speaking fluency. The results of students' progress and success in English must be shown and supported by parents and

administrators. A good relationship and collaboration between teachers, students, parents and school administrators will help in solving the above-mentioned problems and make a valuable contribution to the success of the innovation.

CONCLUSION

The evidence of success in the research shows that PBL really enhances the development of students' fluency in speaking English as a second language in Vietnam. The study explores many positive effects on PBL students: a significant increase in motivation and engagement in English study, and high development of essential skills, such as communication, critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration. Moreover, PBL students are more autonomous and responsible for using English to complete and perform their tasks, and enjoy learning English through completing a project on a favourite topic. They have more chances of speaking English through authentic situations, so they feel completely at ease in speaking English and willing to make a long speech. The smoothness and rate of speech increase while their hesitation and self-correction due to errors in vocabulary and grammar decrease significantly, so their spoken fluency is dramatically improved. However, the study also illustrates certain obstacles that PBL students and teachers face such as timing, planning, and lack of essential skills and PBL experience. It could be concluded that PBL will make valuable contributions to the ability of Vietnamese students to learn English as a second language if it is well prepared and adapted in innovative ways. However, problems are identified in the research in that PBL is challenging for both students and teachers to implement in ESL classrooms in Vietnamese schools, specially managing, planning and enacting PBL effectively. In addition to the lack of experience, time, effective instruction, essential IT skills, communication, collaboration and critical thinking are found to be major obstacles for PBL students and teachers. On completing the projects, this model requires more careful study for implementation in a Vietnamese context. It is highly recommended that PBL should be adapted to improve English learning and teaching, especially to develop spoken fluency at universities in Vietnam, so further study is required. It is believed that PBL will make a valuable contribution towards improving students' English competence in the future.

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FACEBOOK AS A LEARNING TOOL IN THE COURSE CULTURES OF ASEAN COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

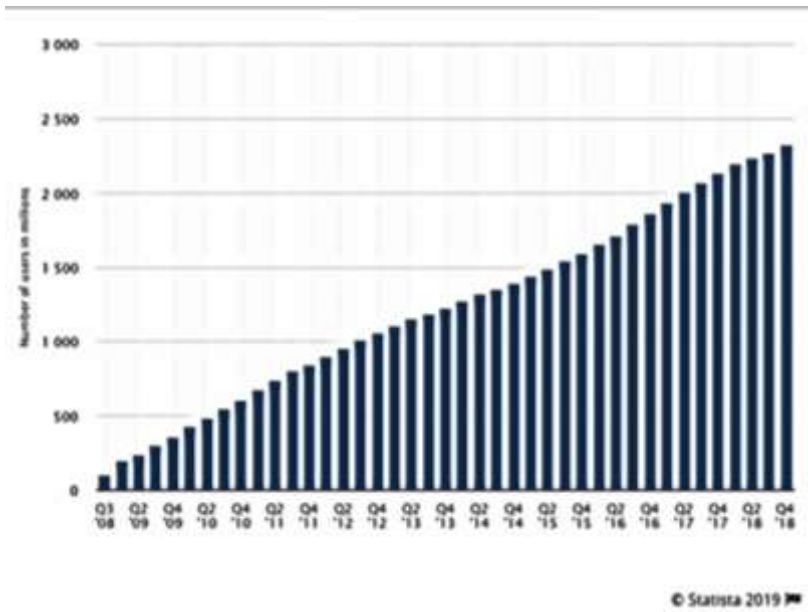
As a popular communication means, Facebook has also been improving its popularity in academic purposes. With users ranging from global educational organizations to local groups of students/private classes, different functions of Facebook have been employed to do numerous tasks which are beneficial for learning and teaching such as sharing resources and improving contacts between teachers and learners. With survey as the main research method, this study aims at investigating the use of Facebook fan pages as a learning platform for 44 English majored students to share posts on a weekly basis and openly discuss in the course of Cultures of ASEAN Countries at ULIS – VNU. The results revealed that when it comes to the students' perceptions of the Facebook fan page, the participants perceived a rise in their knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward the course. Moreover, students reportedly expressed their interest in this learning tool because of its benefits in terms of (1) extensive reading, (2) positive interaction, flexibility and (3) competitiveness. By contrast, difficulties mainly related to maximizing reach and selecting useful information for posts, related to the competition between teams, are shown. With all aspects above considered, the potential of Facebook as a learning tool is also realized.

Keywords: *Facebook fan page, learning tool, skills-knowledge-attitudes, Cultures of ASEAN countries.*

INTRODUCTION

Marking its appearance in 2004, with the original intention of being available for Harvard University only, in the past 15 years, Facebook

has never ceased to experience the upsurge of the user number and its popularity. Until the end of 2018, the number of active Facebook accounts was recorded at roughly 2.32 billion, making up for about 30% of the world population (“Worldometer”, 2019). Regarding Vietnam, our country has been ranked among the leading ones in terms of the Facebook account number, at around 55 million, equal to over half of the whole nation’s population. (“Statista”, 2019, “Worldometer”, 2019)



Facebook user number growth

Together with a large number of the virtual population, the use of Facebook varies widely from socialization, entertainment to more serious purposes, including trade, or education thanks to its easy accessibility. Noticeably, this Social Networking site (SNS) has been favoured as a tool of sharing educational information or cooperative work with peers in an academic environment by many people nationwide and worldwide. Considering academic aims, my experience and observation have shown that not only learners but educators also utilize this page for their work- and study-related activities such as group discussion, public knowledge sharing, with all parties’ positive feedback on its convenience. However, the record has been accounted

as “informal” and irrelevant to any type of assessment. Specifically, the Facebook fan page has been around for a while, mainly as a marketing tool, which seems to have no relation to the academic world.

Regarding the formal use of Facebook fan page in the university context, this practice has started at the beginning of this school year (2018-2019) in the course Cultures of ASEAN Countries at ULIS – VNU. Despite its new introduction as a learning tool and a means of official assessment, the Facebook fan page has the blog as its predecessor in the first time this course was launched in 2015. The philosophy of the inclusion of these seemingly entertaining websites in this course deeply lies in an innovative approach to the subject in particular and almost every subject currently offered by the Division of Country Studies, Faculty of Linguistics and Cultures of English Speaking Countries at ULIS. Such approach includes applying technology into education, and visual learning theory, which has proved beneficial for learners’ acquisition of knowledge with the involvement of their interest and passion, instead of passive or forced learning (Moore, 1994, Devine, 2016). Moreover, another reason why Facebook has been included in formal teaching and assessment of this course is to boost learning and researching time considering limited face-to-face interaction duration in class.

After nearly two semesters of implementing Facebook fan page in formal instructions, I spotted learners’ enthusiasm as well as difficulties, which have not been recognized and treated officially. Consequently, this paper is employed to investigate students’ experience with Facebook fan page as a learning platform to share posts relevant to their learning content of the course on a weekly basis. The participant population of the study is made up of 44 English majored students at ULIS – VNU who have been studying Cultures of ASEAN Countries in 2018 fall or 2019 spring courses. The researcher hopes to shed a light on the impact of the Facebook fan page on students’ interest in the subject as well as their perception of how this learning tool influenced their knowledge and skills, which can later be triangulated by the reflection essay by part of the participants who took this course in 2018. The factors contributing to their likes and dislikes of this learning tool will be also found out.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1 Online Learning

Ever since its birth, information technology has made substantial impacts on every aspect of our lives, and education is no exception. The emergence of computer connected with the Internet has changed the way the whole world study, anywhere the Internet can reach. The idea of online learning is familiar with basically everyone, but its history is not so long only about 55 years. The University of Illinois made itself become the first educational institute to use the Intranet in the world in 1960, then software based on online platform quickly came to life and supported tertiary sector of the USA to deliver its courses other than face-to-face learning since the 80s of the last century (“The History of Online Education”, 2017). However, the real appearance of the notion e-learning or online learning was recognized in the late 90s of the 20th century and the beginning of this century (Carliner & Shank, 2008).

Research in this field has developed since then to continuously discuss the pros and cons of online learning and the potential of technology in education. It seems obvious that online learning empowers learners thanks to the flexibility when it comes to such issues as time, location or learning pace. Besides, quick access to the program at personal convenience also saves time and money, which must be spent on travel or even the tuition fee itself. Considering learning styles, online learning can suit different needs, whether the students are extrovert or introvert, or they tend to be visual learners or auditory learners (Dhirendra, 2010, MacDonald & Creanor, 2010). However, the cons of online education also attract many voices to raise, among them are the four categories sorted out by Dhirendra (2010): “limited social interaction”, “technology cost and scheduling”, “effectiveness of assessments”, and “problematic for instructors.”

The downside of online learning has been confirmed by many other researchers, among them are Carliner & Shank (2008). In their book *“The E-Learning Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Online Learning”*, the two authors pointed out the case of overenthusiasm of technology with neglect of pedagogy, which plays the principal role in any kind of study. To fill in the gap, Carliner & Shank (2008) did categorize areas

of pedagogical assistance to optimize the use of technology for educational purposes regarding online course design.

| <i>Category of support</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Types</i> |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogical Supports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies and tools that are embedded within or associated with the instructional design of a learning experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualization • Personalization • Feedback |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrapersonal and • Interpersonal Supports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal supports are grounded in both meta-cognition about what people know and don't know, and in reflection about actions and decisions • Interpersonal supports ensure that group interaction and communication are seamless and meaningful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing tools and strategies • Self-critique • Expectations • Parameters • Applications |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Supports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive supports alleviate cognitive load | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just-in-time information, advance and visual organizers • Cognitive connections |

(Clarliner & Shank, 2008)

With a clear design and blueprint, it is sure that online learning receives a positive review from users, i.e. learners, especially the young who were born and grew up in the era of technology (MacDonald & Creanor, 2010). Instead of being restricted in learning, the trend for

doing science online proves beneficial to scientists in many ways. While the nature of science includes collaboration and sharing, which is usually hindered by geographical distance, the online platform could provide a perfect key as the quick and convenient transfer of information all over the world (Downing & Holtz, 2008). Research in the broad field of online learning has never ceased to show more evidence of the essentials of this type of learning as well as the challenges facing educators and learners, together with solutions to part of them in the background of 21st century (Hampel & Lamy, 2007, Palloff & Pratt, 2007, Pletka, 2007, Ryu & Parsons, 2008, Goodfellow & Lamy, 2009, Pozzi & Persico, 2010).

2 Facebook as a Learning Tool

The beginning of the 21st century witnessed the launch of Facebook, a new SNS besides Twitter, Yahoo, Instagram. Only within 15 years since its birth, Facebook has experienced the rocket in a number of user accounts and the ways it is used. Not only individuals fancy this SNS, educational organizations like schools or universities also use it to reach the public, including their (future) students and their parents. In their book, *"An Education in Facebook: Higher Education and the World's Largest Social Network"*, Kent and Leaver (2014) compiled the discussion of the use of Facebook in learning, teaching in general and that on the university campus with some thoughtful ideas. Stirling (as cited in Kent and Leaver, 2014, p.30) concluded:

"The use of Facebook in lectures by students is an obvious development of digital technologies and of software and hardware usage. The site affords so many social and cultural practices of student life. Why not use it?"

Advocates of this SNS in terms of academic purposes mentioned Facebook as a tool for students' development (Tilton, as cited Kent & Leaver, 2014, p.32) as it allows them to reach not only their friends, acquaintances, but even strangers from different corners of the world to contribute their ideas to controversial issues without difficulties of interpersonal communication.

To go more specifically into Facebook in learning and teaching, McLoughlin and Lee (as cited in Kent and Leaver, 2014, p.47) reviewed

the available literature of the Facebook community in education to show the framework in which they believed the creation and transfer of knowledge happen on Facebook platform.

“1. The domain: A Communities of practice is something more than a club of friends or a set of connections between acquaintances. In Facebook, the domain is the common ground or space where members share ideas, knowledge, and experiences. This gives rise to personal meaning and a sense of belonging.

2. The community: According to Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat (2011), members of the community collectively create value and knowledge through their exchanges and dealings. SNSs such as Facebook can help build community by serving as forums for dialogue, discussion, and debate (Reich, 2010).

3. The practice: Whereas the domain denotes the topic or concern that is shared, the practice is the specific knowledge base that the community jointly cultivates and maintains. Facebook offers ways to learn through interactive dialogue and discovery and can involve multiple viewpoints and levels of expertise. In addition, there is a negotiation of meaning as individuals refine and share their ideas and form new understandings. These processes lead to distributed knowledge production (Lee, McLoughlin, & Chan, 2008; Poellhuber, Anderson, & Roy, 2011).” (McLoughlin and Lee, as cited in Kent and Leaver, 2014, p.47)

Levinson (2010), in his book “From Fear to Facebook: One School’s Journey,” seemed to provide readers with a narrative of the transformation in the attitude toward such used-to-be-thought-as-harmful tool as its original function of socializing and entertaining. Instead of banning technology in school, educators needed to employ it and train themselves as well as the students into the right path so that technology, or in this case Facebook, become an educational tool.

“Technology is moving at lightning speed, and school communities need to be open to learning about the latest tools along with students. Parents and teachers set the tone through

their willingness to sit next to and learn from students. The role of the teacher has changed, and school communities need to grow comfortable with these changing roles. Students can and should be placed in teaching roles with technology.” (Levinson, 2010, p. 128)

Recently, research on the effects of Facebook on teaching and learning has attracted lots of attention from around the world. In 2014, Hassan from Port Dickson Polytechnic, Malaysia aimed to shed a light on Facebook as a learning and teaching tool and found out that his participants felt at ease using such SNS to study, and they did not mind to share further information outside the classroom on this virtual platform. Hassan (2014) also made an implication related to the potential of Facebook as a tool for “lifelong learning channel” at his specific educational context.

A paper with the cooperation of RMIT researchers based in Vietnam and Australia was conducted in 2015 using a questionnaire to look into “the use of out-of-class communication between students and instructors using Facebook as a means of interaction for learning.” It is interesting that the research result revealed good feedback on students’ perception of content quality of online communication with their lecturers; however, those students cast doubt on their perceived performance when virtual interaction with the lecturers was involved (Nkhoma, Hiep, Au, Tri, Richardson, Smith & El-Den, 2015).

Also in Asian context, a group of researchers in Hong Kong, China found out in their study named “Effectiveness and obstacle of using Facebook as a tool to facilitate student-centred learning in higher education” that this SNS “could facilitate student interaction and their knowledge constructions” as a way of blended learning (Leung, Kong, Chan & Cheng, 2016). On the other hand, privacy or the safety of the online educational environment was pointed out as an issue to be addressed.

When it comes to Western institutions, Demirbilek (2015) from a Turkish university investigated the use of Facebook to give and receive peer feedback on their academic work. He showed that online feedback using this SNS improved students’ critical thinking and the quality of their production.

Considering the undeniable advantages of technology and Facebook in education, and overcoming the fear of losing track of students' work, the Division of Country Studies, for the first time, applied Facebook fan page as part of assessment and learning tool in the course Cultures of ASEAN Countries. However, the real situation in Vietnam and at ULIS can be different from that in the world, which motivated the researcher to carry out this study to confirm or challenge the existing literature.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The paper is designed to answer two research questions:

- *What are students' perceptions of the Facebook fan page as a learning tool?*
- *What are the reasons for students' likes and/ or dislikes of Facebook fan page in the course?*

THE STUDY

1 Settings and participants

Cultures of ASEAN Countries is an elective subject designed for English majored students at ULIS – VNU who meet the language requirement equal to at least band 6.0 of IELTS or level B2 of CEFR. The main aims of the course, relating both knowledge and skills, are for students to

- Understand geographical, historical and cultural features of the Southeast Asian region as a whole and its individual member states.
- Be able to recognize and explain the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of each country as well as of the region in terms of security, economic development and regional culture.
- Develop critical thinking, academic writing, and presentation skills.

The types of assessment and modes of work applied in this course consist of (1) regular quizzes, (2) a group work presentation, (3) 10 weekly posts on the Facebook fan page of a country, (4) one individual reflection essay based on the Fan page content.

In this study, the students who have taken the course in the current academic year 2018-2019 are chosen to be participants. The total number of respondents is 44, in which 1 student is currently in her second year, 2 in their last year, the rest are third-year students. Part of the participant – students finished this course offered in Fall 2018, which means that they also finished their essay writing as part of the end of the course assignment. The rest taking the course in Spring 2019 are now planning for the final essay. It is noteworthy that although Vietnam is in ASEAN, most students hardly knew anything about ASEAN at the beginning of the course; therefore, they expressed significant enthusiasm for their work.

In the assignment with Facebook as a learning tool, each class is divided into groups of 4-5, choosing one ASEAN country by consensus, then update information weekly on the group fan page in a 10-week period, starting at week 6 of the term. Their posts which should cover any aspect of a nation such as economy, cultures, education, or politics are followed by discussion questions to help generate readers' opinions and comments. The fan pages are set to be reachable to the public, which explains why they can be read and given thoughts to by people outside the classes, and even many foreigners in some cases.

2 Data collection and analysis

As the research purpose is to investigate students' perceptions, the main research tool is a survey questionnaire. The set of questions features 20 close-ended questions and 2 open-ended questions delivered in Google form, allowing students to answer once online. The responses will then be collected automatically and analyzed by the researcher.

Regarding the first part of the questionnaire, students are asked to rank the 20 statements on a Likert scale with the value from 1 to 5 (1 means "strongly disagree", 5 means "strongly agree"). Consequently, the higher the score they give, the more they agree with the provided opinions. In the second part of the survey, asking for reasons why they like and dislike Facebook fan page as a learning and assessment tool, students are required to freely exhibit their opinion.

Below are the set of close-ended questions used in this paper, which is divided into four subsections.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Exposure to Facebook | <p>1. I use Facebook on a regular basis with no difficulties.</p> <p>2. I have been using Facebook for teamwork in many subjects.</p> <p>3. I know how to upload entries on a Facebook fan page and react to comments, technically.</p> |
| Page owners' perspective | <p>4. Using Facebook to post relevant content as part of my duties in the course Cultures of ASEAN Countries helped me with my extensive reading.</p> <p>5. Using Facebook fan page in this course did help me to develop critical thinking as I have to read to synthesize information.</p> <p>6. Using Facebook fan page in this course did help me to develop writing skill.</p> <p>7. Using Facebook fan page aroused my interactive and positive attitude towards the subject.</p> <p>8. I could develop my creativity in this course thanks to the Facebook fan page.</p> <p>9. I gain extra knowledge of the subject through using Facebook fan page, other than that in the book and my classmates' presentations.</p> <p>10. I got more involved and responsible as I have the feeling of contribution to the knowledge of the subject, apart from that from lectures.</p> |
| Readers' perspective | <p>11. I look forward to reading and responding to the comments that the audience left in each of my group's posts.</p> <p>12. I look forward to new posts from other groups in my class.</p> <p>13. I found the posts by other groups informative and worth reading.</p> <p>14. Entries by other groups did broaden my knowledge of the countries.</p> <p>15. I like to leave comments on other groups' posts and wait for the reply.</p> <p>16. My classmates' posts triggered my interest in the topics or the countries, which I'd never known about.</p> <p>17. I like the content as well as an illustration of my classmates' posts.</p> |
| Preference for Facebook | <p>18. Regarding assessment/ scoring methods in the course, I prefer Facebook fan page updating to others (quiz, presentation, reflection essay).</p> <p>19. If I had a chance, I would decide Facebook a part of my learning in some other subjects.</p> <p>20. Facebook fan page required a lot of time and effort, which was worth as I gained in both knowledge, skills and interest in learning.</p> |

In order to justify students' opinion of their improvement in knowledge and language skill after the course, the essays of those taking Fall 2018 course will be considered to identify their chosen topics (which are decided on their own).

DISCUSSION

1 What are students' perceptions of Facebook fan page a learning tool?

The first research question is answered by students' response to the 20 close-ended questions in the first part of the survey, which are categorized into four subsections:

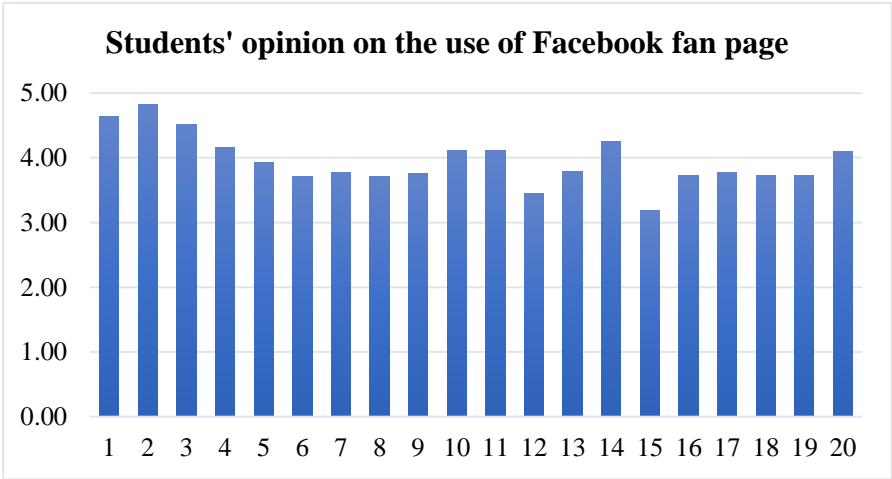
- Questions 1 – 3: Students' exposure to Facebook in social and academic life.
- Questions 4 – 10: Students' perceptions of what they gained as the owners of the page.
- Questions 11 – 17: Students' perceptions of what they gained as the visitors of their peers' pages.
- Questions 18 – 20: Students' preference of Facebook fan page as a learning and assessment tool.

It is confirmed that those students aged 19 – 22 are familiar with Facebook in their daily life, and beyond the main function of an SNS, Facebook has become learning platform for them to work in groups to compensate for the disparity of geographic locations of their current accommodation and that of their schedule because of credit learning mode. On average, they ranked 4.5 to 4.75 out of 5 for the three first questions.

Regarding the knowledge and skill gained with the assistance of keeping the page updated weekly, students agreed that they learnt even more when they chose content to share with friends, other than attending lectures. Their extensive reading improved substantially, next came their critical thinking as they had to process the huge amount of information frequently to have new posts and to answer their audience's questions. Students also reported the improvement in their writing, creativity, and passion for the subject.

The next part of the questionnaire deals with what students improved as readers of the pages managed by other groups. Again, the participants of the study showed their strong appreciation of knowledge improvement via regularly updated posts, although in this case, they received it passively, which is shown by around 4.25 out of 5 for question 14, and over 4 out of 5 for question 11, the other questions, except for 15 received roughly 3.5 out of 5. The lowest score for question 15 signals the respondents' fair expectation of reacting the posts. It can be inferred that students preferred reading to receive information to challenging it.

About the overall impression that students have with this learning tool, on average, they believed that their skills, knowledge and interest in the subject experienced a substantial rise. However, they seemed cautious to consider the chance of applying this SNS into other subjects and their preference of it as an assessment tool.



2 What are the reasons for students' likes or dislikes of the Facebook fan page in the course?

It is interesting to see that participant – students in this study expressed binary opinions (both like and dislike) of the same issue, Facebook as an educational tool which contributes to their total score of the course.

Reasons why students like Facebook fan page as a learning tool.

Overall, students were in favor of Facebook as both a means and an end of the learning process. They expressed their preference of the way they worked with Facebook over the whole semester and the information that all fan pages contributed to the knowledge of ASEAN countries.

The 44 responses given can be mainly sorted out as the (1) benefits of knowledge expansion, way beyond the information provided in the textbook, (2) an interactive, flexible and engaging way of learning, (3) the competitiveness to get “likes”, and comments from the audience. These ideas are categorized by their frequency in the survey. The improvement in reading and writing skills, eye-opening experience even only virtual experience with the neighbouring countries in ASEAN were often cited as the reasons for their enjoyment of the page in this case. Below are some of the thoughts left by the participants.

“It required extensive reading, particularly different sources of news, to first find an interesting topic and to later synthesize information from these sources into a Facebook post. Thanks to this, both my writing and reading have been improved.”

“While researching information to post and answer audience’s questions I can broaden my perspectives and inspire me to learn this subject. Besides, I have a chance to practice skills of managing a FB page, using FB tools, content writing, researching and analyzing information”

“Through the Facebook fan page, I find a lot of interesting and updating information about ASEAN countries by reading not only my posts but also my classmate's posts.”

“I believe that fan page gave us a chance to discover the material beyond the textbook and keep us up-to-date with the world around.”

Students not only learned from teacher/ lecturer or from themselves when they did the research on their assigned ASEAN countries, they learned many times as much from other groups of their class and other classes who took the course at the same.

“Through Facebook fan page, I find a lot of interesting and updating information about ASEAN countries by reading not only my posts but also my classmate's posts”

“What I like most is the informative posts, to have an interesting reading in FB fan pages, students have to read a lot about a country. Through reading, we acquire and explore a lot of efficient information about the country in ASEAN.”

The improvement in language acquisition and content knowledge of the students also surprised the researcher when it comes to a reflection essay. The topics of the essay collection completely went beyond those in the textbook. Instead, the author-students analyzed controversial issues of one chosen country, for example, the aging population in Singapore, unemployment in seemingly rich countries of the regions, or modern slavery issue in the Philippines and Indonesia. Although the essays were limited to 500 words, students could manage to read from at least 3 sources and synthesize information, then evaluated it in their own voice. That is to say, not only their reading and writing developed, their critical thinking also saw an enhancement.

Noticeably, a few students realized the advantages of managing country fan page in this course as a way to practice content writing, a currently trendy job which is favored by many enterprises to build their image and keep communication with existing and potential customers.

Interestingly, some of the respondents expressed their thoughtful concern on the environment by comparing SNS as a learning tool and other traditional ones. Sharing information virtually is a way to protect our nature as no paper is required, a large amount of which is seen as textbook and handouts in class, yet the information is still conveyed in a useful way to the target readers.

“What I like most is that the method is quite environmentally friendly. In my opinion, we should avoid using handouts or printed materials for sharing information to reduce the amount of paper used and wasted.”

Reasons why students don't like the Facebook fan page as a learning tool.

Besides all the praiseworthy comments on using the Facebook fan page in the Cultures of ASEAN Countries course, the research respondents also shared some problems facing them.

Most students expressed their worry about attracting reactions and comments from the audience as that is one of the criteria to assess their work on this SNS. It is funny to see that the competition sometimes prevented them from leaving comments despite their love for the posts for fear of boosting other groups' reach while the same situation may not have happened to theirs:

“Since the marking criteria include an interaction between the group and the audience, it can be a disadvantage if the audience are not supportive or leave too many “meaningless” comments like “wow/great” under the posts.”

The other factors accounting for their difficulties in using this platform of learning include the distraction when they log in Facebook, the hardness to read and synthesize information as their source of reading was authentic, which could cause trouble for their understanding due to both language difficulty level and content complexity. That is because extensive reading coverage is not restricted to textbooks, the information collected is from various sources, including magazine articles targeting at the public or some at well-informed readers. When it comes to the validity and reliability of the information, students had to do a lot of work to judge what they read before posting it. Ultimately, some students also gave critical thoughts of what teachers/ lecturers should count as valid reach and comments to ensure fairness.

Comparing the current research results and those available in the existing literature, it is clear that the positive perceptions about interaction and knowledge expansion with student-centered approach of this study mirrored those in Hassan (2014) and Leung, et al. (2016). Concerning the development of important skills like critical thinking, the positive findings of this paper also confirmed those discovered by Demirebilek (2015).

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

1 Implications

The paper shed a light on students' perceptions of a new tool of learning and received good review, which assures the potential of this SNS in content-based subjects. Thanks to students' positive opinions, especially regarding their desire to learn beyond textbooks, this SNS can be used to boost their study as well as their interaction with each other and with the real world. With a careful design of requirement in the syllabus, this tool can be useful in motivating students' exploration of knowledge and at the same time, promoting their personal images as well as the university images to the outer world. What is more, the usage of SNSs this way can help students practice content writing, which is useful for their future jobs.

Considering the limitations of Facebook fan page as perceived by participant-students, lecturers and course designers can revise the holistic assessment and instruction plan to make it less stressful for students. At the same time, the competitiveness and original purposes of a way to boost students' knowledge, skills and attitudes toward learning should be preserved. It is interesting to see that students' concerns over judging and selecting information can be counted as a sign of the development of their critical thinking, which partly fulfills the course objectives.

2 Limitations

Despite the researcher's efforts, there are some limitations that future research can fix.

- *Research scope*

This is the first time Facebook was utilized as a learning tool, so the population of research participants is limited. Moreover, to investigate the effect of Facebook fan page on knowledge expansion, and extensive reading, a further study with a bigger scope covering the analysis of the content of the fan page posts should be carried out.

- *Research methods*

In the current paper, the survey with a combination of open-ended and close-ended questions is employed to collect data, i.e. students'

opinions. If time allows, the research should be carried out at the end of this academic year, when reflection essays, another type of assessment tool of the course closely related to Facebook fan page can be collected to triangulate students' answers. As stated in the previous part "Research scope", students' weekly posts should also be used as part of the data.

CONCLUSION

The paper has revealed students' positive experience with Facebook fan page as a learning tool in the course Cultures of ASEAN Countries with the improvement in all 3 areas: knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Besides, the participants also revealed their interest in this SNS as a learning tool thanks to the flexible, engaging experience, the massive amount of real-world knowledge, and the sense of competitiveness that it brought. On the other hand, the factors hindering students in their utilization of SNS were shown so that solutions can be found to make SNS more suitable for learning and teaching in the future.

Considering both benefits and drawbacks that Facebook was perceived to have in this study, it is potential for Facebook to be applied in other subjects to varying extent to promote student-centered learning and the quality of teaching, provided appropriate instructions are clearly communicated.

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THE IMPORTANT ROLES OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

It is universally acknowledged that project-based learning (PBL) plays crucial roles in language teaching and learning. In many countries worldwide, especially those with highly advanced education, PBL is widely and effectively applied into English teaching and learning. However, in the context of Vietnam, PBL is an emerging approach in English language learning as it is a vital part in new English high school textbooks. Therefore, this paper aims at discussing the important roles of PBL in teaching English to students and the challenges that teachers and students face during PBL implementation process. Furthermore, pedagogical implications are also made in an attempt to shed light on how to use PBL in teaching English to high school students in the context of Vietnam.

Keywords: *English language, high school teachers and students, high school textbook, project-based learning, roles, challenges.*

INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that the history of language teaching has significantly innovated in the 21st century (Tran & Duong, 2018a). Traditionally, it was simply to supply students with merely fundamental knowledge, teachers played a dominant role in teaching and learning acquisition and students acted passively in the language classroom and the knowledge they gain was merely limited inside the classroom. Students were more familiar with “teacher-talk” environment and depending

heavily on the textbook and the teachers' feedings. But for the teachers' adequate and sufficient assistance, the students might have been disoriented and goalless. Along with the continuous development in teaching and learning language, it is vital that the teachers shift the traditional methods into the innovative ones. Project-based learning is one of the ideal options for teachers to teach students in the modern classroom. As Bender (2012) indicates that when teachers utilize project-based learning (PBL), they change their traditional roles into the new modes of teaching. Therefore, one of the effective ways to foster students' ability is to implement project-based learning for students to acquire knowledge and skills in their learning process as Bell (2010) and Bradford (2005) assert that the 21st century skills are in associated relationships with PBL. According to an educator and philosopher, Dewey (1959), who is considered as one of the pioneers of Project-based learning, when students implement meaningful tasks related to problems in real-world situations, they can achieve more profound comprehension. Many researchers such as Krajcik, Czerniak and Berger (1999) and Helle, Tynjala and Olkinuora (2006) have regarded Project-based learning as an alternative choice for teaching as it is a powerful tool for students to engage more in solving real-world problem. It is believed that Project-based learning assists students to take part in learning activities as active and confident participants (Doppelt, 2003; Krajcik, Blumenfeld, Marx, & Soloway, 1994). Moreover, projects are the combination of the new and prior knowledge and skills that students experience in the past and present in order to promote students' self-direction and motivation. These combinations are imperative in language acquisition as effective ways for students to revise what they have learnt and how to apply it into their real life.

In the context of Vietnam, some research has been conducted in terms of project-based learning. In the study mainly on theory by Nguyen (2011), she focuses on the definitions, the benefits of PBL as well as the process of implementing PBL effectively. According to Nguyen (2017) and Truong (2017), projects have great influence on enhancing learner autonomy in language teaching and learning. In Hoang's (2012) study, she shares her useful experience in implementing a project in her teaching. Pham (2014) indicates that students have the positive

attitudes towards Project-based learning and PBL has beneficial impacts on students' speaking performance. However, the application of PBL into English language teaching and learning is not prevalent, especially in the context of high school.

Comprehending the imperative roles of PBL to facilitate students' learning and create productive classroom environments for the students to enhance students' fundamental skills and the 21st century skills as well as learner autonomy, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) attempts to initially introduce and apply PBL in the new the ten-year English textbooks designed by the National Foreign Language 2020 Project. Project is recommended in each unit with the aim of aiding high school students to be familiar with implementing projects and assist students to achieve fruitful outcomes in the future through learning autonomy. Students in the 21st century have become more and more autonomous, active and creative in their study process. At some high schools in Vietnam, students have been familiar with operating with PBL since they learnt the new English Textbook in 2013. However, the frequency of project implementation is not as expected due to the inadequate skills as well as self-regulated learning ability. Therefore, the aims of this paper are to discuss the important roles of PBL in teaching English to students and the challenges that teachers and students face during PBL implementation process as well as some pedagogical implications of the use of PBL.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

Definitions of project-based learning

In terms of pedagogical framework, PBL is regarded as an innovative approach in education. Brandsfort, Brown and Cocking (1999) define PBL as a powerful approach that encourages students to expand the knowledge they have learnt in a new context. Supplying another definition of PBL, Savery (2006, p.12) considered PBL as a constructivist instructional method, in which students are encouraged to interact with each other in teams or groups to apply the knowledge in the classroom in order to solve the problems in their real life under the teacher's instruction. Furthermore, The Buck Institute for Education defines PBL as "a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry

process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks.” (Markham, 2003, p. 4). In short, PBL is known as the new approach in language teaching and learning which encourage students to use their knowledge and skills to solve real-life problems. Through PBL, the ways students comprehend the lesson become more and more effectively.

Important roles of Project-based learning in English language teaching to students

It is imperative that students be beneficial to the use of PBL as mentioned below:

Self-regulated learning enhancement

As the major purpose of PBL is to assist students to enhance their self-regulated learning performance, students primarily learn how to learn on their own when implementing PBL (Vaiz, 2003). As engaging into implementing PBL through the process of collecting information from different material sources as well as attaining the knowledge via analysis and synthesis, students themselves stand a great chance of comprehending the lessons more thoroughly and apply them into their real-life situations. Through project implementation, their self-regulation improves day by day (Hoang, 2009; Nguyen, 2017).

21st-century skills improvement

Apparently, PBL has substantial benefits to learners as it encourages active inquiry and higher-order thinking skills among learners (Thomas, 1998). Moreover, PBL helps them to constitute improvement in self-reliance, attendance and attitudes towards learning and then have a great influence on the students’ learning behaviors and even their performance (Thomas, 2000, Tran and Duong, 2013b). Moreover, according to George Lucas Educational Foundation (2001), PBL in high school stimulates learners’ engagement into the classroom activities, enhance cooperative learning skills and foster academic learning performance. Obviously, when operating PBL, students may improve their high level cognitive skills, including data analysis, problem solving, decision making... (Winn, 1997). Additionally, thanks to PBL, learners develops their 21st – century skills, including collaborative skills, creative skills, critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills,

decision making skills, communicative skills ..., all of which are absolutely effective for their own life and supportive of improving their sense of responsibility for social environment (Dori & Tal, 2000; Nguyen, 2011; Pham, 2014).

Speaking competence developments

According to Torres and Rodríguez (2017), PBL helps students to enhance their speaking competence as they are given the strength to enrich the new vocabulary so that they can express their own ideas, convey the messages and complete the tasks in the projects. It is true that when students are forced to learn the new words related to the projects, they will have more motivation to search and learn them in order to fulfill their speaking performance. These authors highlight that when students are provided with a wide range of vocabulary, they can overcome their fear of speaking and become more confident. As the results, students are in favour of discussing about their own experiences and community not only in their mother tongue but also in their foreign language (Truong, 2017). According to Pham (2014), it is PBL that enhance students' speaking skills in the classroom. Students became more and more confident when talking in front of the class.

Opportunities for self-assessments

Railsback (2002) claims that operating PBL may engage culturally diverse learners as they are provided a wide range of learning opportunities in the classroom. Furthermore, students have opportunities to assess their learning process and their products on their own as well as provide constructive feedback to each other (Gubacs, 2004). This is meaningful and attentive to students as they can enhance their strengths or eradicate their weaknesses.

More active learning engagements

It is universally believed that PBL triggers performing engagement into the students' learning acquisition (Cornell & Clarke (1999); Wurdinger, Haar, Hugg, & Bezon, (2007). Cornell and Clarke (1999) cite that not only does PBL supply students with team collaboration and new skills while implementing hands-on activities but it is also allowed the weak students to make progress at their own space. Research on collaborative learning shows that when working in groups positively,

students have a tendency to obtain higher learning outcomes than those who work in traditional classroom environment (Gillies & Ashman, 2000). It is because the weak students can receive explanations, aids and supports from their better partners which help them to clarify the issues and build comprehension easily. As a result, they can join hands to solve the problems together. Furthermore, planning, revising and reflecting to complete the projects may help students to achieve expected outcomes in their learning (Nguyen, 2011).

Challenges in implementing project-based learning

Despite the fact that the majority of the research concentrates more on the positive effects as well as the successful outcomes of the use of PBL, it is challenging to shift from traditional approaches to PBL one. In an attempt to implement PBL into learning environment, some following issues should be concerned about.

Lack of student preparation

In order to achieve desired outcomes when implementing PBL, it is crucial that “students need to have sufficient knowledge of the content and specific skills to explore information” (Blumenfeld et al., 1991) (p.378), which means they have to find out and solve the problems on their own and minimize the teachers’ instructions. As Ge, Planas and Nelson (2010) indicates that “Evidence has shown that PBL presents a challenge to novice learners” (p.31). Apparently, as the result, students are under heavy load on their memory when doing PBL because they do not have enough proper schemas to generate their prior knowledge into the new one. Furthermore, most of the students have been familiar with learning styles in traditional classroom where they are recipients of knowledge rather than generators (Nguyen, 2014). They find it difficult to comprehend the teachers’ comprehension and try to apply the prior knowledge to solve the problems in real situation.

The changes in roles

In order to implement PBL successfully, there must be a transformation of teachers as well as students’ roles in teaching and learning process. Traditionally, teachers and students are more acquainted with lecture-based education; however, in the place of new

model, they are forced to work in unfamiliar territory. According to Hoang (2012), it is teachers who are made to assume “new roles” in their teaching methodology. Spontaneously, instead of receiving the knowledge passively, students are encouraged to play more active roles in the classroom and take their responsibilities for “actively constructing” and “reconstructing their knowledge networks” (Dolmans, De Grave, Wolfhagen & Van Der Vleuten, 2005, p. 732).

Teacher Pedagogical Shift

It is an arduous task for most of the teachers, even for the experienced ones, to keep their students engaged and motivated in school. According to Hoang (2012), in Vietnamese context, when instructing students PBL, teachers play different roles as instructors, supporters and supervisors, which are rather different with their traditional roles in the classroom. Therefore, in order to use a true PBL model, it is imperative to force teachers to experience a “paradigm shift” (Camp 1996, p.1). The significant issues in implementing PBL in the classroom is the demand to shift the methods of instruction, assessment as well as the curriculum (Barron et al., 1998). It is the teachers who change their traditional roles and undertake the new roles after re-examining the pedagogical views and struggling the “conflicts with deep seated teacher beliefs” (Rosenfeld & Rosenfeld, 2005, p. 386). The shifts in innovation pedagogy and personal beliefs may come into conflicts which are complicated to resolve. It is true that in Vietnam some teachers are not eager to change from the traditional teaching methods to more advanced one (Nguyen, Terlouw & Pilot, 2005). Furthermore, Dahlgren, Castensson and Dahlgren (1998) give clear descriptions of the teachers who struggles in their teaching experience as they lack expertise to fully apply the innovative approach. In traditional approach, teachers tend to teach as much knowledge as possible in the given amount of time. That is the reason why many teachers think that they may not supply students with enough information and that students are unable to achieve enough knowledge for their project (Dahlgren et al., 1998). In the new approach, there appears a shift in pedagogical thought of moving from quantity to quality in education. As a consequence, it is of essence for teachers to change their mind set from being a supplier to facilitators in teaching process. Due to the fact that PBL is time-consuming, some teachers find it challenged to

monitor and scaffold students' activities in generating the project. Additionally, some following challenges such as inadequate materials, lack of time to create new curricular, large class size and over-controlling administrations are obstacles that prevent teachers

Student Pedagogical Shift

Teachers are not the unique figures that have to change their roles in education. It is students who are made to take on the new roles in learning acquisition, which completely differentiate with what they have experienced before. Rather than taking part in traditional activities in the classroom, students have to take responsibilities for their own learning, become more creative and improve their reflective and critical thinking skills (Bereiter & Scardanakua, 1989). However, according to Hoang (2014), some Vietnamese students cannot solve the driving questions effectively, keep up motivation or engage actively in the project process till the end, which is one of the major challenges that they face in implementing the PBL. Furthermore, no longer do students rely on memorizing the lessons to succeed in class, they also need to apply what they have learnt into their real-life situations. It is vital that students develop their own self-regulated and self-evaluated learning abilities so as to master PBL (Nguyen, 2017). Instead of rote learning and memorizing the knowledge, students are supplied with more challenging and complicated work, in which they are encouraged to collaborate in teams to solve the problems (Anderman & Midgley, 1998; Lumsden, 1994). Nevertheless, Vietnamese students are not well-equipped with fulfill skills of team working, which lead to some challenges when working collaboratively (Hoang, 2014).

Pedagogical implications

In order to overcome the challenges of implementing PBL at high schools in Vietnam, some pedagogical implications are introduced as followed:

PBL – a compulsory activity at high school in Vietnam.

First and foremost, PBL has to be made a compulsory activity for all students at high school in Vietnam. In order to achieve the goal, they will be equipped with some essential skills and the readiness to shift into the new ways to learn. When students are provided good

preparation to operate projects with high determination to gain good results, they will be in attempt to fulfill their shortcomings. Furthermore, it is vital that when students implement PBL, they should be assessed as a kind of tests such as oral tests or fifteen-minute tests or even forty-five-minute tests.

The positive changes in the roles of high school teachers and students

Secondly, not only teachers but also students have to be willing to change their roles in the classroom. As Tran (2012a) states that it is difficult tasks as they are more familiar with traditional methods of teaching and learning and the changes are rather time-consuming. It is true for those who are at high schools as high school teachers and students have to depend heavily on a crowded curriculum with different subjects (Hoang, 2014). However, when they are ready to shift into the new active roles, their innovation pedagogy and even their personal beliefs, PBL can be implemented effectively and successfully (Truong, 2017). Moreover, when the teachers can overcome problems such as school infrastructure, available resources and time, they can trigger the students' creativity and enthusiasm in implementing PBL.

Adequate training for high school teachers and students

It is of essence that Vietnamese high school teachers, whose new roles are instructor, facilitator, supervisor and monitor, should be supplied with appropriate training by the MOET and the DOET. Besides, being equipped with adequate skills, teachers should also be supplied with the process of project implementation as well as the ways to evaluate students (Nguyen, 2017). When they have sufficient skills they may train, instruct and help their students if necessary. Teachers should have the comprehension of students' basic knowledge and facilitate students learning process by helping them to combine their basic knowledge and the new one to solve the complicated tasks in real life. Moreover, teachers should plan learning materials and assessment rubric carefully for students. Moreover, it is critical that teachers who implement the project should be experienced to instructing students to do projects. High school students, the center of the learning process, are also well-prepared with basic knowledge and soft skills to

implement PBL effectively.

The support from the stakeholders

Along with the efforts of teachers and students, the stakeholders should encourage teachers and students to apply PBL into language teaching. They should update and supply information for the students and teachers through various sources. MOET and DOET in each city or province in Vietnam should organize some more training courses or design a forum to provide teachers essential information of project implementation and evaluation as well as invite some experienced teachers who have operated PBL at their high schools to share their experience so that the use of PBL becomes more and more effective at high schools.

CONCLUSION

Obviously, both teachers and students are beneficial when implementing PBL. It is believed that by bringing the problems in the real-life situations for students to solve through PBL, teachers encourage students to become more independent, promote their creativity and critical thinking. However, during the implementation process to innovate the teaching methods, there appears some challenges such as the lack of preparation and the changes in roles for teachers as well as students to overcome. In order to operate PBL successfully at high school in Vietnam, teachers and students have made great efforts to get over the difficulties and obstacles. It is challenging to implement this task in a relatively short time as it is a long-term one. However, when the efforts are made by not only the teachers and the students but also the stakeholders, the expected outcomes will be in our hands.

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APPROACHES

CROSS-EVALUATION OF GAMAGREE AS A PLATFORM IN TEACHING SVA RUDIMENTS TO GRADE 7 STUDENTS OF TALIPAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Teaching grammar to Filipino students who are non-native speakers of English is challenging work for teachers. To be effective in learning, it requires to have a combination among plays, games and constructive occupations anchored on “explicit references to experiential learning” (Ord, 2012, as cited in Smith, 1980, p. 55). Thus, it is advisable to apply a board game called “Gamagree” which was designed and tested on Grade 7 students of Talipan National High School (TNHS).

In this study, a quantitative research with quasi-experimental and descriptive methods was performed. Also, standard statistical tools include percentage rating, Weighted Arithmetic Mean (WAM), and t-test for independent variables are employed. After the experimentation, results revealed “Satisfactory” at 83.60 for the control group and “Very Satisfactory” at 88.21 for the experimental group at 5% alpha level. Although the Gamagree revealed high levels of acceptability (3.52 and 3.64), there are some aspects of content, clarity, appeal and originality that need to be improved such as: a) sufficiency and organization of game icons; b) responsibility of players and game moderator; c) colors used on the board game; and d) design uniqueness, respectively. As shown in the results, teaching Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA) rudiments using Gamagree as a learning platform is an effective strategy to help students learn better, which can be an alternative of language teachers to break down monotony of board drills and paper tests.

Keywords: *Gamagree, Learning Platform, Rudiments, Subject-Verb Agreement.*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching Filipino students who are non-native English speakers and using it as second language (L2) is a challenging work for language teachers. There is a variety of strategies available in books and other resources, but putting them all in context proves difficult even for the experienced. The rules of grammar may be too structured and thus need a ton of memorizing and paper applications. However, it is urged by constructivist philosophies that education should lead every child to “meaningful activity”, that is, in the thoughts of Dewey (1938), a process of learning by which meanings are constructed from direct experiences through hands-on approaches that promote problem-solving and critical thinking, group work and development of social skills. For him, students should thrive in an environment where they can experience and interact with the curriculum, and they should have the opportunity to take part in their own learning.

According to Ord (2012 as cited in Duma, 2016), learning must incorporate “plays, games, and constructive occupations”. This means that only when teachers transcend the boundaries of rote, old-fashioned teaching shall they expect for better learning outcomes in the pursuit of 21st century education. Board drills and seatwork may still prove beneficial, but active participation in discovery and cooperative tasks can offer a more novel approach to language learning. When the curriculum becomes fun, learners are highly engaged and motivated. When they are engaged and motivated, learning readily follows. Teaching is no longer individualized and formal, but becomes collaborative and free. Thus, faced with the problem of teaching his class to make a subject agree with its verb, the researcher was prompted to develop a board game in 2016, and tested it to one (1) group of students. The effectiveness of this instructional material was manifested in the achievement level of 84.97% with an increase of 8.46% in the overall class mean performance.

In light of the present study, the researcher re-evaluated the board game called “Gamagree” in 2017 to affirm the findings of his initial research given different sets of learners with the same difficulty in learning subject-verb agreement. He also aimed at finding out whether the control and experimental groups were significantly different as

regards their mean performance. To further improve this material, the feedbacks of other language teachers and learners about the Gamagree were analyzed too. They have provided assessment on its content, clarity, appeal and originality which guided the researcher towards necessary modifications on the game elements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A game is defined in the article of Andreu-Andres and Garcia-Casas (2011, p. 795) as “a set of activities involving one or more players. It has goals, constraints, payoffs and consequences. A game is rule-guided and artificial in some respects...” They explained that a game includes several fundamental characteristics, which is usually a contest that requires participants to follow a set of rules in order to reach a goal. With similar objective of favoring meaningful and experiential learning, this study exposed students to activities from which they could learn and put into practice or discover new knowledge, which might make them more competent.

Similarly, according to Hedjdenberg (2005), games can be played against other people, against oneself, against a computer, or perhaps even against the forces of nature—but what they all have in common is that they have goals with set rules that must be followed in order to play.

In history, Lambert (2019) wrote that people have been playing board games since the start of civilization. A board, dice and counters were found in Iraq dating from 3,000 BC. Egyptians also played a board game called “senet”. The board was divided into squares with counters where sticks were thrown rather than a dice. The Romans played board games called the twelve-line game, like modern Backgammon. Rich Saxons played games like chess. The Arabs played a similar game, and by about 1100, a form of draughts was being played in France; this is called “Checkers” in the USA.

Lambert (2019) added that traditional games remained popular in the 18th Century. These included games such as chess, draughts and backgammon. Many new board games were introduced in the 19th and 20th centuries. “Ludo” was originally an Indian game. It came to Britain in 1880. “Snakes and Ladders” was introduced in Britain in 1892 while “Monopoly” was introduced in 1935.

According to Pepperdine University (2015), students succeed in an environment where they are given opportunities to experience, interact with the curriculum, and take part in their own learning. This idea framed the development of the “Gamagree”, a game board to help students learn the rudiments of subject-verb agreement through gaming approach. The Gamagree was developed based on the game elements of Appelcline (2006).

Appelcline (2006) defined four types of components: a) environment, b) tokens, c) markers, and d) randomizer. “Environment” is the board upon which the game is played. “Tokens” are movable pieces which are placed upon that environment representing each player. “Markers” are game components which exist outside the environment; they help a player keep track of some quantity, like the pen and score sheet. Lastly, “randomizer” is something which also exists outside the environment, and which in some way introduces luck into the game, that is, the die being cast. On the other hand, “activity” refers to the mechanics describing interactions in the game, while “victory” is defined by victory points (VPs) or scores required to win the game (Duma, 2016, p. 213).

In the Philippine study of Pornel (2011), an educational board game called “EcStatistakes” for Mathematics and Statistics classes was developed. EcStatistakes is a monopoly-like board game with 28 squares arranged consecutively around the board where the players, represented by tokens, moved around. About 85 students participated in the study, and results revealed that the factors that made an educational board game engaging to students include aesthetics, mechanics of the game, variety of experience, interaction among players, and control. This study also confirmed that the factors found important in computer games and educational games for adults also applied to board games for young people.

A related research conducted by Gutierrez (2014) in Bulacan State University–Sarmiento Campus has shown that the students’ score increases from pretest to posttest for both the control and experimental groups, but a t-test showed that the card game applied in teaching is more effective than traditional teaching methods. In this study, a pretest–posttest model was used to test the effectiveness of an

educational card game in reinforcing biological concepts in comparison with traditional teaching methods. The subjects of this study were two biology classes. Both classes received conventional instruction; however, the experimental group's instruction was supplemented with the card game, while the control group's instruction was reinforced with traditional exercises and assignments. Likewise, students from the experimental group evaluated the card game using five criteria: goals, design, organization, playability, and usefulness. The students then rated the material very satisfactory.

The backbone of the present study is the Hannafin-Peck Model cited in Isman, Caglar, Dabaj and Ersozlu (2005). This instructional design that proceeds with three stages, including the needs assessment, design phase, and development/implementation of instruction. Critical to its phases are the constant evaluation and revision along the process. To fit the needs of this research, the model was modified to include the feedback provided by the student and teacher-respondents. The cross-evaluation made by both respondents has provided different vantage points or perspectives regarding the acceptability levels of the Gamagree. Ayala (2011) defined acceptability as the determination of how well an intervention was received by the target population and the extent to which it might meet their expectations. In relation to the studies of Pornel (2011) and Gutierrez (2014), this study also aimed at evaluating certain characteristics of the game such as content, clarity, appeal and originality.

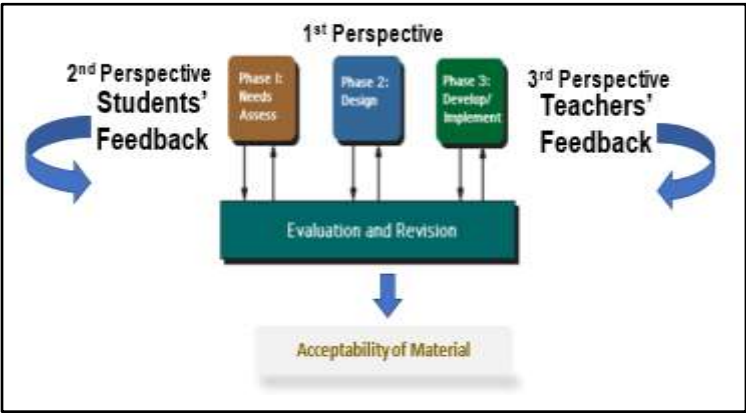


Figure 1. The Modified Hannafin & Peck Model as Research Framework

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research was undertaken to cross-evaluate the Gamagree as platform in teaching SVA rudiments to Grade 7 students of Talipan National High School (TNHS). It sought answers to the following:

- 1 Is there a significant difference in the mean performances of the control group and experimental group after experimentation?
- 2 What is the level of acceptability of the Gamagree as a platform in teaching SVA rudiments based on the feedback of the teacher- and student-respondents in terms of:
 - a Content;
 - b Clarity;
 - c Appeal; and
 - d Originality?

Hypothesis

H₀ : There is no significant difference in the mean performance of the control and experimental groups after the experiment.

THE STUDY

Settings and participants

This research was conducted in two Grade 7 classes at Talipan National High School, Pagbilao, Quezon, Philippines. It involved a sample of 50 students for the control group and 53 for the experimental who were purposively chosen. Both groups were taught subject-verb agreement with the use of traditional approach. Instruction for the experimental group was supplemented with the Gamagree, while instruction for the control group was reinforced by board and paper exercises. To obtain data on acceptability levels, two groups of respondents answered the survey questionnaire; the first group included language teachers in English department, while the second involved only students in the experimental group.

Data collection and analysis

A pretest-posttest design was used to test the effectiveness of the Gamagree. Furthermore, descriptive survey was employed in evaluating the acceptability level of the Gamagree. Adapted from the study of Mopera (2011), its acceptability was assessed by the teacher- and student- respondents in terms of content, clarity, appeal and originality.

Data collected were computed electronically and treated statistically. To determine the percentage scores of the respondents before and after experimentation, the percentage rating formula was used:

$$P = \frac{\text{Score} \times 50}{\text{Total Item}} + 50\%$$

Total Item

Where: P= *percentage rating*

To determine the average mean performance of the respondents in the pretest and posttest, the following formula was used:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

Where: \bar{x} = *mean performance*

x = *performance of individual respondent*

n = *total number of respondents*

To interpret the computed mean performance, the following scale and qualitative descriptors were employed:

90 – 100 = *Outstanding* (O)

80 – 84 = *Satisfactory* (S)

85 – 89 = *Very Satisfactory* (VS)

75 – 79 = *Fairly Satisfactory* (FS)

Below 75 = *Did not meet expectation* (DME) (Source: DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015)

To determine the acceptability level of the Gamagree as a platform in teaching SVA rudiments, the weighted arithmetic mean was utilized:

$$WAM = \frac{\sum fw}{n}$$

Where: WAM = weighted arithmetic mean
 f = frequency of the responses
 w = weight of the responses
 n = total number of responses

To interpret the computed WAM, the study employed the following continuum scale with corresponding verbal descriptions:

| WAM Scale | Verbal Description | Verbal Equivalence |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3.26 – 4.00 | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Highly Acceptable</i> |
| 2.51 – 3.25 | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Acceptable</i> |
| 1.76 – 2.50 | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Less Acceptable</i> |
| 1.00 – 1.75 | <i>Strongly Disagree</i> | <i>Not Acceptable</i> |

This study used the independent sample t-test to determine the significant difference in the mean performance of the control and experimental groups after the experimentation. It evaluates the means of two independent or unrelated groups.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Mean performance of the control group before and after experimentation

| Mean Performance of the control group on: | Quantitative Rating | Qualitative Description |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| PRETEST | 75.40 | <i>Fairly Satisfactory (FS)</i> |
| POSTTEST | 83.60 | <i>Satisfactory (S)</i> |

As shown in the table, before experimentation, the control group had a rating of 75.40, qualitatively described as Fairly Satisfactory. After the experiment, the control group got a rating of 83.60, qualitatively described as Satisfactory. The results imply that there was a marked increase in the mean performance of the control group after experimentation, with the variance of 8.2 percent.

Table 2: Mean performance of the experimental group before and after experimentation

| Mean performance of the experimental group on: | Quantitative Rating | Qualitative Description |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| PRETEST | 75.33 | <i>Fairly Satisfactory (FS)</i> |
| POSTTEST | 88.21 | <i>Very Satisfactory (VS)</i> |

The table shows that before experimentation, the experimental group had a rating of 75.33, qualitatively described as Fairly Satisfactory. After receiving instruction with the supplementary activity on Gamagree, the experimental group got a rating of 88.21, qualitatively described as Very Satisfactory. The results imply that there was a marked increase in the mean performance of the experimental group after treatment, with the variance of 12.88 percent.

Table 3: T-test results on finding the significant difference in the mean performance of the control and experimental group after experimentation

| Variables Compared | Degree of Freedom | Mean Values | Computed t-value | Critical t-value | Decision | Impression at 0.05 Significance Level |
|--|-------------------|--|------------------|------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| Pretest mean performance of the control (x) and experimental group (y) | 101 | X ₁ = 83.60 X ₂ = 88.21 | 5.34 | 1.984 | Reject | Significant |

There was a significant difference noted in the mean performance of the control and experimental group after experimentation. Hence, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis. The results can be justified by their absolute computed t-value of 5.34 which is higher than its critical value of 1.984, significant at 0.05 alpha level.

It can be noted that the mean performance of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group which marked a difference of 4.61 percent. This implies that teaching SVA rudiments using the

Gamagree as a learning platform is more effective and can better reinforce learning the rudiments of subject-verb agreement.

Table 4: Acceptability level of Gamagree as a platform in teaching SVA rudiments in terms of Content

| Acceptability based on Content | Teacher-Respondents | | | Student-Respondents | | |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | WAM VALUES | VERBAL DESCRIPTION | VERBAL EQUIVALENCE | WAM VALUES | VERBAL DESCRIPTION | VERBAL EQUIVALENCE |
| 1. concepts of SVA adequately expressed in the game | 3.9 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.96 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 2. application of rules observed in the sentences used in the gameplay | 3.8 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.96 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 3. provides enough repetition of learning to support retention | 3.8 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.98 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 4. contains a variety of sentences from simple to complex for mastery of competency | 4 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 4 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 5. icons on the board enough and well-organized | 2.2 | Disagree | Less Acceptable | 2.4 | Disagree | Less Acceptable |
| AVERAGE | 3.54 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.66 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |

Table 4 shows the average WAM values of 3.54 and 3.66, verbally described as Strongly Agree/ Highly Acceptable based on the feedback of the teacher- and student-respondents respectively. This implies that the “content” of the Gamagree is Highly Acceptable.

Specifically, the teacher- and student-respondents strongly agreed that the Gamagree “contains a variety of sentences from simple to complex for mastery of competency” which got the highest WAM value of 4 described as Highly Acceptable. Meanwhile, they disagreed that the “icons found on the board are enough and well-organized” which got the lowest WAM values of 2.2 and 2.4 respectively which are “Less Acceptable”.

Table 5: Acceptability level of Gamagree as a platform in teaching SVA rudiments in terms of Clarity

| Acceptability based on Clarity | Teacher-Respondents | | | Student-Respondents | | |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| | WAM VALUES | VERBAL DESCRIPTION | VERBAL EQUIVALENCE | WAM VALUES | VERBAL DESCRIPTION | VERBAL EQUIVALENCE |
| 1. mechanics understandable and easy to follow | 3.9 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.96 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 2. responsibilities of players and game moderators clear | 2.1 | Disagree | Less Acceptable | 2.42 | Disagree | Less Acceptable |
| 3. well-explained lesson and has become preparatory stage for application in the gameplay | 3.8 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.92 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 4. function or purpose of game icon clear to all players | 3.8 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.92 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 5. size of prints and game icons readable and can be easily recognized | 3.8 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.91 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| <i>AVERAGE</i> | <i>3.48</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Highly Acceptable</i> | <i>3.63</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Highly Acceptable</i> |

Revealed in the table are the average WAM values of 3.48 and 3.63, verbally described as Strongly Agree/ Highly Acceptable based on the feedback of the teacher- and student-respondents respectively. This implies that the “clarity” of the Gamagree is Highly Acceptable.

Specifically, both respondents strongly agreed that the “mechanics of Gamagree are understandable and easy to follow” which got the highest WAM values of 3.9 and 3.96 respectively described as Highly Acceptable. Meanwhile, they disagreed that the “responsibilities of players and game moderators are clearly expressed” with the lowest WAM values of 2.1 and 2.41 respectively which are Less Acceptable.

Table 6: Acceptability level of Gamagree as a platform in teaching SVA rudiments in terms of Appeal

| Acceptability based on Appeal | Teacher-Respondents | | | Student-Respondents | | |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| | WAM VALUES | VERBAL DESCRIPTION | VERBAL EQUIVALENCE | WAM VALUES | VERBAL DESCRIPTION | VERBAL EQUIVALENCE |
| 1. captivates the students' motivation to learn and strengthens the positive attitude towards learning | 3.7 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.89 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 2. visuals attract students to actively participate in the activity | 3.9 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.94 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 3. colors used pleasing to the eyes | 2.3 | Disagree | Less Acceptable | 2.49 | Disagree | Less Acceptable |
| 4. friendly competition stimulates learner's attentiveness in completing the gameplay | 3.8 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.91 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 5. sustains the learners' interest | 3.8 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.91 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| <i>AVERAGE</i> | <i>3.5</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Highly Acceptable</i> | <i>3.63</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Highly Acceptable</i> |

Shown in the table are the average WAM values of 3.5 and 3.63, verbally described as Strongly Agree/ Highly Acceptable based on the feedback of the teacher- and student-respondents respectively. This implies that the “appeal” of the Gamagree is Highly Acceptable.

Specifically, both respondents strongly agreed that the “visuals attract students to actively participate in the activity” which got the highest WAM values of 3.9 and 3.94 respectively described as Highly Acceptable. Meanwhile, they disagreed that the “colors used are pleasing to the eyes” with the lowest WAM values of 2.3 and 2.49 respectively which are Less Acceptable.

Table 7: Acceptability level of Gamagree as a platform in teaching SVA rudiments in terms of Originality

| Acceptability based on Originality | Teacher-Respondents | | | Student-Respondents | | |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| | WAM VALUES | VERBAL DESCRIPTION | VERBAL EQUIVALENCE | WAM VALUES | VERBAL DESCRIPTION | VERBAL EQUIVALENCE |
| 1. design exceptionally different from other game-boards available | 2.4 | Disagree | Less Acceptable | 2.45 | Disagree | Less Acceptable |
| 2. serves as a new model in teaching English as it enables learners to develop critical thinking without fear of mistakes | 3.8 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.89 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 3. provides a creative and innovative way of evaluating student learning | 3.7 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.89 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 4. promotes both cooperative learning and self-involvement in the acquisition of competency | 4 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.94 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| 5. supports a range of Multiple Intelligences, as it maximizes verbal, mathematical, social and independent learning | 3.8 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable | 3.91 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| <i>AVERAGE</i> | <i>3.54</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Highly Acceptable</i> | <i>3.62</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Highly Acceptable</i> |

Presented in the table are the average WAM values of 3.54 and 3.62, verbally described as Strongly Agree/ Highly Acceptable based on the feedback of the teacher- and student-respondents respectively. This implies that the “originality” of the Gamagree is Highly Acceptable.

Specifically, both respondents strongly agreed that the Gamagree “promotes both cooperative learning and self-involvement in the acquisition of competency” which got the highest WAM values of 4 and 3.94 respectively described as Highly Acceptable. Meanwhile, they disagreed that the “design is exceptionally different from other game-boards available” with the lowest WAM values of 2.4 and 2.45 respectively which are Less Acceptable.

Table 8: Summary of the level of acceptability of the Gamagree as a platform in teaching SVA rudiments based on the feedback of the teacher and student-respondents

| Acceptability Level in terms of: | Teacher-respondents | Student-respondents | Student-Teacher Response Average | Verbal Description | Verbal Equivalence |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | | | |
| Content | 3.54 | 3.66 | 3.60 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| Clarity | 3.48 | 3.63 | 3.56 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| Appeal | 3.50 | 3.63 | 3.57 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| Originality | 3.54 | 3.62 | 3.58 | Strongly Agree | Highly Acceptable |
| <i>Grand WAM</i> | <i>3.52</i> | <i>3.64</i> | <i>3.58</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Highly Acceptable</i> |

The summary table shows that the Gamagree is Highly Acceptable with the grand WAM values of 3.52 and 3.64 respectively based on the feedback of the teacher and student-respondents in terms of content, clarity, appeal and originality. Specifically, each indicator received a verbal description of Strongly Agree/ Highly Acceptable. This can be justified by their WAM values of 3.54 and 3.66 in terms of “content” (3.60) which received the highest level of acceptability; 3.48 and 3.63 in terms of “clarity” (3.56) with the lowest level of acceptability; 3.50 and 3.63 in terms of “appeal”; and 3.54 and 3.62 in terms of “originality”.

DISCUSSION

The test scores have proven that both approaches are effective in making students learn subject-verb agreement (SVA). More importantly, the t-test results explicitly showed that reinforcing teaching with the Gamagree leads to more effective SVA learning as opposed to mere conventional method. On this note, the findings confirm those of Gutierrez (2014) in Bulacan State University-Sarmiento Campus, Philippines.

Additionally, this finding affirms Ord (2012) as cited in Duma (2016) when he asserted that for effective learning to happen, teachers must incorporate “plays, games, and constructive occupations”. Board drills and paper tests may be beneficial, but active participation in discovery and cooperative tasks (such as board gaming) can offer a more novel approach to language learning. It further validates that when the learners are highly engaged and motivated, learning readily follows.

While the Gamagree revealed high level of acceptability, there is still a need to improve the following aspects: a) sufficiency and organization of game icons (content); b) responsibility of players and game moderator (clarity); c) use of colors on the board game (appeal); and d) uniqueness of design (originality). It is important to note that these characteristics of the Gamagree which need improvement are the factors that made an educational board game engaging to students mentioned in Pornel (2011), such as aesthetics, mechanics of the game and interaction among players. It also relates with some criteria evaluated in the study of Gutierrez (2014) including design, organization and playability.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The Gamagree can be an alternative instrument for language teachers to break down the monotony of board drills and paper tests. The findings imply that it can help students learn the basics of subject-verb agreement. Appropriate use, however, is needed before introducing this board game to class. The type of learners should also be considered, including enough time to allow for learning while playing.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The mean performances of the control group and experimental group are significantly different as found after experimentation. Though it is revealed in the after-experiment means of both groups that they scored higher compared to their pretests (where the amount of improvement favored the experimental group), the t-test results sufficiently support that the Gamagree can positively affect learning the SVA.

The Gamagree as a platform in teaching SVA rudiments has an overall level of Highly Acceptable in terms of content, clarity, appeal and originality. It is shown however that “content” had the highest acceptability level while “clarity” had the lowest. Based on the indicators, the board game still needs improvements on a few aspects, namely sufficiency and organization of game icons, responsibility of players and game moderator, use of colors on the board game, and uniqueness of design.

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TEACHING ENGLISH SKILLS INTEGRATEDLY: TEXTBOOK USE AND TEACHING METHODS

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ABSTRACT

One of the ultimate concerns in teaching English is how to help learners acquire the language well, which motivates EFL educators and researchers to find a variety of teaching methods and materials to support EFL learners' language development. In contrast to traditional methods in which English skills are taught separately, innovative EFL education confirms the benefits of teaching English skills integratedly. Along with teaching methods, materials that support this integration have been also developed. This paper aims to investigate the use of integrated skill textbooks and the practice of teaching English Reading-Writing skills integratedly at a university in Southern Vietnam. Through classroom observations and informal interviews with the instructors, the findings reveal that the integration of Reading - Writing skills were not efficiently undertaken due to the limited course duration in contrast to the heavy course content, the instructors' use of textbooks and teaching methods in integrating knowledge of the two skills. The paper, therefore, provides suggestions on how to teach Reading-Writing skills integratedly in a more effective way through improving teaching methods, textbook use, and curriculum design to develop the two skills of English-major students.

Keywords: *integration, English skills, textbook use, teaching methods.*

INTRODUCTION

With the increasing number of English language learners worldwide, education institutions have made English a mandatory part in the curriculum with the aim of developing learners' English language proficiency for further use (Denham, 1992; Nunan, 2003). The National English Language Project 2020 also emphasises the need to improve

English skills comprehensively after realising the imbalanced focus in teaching the language (MOET, 2008). For example, Nunan (2003) is concerned about the great focus on developing lexical and grammatical competences which are thought to support learners in passing the course assessment while communicative competence is somehow underestimated.

According to Skehan (1998), English language skills are usually unevenly developed, and there is a need for innovations in English language education that can support learners' full development of all language skills. A recommendation is then proposed to teach those skills in integration. This integration has caught much attention of educators so far who then recommend the development of curriculum and materials so that this integration can fit in the educational programs.

However, integration in teaching English skills is still a new concept in some settings, which causes the ineffective application of textbook and teaching methods. This paper investigates the integration in teaching English language skills at a higher education institution in Vietnam to find out how this integration has been undertaken so far and whether there are certain challenges in this integration in teaching English language skills.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN GENERAL

English has been long considered as the language of global communication. Many associations (ASEAN, EU) have defined English as the common language of communication. This then leads to the increasing demands of learning English for communicative purposes (Hamid & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Many English language educators and researchers have put great efforts to propose effective textbooks and teaching methods that can serve the need of developing learners' English language skills (Hinkel, 2018; Nunan, 2003; Skehan, 1998).

Denham (1992) and Nunan (2003) admit the turning point in many nations (including Vietnam) in making the English language a compulsory subject from early education. However, in teaching the language, the outcome is usually mistakenly understood between knowing and using the language (Richards, 1974). Learners may know

the language elements including its lexical and grammatical features but fail to use the language for communicative purposes. Skehan (1998) and Hinkel (2018) identify the reason for this low communicative competence due to the uneven language development of learners. To illustrate, teachers may have a certain focus in teaching such as grammar and vocabulary and pay very limited attention to speaking and/or listening skills. Ro and Cheatham (2009) research barriers in language development and suggest that the language environment, especially exposure to language, is a deciding factor that either contributes to or hinders the process of language development. When the role of the language environment is praised, many countries whose English is not the main language have seen educational settings as the primary language environment. The focus is then shifted to how to provide learners chances to use the language at most so that the process of language development is continuous.

Why do we need to teach English skills integratedly?

Skehan (1998) and Hinkel (2018) remind that there is usually uneven development in language skills, and teachers need to be aware of making one skill a support to develop the others. Chen (1999) researches English language teaching in Taiwan and concludes that language skills are taught separately, leading to the consequence of inadequate language development. Especially when learners reach higher levels of education where productive skills are highly needed, learners fail to produce language meaningfully. Oxford (2001) claims that separating skills in teaching can still develop certain skills but does not work for all. Chen (1999) realises that because those skills are taught in separation, teachers tend to pay more attention to certain skills over the others and prefer rote learning.

Due to the problems when language skills are taught separately, integration in teaching language skills has been paid much attention to. According to Su (2007, p. 29), 'the philosophy of integrated-skills instruction is based on the concept that in natural, day-to-day experience, oral and written languages are not kept separate and isolated from one another'. Akram and Malik (2010) further support this claim by saying that in reality, communication requires a combination of skills, which learners should be carefully trained.

Isolation in teaching language skills will lead to breakdowns in communication where learners tend to be more receptive than productive. Integrating skills in teaching, on the other hand, helps teachers evaluate learners' one skill in relation to others as well as evaluate numerous skills at once (Oxford, 2001).

What needs to be considered in teaching English language skills integratedly?

The benefits when integrating skills in teaching are obvious, and teachers are further reminded of selecting appropriate materials and teaching aids that can support this integration (Akram & Malik, 2010). Besides, teachers should also be thoughtful of designing classroom activities so that the skills are truly integrated, and the learners are motivated to engage in the activities. In order to both transmit the knowledge and engage learners in the classroom activities, teachers need to think of appropriate teaching methods that can fit the teaching content and the learners' characteristics. Therefore, this integration demands much time and effort, especially when learners obtain unequal language skills, the need to take learners' individual differences into consideration is extremely challenging when teachers are not able to support all learners within a limited amount of time (Jing, 2006). Akram and Malik (2010) also mention the social-political issues that take control of the teaching process. Teachers are given a quite limited amount of time to reach expectations of the schools and make students pass the tests. Therefore, teaching for tests frequently occurs and eliminates the integration of language skills in teaching. These are the reminders but also the admitted challenges of researchers when proposing the integration in teaching language skills.

As a concluding remark, integration in teaching language skills shows the benefits of developing learners' language skills comprehensively for authentic language use. However, the demands of time, effort, teaching materials and methods are the clearly-seen obstacles that teachers encounter, which then propose the need for studies that address these points so that recommendations for effective integration in teaching language skills can be proposed.

What did we do?

The writing of this paper is based on our concerns about how English language skills are taught at our institution and whether the integration of skills in teaching is effective as expected. The ELT programs at our institution were modified not so long ago, and we decided to integrate language skills in teaching. To be specific, before this integration, each language skill (Speaking/Listening/Reading/Writing) had been a 2-credit unit and taught in separation from the other skills during the first five semesters. The modification of curriculum highlighted the reduction of the credit points for English skills in each semester so that more subjects could be added to the curriculum, especially the addition of Listening- Speaking 6 and Reading – Writing 6 to advance learners' language skills. We then decided to integrate Listening with Speaking and Reading with Writing. Each pair was given 3 credits equivalent to 45 teaching periods. The materials were also changed to Q-Skills for Success series of Oxford University Press because this series had the integrated skills which were thought to be convenient for designing the curriculum, syllabus, and lessons. This series was chosen, apart from its already integrated skills, because of its being learner-centered, raising intercultural awareness, enclosing diverse genres and self-evaluation checklists, and focusing on both receptive and productive skills (Daise et al., 2011; John, 2013; MacDonald, 2013).

We proposed this study to see how instructors made use of the teaching materials and undertook teaching practice when language skills were integrated. However, the challenges emerged when we asked for permission to extensively observe classroom activities. We then decided to select Reading and Writing 4 whose instructor allowed us to observe her class, but we also made informal discussions with the teaching team to gain further information on the reality of teaching and learning of Reading and Writing skills. We hope that this very first study at our institution will help take further actions to support teachers and students in teaching and learning English language skills effectively.

What did we find from our observations and informal discussions?

Q-Skills for Success Reading and Writing 4 contains 10 units, each of

which has 2 reading texts and one writing lesson with quite many exercises. Similar to the problem of time limit proposed by Akram and Malik (2010), the teachers found it hard to cover all units within 45 teaching periods. Therefore, the redesign of the content was done. We discussed with the representative of the teaching team, she admitted the limited amount of time that left them with no choice but reducing the amount of teaching content. To illustrate, of all 10 units, the Reading - Writing teachers cut off some units of the book for Reading and selected only a few themes for teaching Writing. The decision of how many Reading units to cut off and which themes of Writing to teach is made as negotiated by the teaching team. Furthermore, Reading sessions were taught before Writing ones. Therefore, there was no interrelation between Reading and Writing sessions in the same unit and in the entire book. This, in fact, goes against what Daise et al. (2011), John (2013), and MacDonald (2013) explain about the use of Q-skills series that each unit is designed in a way that one skill supports others. For example, in Reading sections, learners are exposed to vocabulary, structures, genres, and ideas relevant to the unit topic so that they can apply those in later Writing. The aim of this is to improve learners' vocabulary, structures, and background knowledge for a particular topic and writing genre. The self-evaluation checklists at the end of the units do remind the application of relevant vocabulary and style in the writing.

In addition, the reduction of units in Reading – Writing 4 was done with no references to the previous Reading – Writing 3 or the following Reading – Writing 5, which created difficulties for the teaching team of the following semester because they needed to redesign the teaching content again. But more importantly, this left an incomplete development and assessment of learners' language skills because the teachers did not touch some Writing themes in the book and they were not able to assess how learners would apply what they had learned in Reading sections into their writing practice. Following what is proposed about integration and separation in teaching language skills, learners' language skills were not developed comprehensively because they were exposed much to receptive area and limited to the productive area. It is more likely that those skills were still taught separately (Chen, 1999; Hinkel, 2018; Oxford 2001; Skehan, 1998; Su,

2007)

Apart from teaching, the assessment also reveals problems. The assessment of Reading – Writing courses were 50% in class and 50% end-of-term. Only the end-of-term was controlled by the Faculty and Testing Office; the other 50% in-class assessment was up to the teachers. Therefore, there was a mismatch among Reading-Writing 4 groups where teachers designed their own tests which were different from others' in terms of test topics, objectives, level of difficulties, and marking criteria.

WHAT DO WE RECOMMEND?

Referring to the challenges that teachers encounter in teaching Reading – Writing 4 and the suggestions of researchers, we have come up with some recommendations in terms of teaching time allotted, content modification, material design, teaching methods, and teachers' collaboration.

About the time limit and the heavy teaching workload, we suggest either the expansion of teaching time or redesign of teaching content for each Reading – Writing course. The current teaching time is 45 periods which may be expanded to 60 teaching periods, equivalent to 4 credits. Another solution can be the reduction of teaching content for each Reading – Writing course in 45 teaching periods. However, it should not be mistaken with the cutting-off solution as done by the teaching team. We here suggest that in 45 teaching periods, teachers may teach 5-6 units and leave the remaining units to the following course. The reduction of teaching content in each course does not mean leaving out the units but a more proper division of units that should be taught in one course. This can ensure the interrelation of Reading - Writing sessions in the same course and across Reading – Writing courses in the entire curriculum (Chen, 1999; Hinkel, 2018; Oxford, 2001; Skehan, 1998; Su, 2007). Teachers of the Reading – Writing course should also consider learners' learning progress to decide how much content should be taught and how much time should be devoted to one topic to ensure learners' successful acquisition of the content and development of skills (Akram & Malik, 2010; Jing, 2006).

Hanashiro (2016) emphasises the significance of textbook selection

and textbook use in education as the guide of teaching and learning and a deciding factor of curriculum design, assessment, teaching methods. Therefore, we further suggest that the teaching team together evaluate the textbook and supplemental materials for immediate modifications. The selection of new textbooks or redesign of the current Q-skills series needs to be considered for effective teaching and learning.

Akram and Malik (2010) and Jing (2006) remind teachers of devoting time for lesson designs and teaching methods because the integration of skills in language teaching is very challenging. The findings reveal the problems of teaching skills in isolation. Therefore, teachers need to work on how one skill supports the others through examining the textbook aims and objectives, then deciding what methods are best to integrate what students learn in Reading into Writing practice. The current focus in Reading and Writing 4 course is still on receptive skill. We suggest the strong focus on productive one or at least a balance of these two skills.

At the time of this research, we also realised the isolation in working of the teaching team, so we propose that teaching should be done collaboratively so that teachers can support each other. There were normally two meetings including one at the beginning of the semester to decide what to teach and one at almost the end of the semester to decide what to test. This lack of interactions among the teaching staff created the bigger discrepancy in teaching Reading and Writing because each class worked with one teacher and followed what the teacher instructed. There was no shared voice among the teachers and the shared curriculum was adapted differently by different teachers. We suggest periodical meetings and workshops on teaching methods, lesson designs, and assessment to help teachers fulfil their teaching missions through sharing with and learning from their fellows (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Murray, 2010). The teaching team needs to work closely and collaboratively to suggest teaching methods, lesson designs, or any concerns so that there will be immediate actions to get the problems solved.

Our conclusion

We think that integration in teaching English language skills should be

promoted along with the appropriate selection of teaching materials, methods, curriculum design, and assessment. We also believe that teachers need to be aware of how the skills should be integrated and develop their teaching capacity to achieve the course aims. Supports from the institution and teaching fellows are very necessary so that effective collaboration exists for positive educational outcomes.

In this paper, we realise our limitations regarding our very small scope of the investigation, but we hope this will be the pilot to raise the challenges in teaching English language skills integratedly to a higher level of attention. It is advised that further research be done in both Listening-Speaking and Reading-Writing courses across different levels and institutions where we may find different teaching materials, methods, and assessment tools so that we can propose comprehensive recommendations in teaching English language skills integratedly.

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THE EFFECTS OF INTERACTIVE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES IN INSPIRING ENGLISH-MAJOR STUDENTS AT DALAT UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Although Vietnam's National Foreign Language Project 2020 has brought dramatic improvements in language teaching, a great number of students still lack motivation for learning English. In order to sketch a general picture about students' learning attitudes, a questionnaire was sent to 230 students majoring in English Studies at Dalat University. Surprisingly, the survey showed that about half of the informants had unclear motivation for learning English. In an attempt to arouse language learners, this study investigated the effects of interactive classroom activities in inspiring English-major students to acquire knowledge under the condition of large classrooms. The study participants were 242 freshmen and 142 sophomores at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Dalat University. Questionnaires and interviews played an important role in collecting data which were then analysed statistically and descriptively. The finding results revealed four main effects of interactive classroom activities: make theoretical lessons enjoyable, engaging and simple; stimulate students to work together; encourage students to use four skills in combination; create more opportunities for students to share their knowledge and personal experience.

Keywords: *effects, interactive classroom activities, inspiring, English-major students.*

INTRODUCTION

Having been implemented since 2008, the National Foreign Language Project 2020 has been trying to fulfil targets. Although language

teaching in Vietnam has experienced significant changes over the past ten years, the Minister of Education and Training, Phung Xuan Nha, in November, 2016, stated that the first period of the National Foreign Language Project 2020 was unsuccessful due to a lack of quality in both English teachers and English learners throughout the country. In addition, Thuong (2017) analysed the graduation examination results of 180 high schools in Ho Chi Minh City and revealed that 128 schools accounting for 71% failed to achieve 5.0 point. Obviously, English learners in Vietnam are still facing many difficulties in mastering the language.

Mentioning the term of learning, Chickering and Gamson (1987, p.3) claimed that:

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes, listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

At Dalat University, nevertheless, a great number of students have been learning English in a passive manner. It is rather common for a majority of students to sit passively in class and take notes hour by hour. Not only do they avoid interaction with lecturers but they also lack motivation for learning English. As a result, more and more students have considered English as a burden. In an attempt to arouse language learners, this study investigated the effects of interactive classroom activities in inspiring English-major students to acquire knowledge under the condition of large classrooms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The notion of classroom interaction

Writing about classroom interaction, Richards, John Platt, and Heidi Platt (1992, p.52) explain, 'Classroom interaction is the patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication and the types of social relationships which occur within classrooms.'

Paying attention to the roles of classroom interaction, Kasim (2004) examines the classroom interaction in a Speaking class at Malang University, Indonesia. The Speaking course took place in semester III after all students had passed their first speaking course. According to the finding results, learning-teaching process consists of five different patterns: teacher-class (T-C), teacher-group (T-G), teacher-student (T-S), student-student (S-S) and student-teacher (S-T). The research also proves that 'classroom interaction is important for the development of communicative ability' because 'students were highly motivated to talk to each other in the target language' (Kasim, 2004, p.9).

Another research involving the effects of classroom interaction between student-student and student-teacher was carried out by Wang and Castro (2010). The researchers focused on 28 English students ranging from 18 to 25 years old at the English Department of a university in Guizhou, China. All participants were separated into two groups of equal quantity, but only one group was allowed to access the interactive approach. After two phases with different tasks, the researchers emphasized that classroom interaction positively influences learners. The authors then make further comments:

Since language output and classroom interactions have been shown to have a facilitative impact on language learning, EFL teachers should stimulate learner's interests and provide as many opportunities as possible for language learners to produce the target language by implementing various classroom interaction tasks. Classroom teaching that is learner-centered can provide more opportunities for EFL learners to produce and learn the target language (Wang and Castro, 2010, p.181).

2. Interactive classroom activities and the relationship with English learning motivation

By and large, teaching and learning at higher education level is a two-dimension activity in which teachers carry out classroom activities to help students actively acquire English knowledge. It is well documented that interactive classroom activities offer many advantages. For example, Moore (2011)'s study (as cited in Huang and Hu, 2016) regards interactive classroom activities as useful strategies

to encourage learners to do activities, to practice communicating, to response immediately and to increase learning interest. Also cited in Huang and Hu (2016), Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2005) strongly believe that games develop learners' interest as well as motivation because students keep communicating, sharing, and discussing together. Persuasively, Huang and Hu assert that:

Games or activities have been considered to assist students with their language learning. First, they add interest to what students might not find very interesting. Second, the variety and intensity that games offer may lower anxiety and encourage shy learners to take part, especially when games are played in small groups (Huang and Hu, 2016, p.87).

Harmer (2007, p.223) also affirms, 'The game, which is suitable for all levels, forces students to think extremely carefully about the exact construction of the questions they are asking.' To help teachers create an interactive learning environment, Gholami, Attaran, and Moghaddam (2014) present thirteen strategies after synthesizing six relevant literature studies. The authors also assert that proper use of active learning strategies improves students' abilities of remembering, thinking, and solving problems.

Upon the development of education and technology, Silverthorn (2016) systematically considers three consequences of interactive classroom activities. The author figures out that those who study in the environment of interactive classroom activities tend to enjoy learning challenges and to work better with their partners. Moreover, some suggestions are also made for interactive classroom activities varying from objective setting, instruction giving to facility supporting and performance evaluating.

As recently as 2017, a survey was conducted in an EFL classroom of Saudi learners with the hope of exploring the interactive tasks, seeking learners' feedback and finding new opportunities for the current educational problem. The researcher, Shariq (2017), highlights really optimistic results. Under the traditional pedagogical methods, English-major graduates cannot meet the demand of international job market. However, interactive classroom activities successfully stimulate the

learning process. When asked to compare the effectiveness of interactive approach with that of the traditional methods, 91.66% of the participants claimed that the interactive techniques were greatly satisfactory, 80% agreed that their real expectations were met, and 75% admitted that they could understand grammatical points better (Shariq, 2017, p.93).

On the basis of the above studies, it can be stated that so far interactive classroom activities, to a certain extent, may act as a potential teaching tool which can create an exciting atmosphere in EFL classes, provide learners with more opportunities to use the target language, and increase interactions with their teachers and classmates. On the other hand, it is a pity that no research on the issue of classroom interaction has been conducted in Vietnam's local areas where there are many ethnic minorities and where foreign language learning is not given as many priorities as in big cities. In reality, many English teachers in Lam Dong Province in general and Dalat University in particular are Vietnamese native speakers who often use languages bilingually – Vietnamese and English – in their classrooms. Consequently, it is supposed that there are many things to discuss about applying interactive classroom activities to inspire learning motivation of language learners. This paper, therefore, attempts to gain further insights into the effects of interactive classroom activities in large English classes at the University of Dalat, Lam Dong Province.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the aims and objectives of the study, three questions were posed to guide the research process:

- 1. What are the problems related to students' motivation for learning English?*
- 2. What are the roles of interactive classroom activities in large English classes at Dalat University?*
- 3. What are the effects of interactive classroom activities in inspiring language learners to acquire English knowledge?*

THE STUDY

1. Settings and participants

There were 1,146 students majoring in English Studies at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Dalat University in the academic school year of 2018-2019, 330 of whom were freshmen, 336 of whom were sophomores, 270 of whom were juniors, and 210 of whom were seniors. Between the ages of 18 and 25, these students came from various districts, cities and towns with a variety of ethnic minorities including Nùng, Cil, Srê, M'ông, Mường, K'Ho, Mạ, Êđê, Churu and Tày. Nearly all of them had learnt English for at least seven years in their secondary education, but they hardly had opportunities to use English in daily life.

In accordance with the study's objectives, the sampling of this study was conducted randomly in order for each sample to be relatively fair. Due to the time and resources constraint, this study was restricted to freshmen and sophomores. In the first phase, 230 English-major students were chosen randomly to complete questionnaires. In the second phase, 384 students including 242 freshmen and 142 sophomores took part in experimenting classes with interactive classroom activities. The average number of each class was 55 students, and all of the students had attended conventional classes of the same subjects in the previous semester. At the end of the second phase, 63 participants were asked to join interviews.

With 95% confidence level and a sample size of 384 out of the population of 666 freshmen and sophomores, the confidence interval was 3.26. (The figures were calculated based on the guide in the website of <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm#one>.)

2. Data collection and analysis

The data collection for Phase 1 began early in October, 2018. Questionnaires were distributed to freshmen and sophomores majoring in English Studies, but only 230 questionnaires were completed properly. The data collection for Phase 2, however, began in late February, 2019 when all 384 participants had experienced at least 5 lessons with interactive classroom activities. In the first week of March, 2019, 63 participants took part in interviews for further data of

Phase 2.

To serve this study, data were collected by a variety of instruments: questionnaires, interviews, feedback paper, and a five-point Likert scale. All of the data were analysed statistically and descriptively. In Phase 1, a simple questionnaire was designed to encourage English students to share their opinions about learning motivation. For each question, there were options for informants to choose and circle. It was also possible for informants to write their own answers without choosing given options. After two months of carrying out experimenting classes, feedback paper for Phase 2 was sent to participants so that they could vote the level of satisfaction, evaluate the effectiveness of interactive classroom activities, and give their own opinions about the classes they had experienced before. In order to make the research data easier to read and represent, data figures were given different values based on a five-point Likert scale. In the end, interviews were made randomly with participants for further sharing about their personal reactions as well as learning experience in the experimenting classes.

FINDINGS

1. Data collected in Phase 1

Questionnaires were collected from 230 students majoring in English Studies at Dalat University. Surprisingly, over a half of the informants (122 out of 230 students) had such poor knowledge about the current educational program at Dalat University. 20 out of 230 students, i.e. 8.7%, had no idea about the educational program offered by the Faculty of Foreign Languages. More importantly, 36 out of 230 students, i.e. 15.65%, found too difficult to study English subjects, and 66 out of 230 students, i.e. 28.7%, felt that the lessons lacked practical knowledge as they focused too much on academic theories.

Completing the questionnaires, many students confided that English was not their favourite subject. 110 out of 230 informants accounting for 47.8% had unclear motivation for learning English, 17.4% of whom studied English to make their parents happy, 9.6% studied English for fun, 5.2% studied English to get married to foreigners, and 15.6% had no special reasons.

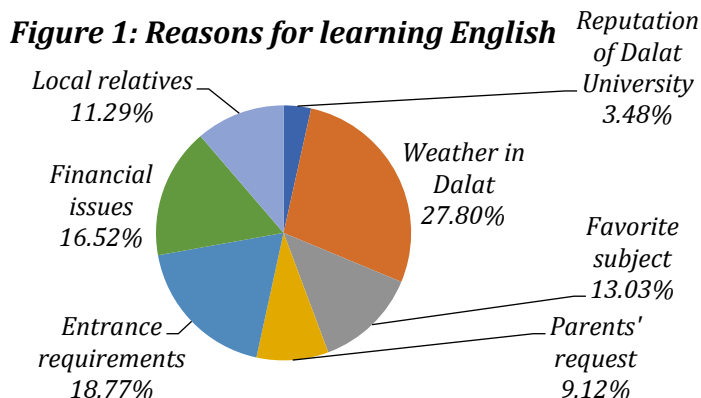


Figure 1 illustrated why students decided to learn at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Dalat University.

As can be seen clearly from Figure 1, among 230 informants, 64 students making up 27.8% reported that they liked the temperate climate in Dalat City, 43 students accounting for 18.77% went to Dalat University because they did not meet the entrance requirements of other universities, 38 students making up 16.54% could not afford their study in any places but Dalat City. Especially, more than one fifth of the informants were affected by their beloved people when choosing their major. 21 students, i.e. 9.12%, confessed that their parents forced them to study English, and 26 students, i.e. 11.29%, entered Dalat University because their relatives were living in this city. There were, in fact, only 30 out of 230 respondents (equivalent to 13.03% of the total responses) choosing to learn English Studies at Dalat University because they liked English.

Commenting upon the current pedagogical methodology, 124 out of 230 informants, i.e. 53.91%, criticized the ineffective methods of lecturers at Dalat University. Ironically, only 2.17% of the respondents (5 out of 230 students) agreed that all English lecturers had excellent methods of teaching. As a matter of fact, 131 out of 230 students, i.e. 57%, reported that the lecturers' methods were not suitable for them and that some subjects were too boring with classic conventional pedagogy. Moreover, 10 out of 230 students, i.e. 4.34%, responded that lecturers' methods were neither effective nor appealing.

2. Data collected in Phase 2

In this phase, 384 participants took part in seven experimenting classes delivered by the researcher for at least five weeks. These classes varied in specific courses comprising English Pronunciation Practice, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Linguistics. As all of the participants had attended conventional classes of the same subjects in the previous semester, their feedback as well as evaluation was considered reliable. In addition, the researcher also observed learners' participation in experimenting classes and took notes constantly for later analysis.

Because the classes were rather crowded with about 55 students, the researcher had to divide students into small groups before doing any activity. Table 1 summarized ten typical interactive classroom activities which were implemented by the researcher in this study.

Table 1: Typical interactive classroom activities

| Interactive classroom activities | Description | Purposes | Advantages |
|---|---|---|--|
| Whispering | Students take turns to pass a message orally from the first member to the last member of each group. The last member has to write down the whole message. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Practice pronouncing English words;- Improve listening skills. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Students can sit at their desks during the activity;- Students do not make much noise as they whisper the message. |
| Speed dating | Students sit along opposite lines and talk to each other within 3 minutes. When the time is up, all students of one line will stand up and switch to another partner. The conversations will start again. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Practice listening and speaking skills when students talk to many partners. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Minimize teacher's talk and maximize students' talk;- A student can talk to at least 15 friends with different topics in one period;- Reduce anxiety so that shy |

| Interactive classroom activities | Description | Purposes | Advantages |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | students can speak louder and better. |
| Half a sentence | Lecturer reads the first part of a sentence taken from the reading text. Students quickly locate the position of that sentence, raise their hands and read the rest part of the sentence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practice scanning skill; - Improve students' pronunciation and intonation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After reading through a long passage, students have chances to scan the passage for general ideas; - Encourage students' participation when they read the sentences and get points for their groups. |
| Quick decision | Lecturer reads aloud a statement related to the lesson. Students quickly decide whether the statement is True or False. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check students' comprehension; - Practice the skills of listening and explaining. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students have chances to look back their lessons; - Students enjoy competing because only the first person to raise his/her hand can give the answer. |
| Good cooperation | One group member stands by the blackboard and directly does the task. Other members support their friend by giving instructions, spelling the answer or searching for information if necessary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve group work skill; - Practice listening and speaking skills; - Encourage students to make decisions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants have to listen and follow their teammates' instructions; - Teammates must discuss and reach an agreement; - Teacher can invite reserved students to join this activity. |

| Interactive classroom activities | Description | Purposes | Advantages |
|---|---|---|---|
| Run and write | Students take turns to write their sentences on the board within certain time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect students' ideas; - Encourage peer-correction. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students think of sentences on their own; - Students can recognize the faults and learn from their friends' mistakes. |
| Acting | One student uses their body language to express an idea. Other students discuss and describe the idea in their own words. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practice speaking skills; - Encourage creativity and imagination. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students feel free to give their ideas; - Students learn to respect their friends; - Students practice thinking actively. |
| Word circling | Lecturer writes a lot of new words on the board. Group members take turns to circle the right words with their colourful chalk. | Practice memorizing and responding quickly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students learn many words in a short time; - Group members help each other by locating where the words are; - Students practice listening to their teammates. |
| Crossing the Hurdle | Students tie their legs together so that each pair can move with only 3 legs. In the shortest time, competitors run or walk quickly around the classroom to collect words/phrases/sen | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the previous lessons; - Improve pair work skill; - Practice problem-solving skill. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All students have chances to recall what they have studied in the previous lessons without looking at their notes; - Students actively work |

| Interactive classroom activities | Description | Purposes | Advantages |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | tences as requested. | | together, discuss the alternatives and reach the final decisions. |
| Hint capture | On the floor, lecturer puts many cards with definitions, explanations and examples. Group representatives show different cards to their teammates and try to pick up the right answers in the shortest time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check students' comprehension about difficult terms and notions; - Encourage students to remember abstract definitions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students practice distinguishing similar notions; - Students work together to find out the correct answers; - There is no need for teacher to orientating students. |

To verify different levels of learning effectiveness, participants were asked to use a five-point Likert scale (1 = ineffective, 2 = okay, 3 = relatively effective, 4 = effective, 5 = really effective). Giving feedback about the interactive classroom activities, participants were more active, confident, and enthusiastic towards the activities instructed by the researcher. The feedback results presented in Table 2 also marked the satisfaction of participants with the application of interactive classroom activities.

Table 2: Participants' feedback on effectiveness level of interactive classroom activities

| Levels of effectiveness | Number of participants | | Total |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| | Freshmen | Sophomores | |
| Level 1 | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Level 2 | 69 (18%) | 47 (12.24%) | 116 (30.24%) |
| Level 3 | 125 (32.55%) | 82 (21.35%) | 207 (53.9%) |
| Level 4 | 30 (7.81%) | 22 (5.73%) | 52 (13.54%) |
| Level 5 | 7 (1.82%) | 2 (0.52%) | 9 (2.34%) |

Being asked about the effects of interactive classroom activities, 148 out of 384 participants making up 38.54% agreed that interactive classroom activities could encourage students to work together and stimulate students to acquire more knowledge. Meanwhile, 123 participants accounting for 32.03% reported that interactive classroom activities could make difficult subjects become simpler and more interesting; 91 participants occupying 23.7% found that lecturers could inspire students to learn actively and encourage students to attend classes regularly by increasing interactive classroom activities in class. Among 384 participants, only 16 students i.e. 4.17% thought interactive classroom activities were rather time-consuming, five students had other ideas and only one freshman objected to the interactive classroom activities.

DISCUSSIONS

1. Students' motivation for learning English

It is now clear that English-major students at Dalat University lack proper motivation for learning the target language. In order to enhance students' motivation, it is necessary to discuss possible reasons for this issue.

Firstly, English Studies was not the initial choice of most informants in this study. Among 230 English-major students, 200 informants chose the major due to some stimulus instead of their own interest. As a result, these students easily lost learning motivation when they had to encounter obstacles during their university time.

Another reason came from the students' awareness of curricula. Because only a minor proportion of the informants were knowledgeable about the educational program, everything was completely new to other students. Somehow, they went to Dalat University, but they knew nothing about what they were expected to achieve at this university. Obviously, it would be impossible for language learners to succeed on this path unless they were well aware of the curricula.

Finally, it was the conventional pedagogy that led students to lose motivation for learning English. According to Silverthorn (2006), in the nineteenth century, teachers were thought to be the knowledge

creators who orally delivered information to students. Nowadays, however, students no longer need to be given information since they can access the Internet and search for any kind of information within a minute. Consequently, didactic lecturers with conventional type of teaching cannot attract students' attention anymore. It is high time English lecturers seriously looked back at their pedagogical methodology, for more than 53% of the informants are losing their senses of academic direction.

2. The roles of interactive classroom activities in large English classes at Dalat University

'It is true most of the time that pupils understand better what they discover for themselves' (Sesnan, 2001, p.10). Therefore, instead of asking students to spend hours learning structures and new words by heart, English teachers should try interactive classroom activities because these activities have been regarded as useful and effective strategies.

Traditionally, classroom games or activities are used at the beginning of each lesson to warm the atmosphere up. They are sometimes used in revision periods to recall given terms or structures. On a contrary, the researcher has applied interactive classroom activities throughout the lessons, even in Writing classes. This methodology, in fact, is supported by Gholami et al. (2014) who said, 'Active learning may occur at every stage or level of a lesson, from getting the students engaged in the topic, through actively and consciously taking part in discovering language and rules, to free, active production' (p.191).

All of the interactive classroom activities which the research has already tried in experimenting classes shared one thing in common: students had to communicate in English so as to support their teammates and to discuss their ideas. Furthermore, English students were stimulated to review previous lessons, to google information, to discuss with group members, to think creatively and to react flexibly. From the researcher's perspective, these interactive classroom activities both successfully created a competitive environment in large classes and effectively inspired learners to acquire English knowledge in active manners.

3. The effects of interactive classroom activities in inspiring language learners to acquire English knowledge

Based on the data collected in Phase 2, it was concluded from Table 2 that interactive classroom activities were so effective that no one felt dissatisfied with the experimenting lessons. By dividing the classes into small groups and inserting interactive activities throughout the lessons, the researcher could succeed in engaging English-major students in active learning. Particularly, 30.24% of the total participants, i.e. 116 out of 384 students, felt okay with the experimenting lessons; 53.9% of the total participants, i.e. 207 out of 384 students, regarded the experimenting lessons as relatively effective; 13.54% of the total participants, i.e. 52 out of 384 students, considered the experimenting lessons effective; 2.34% of the total participants, i.e. 9 out of 384 students, strongly agreed that the experimenting lessons were really effective. These results partly revealed the positive effects of interactive classroom activities in large English classes.

To know more about the effects of interactive classroom activities in inspiring language learners to acquire English knowledge, 63 interviews were made with random participants. Each interview lasted from two to five minutes, depending on how much the interviewees would like to share. Positively, 55 out of 63 interviewees, i.e. 87.3%, expressed great satisfaction to the researcher's method. In addition to the opinions revealed from feedback paper, many interviewees gave compliments to the new approaches. Six transcripts were taken as typical examples.

- I think you are a creative and friendly teacher. In your class, you always make us feel happy and comfortable. Every time you come to my class, I think you give us energy and to sum up, you are a wonderful teacher. I'm so lucky to join your research.
- I see that the activities that you bring to us are very good for learning. I am motivated a lot, but I see that some members in the class are still not really connected with each other. They were separated sometimes, so I hope you will find a way to help them get closer.

- Your methods of teaching are so good and you are quite creative and enthusiastic. I think, I talk, I discuss and I have fun in the class. So I think you will attract more students in the future.
- I hope in the future you will organize interactive activities in classes more often because interactive classroom activities are really important to students like us. Thanks to your activities, we can work together to improve all skills. You can make difficult lessons become simpler and more interesting, so I feel excited to learn English with you.
- You give us a lot of funny lessons. Studying with you, I don't have any stress. On the other hand, the lessons of other lecturers are good but they do not get any of my interest. Moreover, we can study a lot of from your vocabulary game and you also give us good advice for our tests.
- I always felt happy and relaxed when I learned in your classes. I could learn from friends when we discussed and shared ideas, too. I think other students also agree with me.

Even though students' feedback was just subjective impression, the frequency of positive comments proved good effects of interactive classroom activities. As Littlewood (1981, p.18) said, 'Their motivation to learn is more likely to be sustained if they can see how their classroom learning is related to this objective and help them to achieve it with increasing success,' this study could then come to a conclusion that interactive classroom activities had positive effects on inspiring learners. Specifically, four effects of interactive classroom activities were making theoretical lessons enjoyable, engaging and simple; stimulating students to work together; encouraging students to use four skills in combination; and creating more opportunities for students to share their knowledge and personal experience.

Implications and limitations

Despite the fact that this study was an attempt to find out the effects of interactive classroom activities, there were some certain limitations. First, there was a lack of internal literature review because research works of Vietnamese authors inside the country have not been

published widely yet. Second, the study sample should have been more diverse since there was no equal number of male and female informants in this study, and the study participants were only freshmen and sophomores. Third, the pedagogical approaches to teaching experimenting classes were applied and observed subjectively by the researcher without any assessment from professional experts. Thus, it is necessary to conduct another study in this area for the purpose of confirming the stability of teaching strategies as well as the satisfactory levels of English learners.

Since students coming from different regions might have different problems with their learning, further research should be conducted on a larger sample where there is a balance of learner's ages, gender, and background. Besides, this study has not thoroughly dealt with all reasons why students have lacked motivation for learning English. Therefore, these matters are recommended to further studies in the future.

CONCLUSION

On an agreement with previous paper, this study reaffirms the importance of interactive classroom activities. There is no doubt that learning motivation is very important, especially for EFL students who will use English to communicate in their future work. As the English teachers, it is our mission to motivate students through each lesson. To deal with students' losing of motivation, it is suggested applying more interactive classroom activities to arouse students' interest, to stimulate students to work together, to encourage students to use four skills in combination and to help students share more knowledge or experience. Last but not least, educators are recommended to make constant progress as Silverthorn (2006, p.136) once said, "Teaching is an iterative process, and I believe that when we stop trying to improve our teaching, it is time to retire."

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ESP – EMI

EFL VIETNAMESE LEARNERS' ACQUISITION OF ACADEMIC SUBJECTS: FROM ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES TO ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

Science and technology have recently developed and advanced so fast that they have given rise to the strong demand of the English language as a means of acquiring knowledge in universities in many countries, especially in Vietnam. EFL Vietnamese learners are trying to acquire academic subjects effectively with the use of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which focuses learners' English in specific contexts. This paper aims at finding out if EFL Vietnamese students at a university in Vietnam can learn content knowledge and communication skills while improving their English through English as medium of instruction (EMI), the proficiency of which is higher than that of ESP. EMI focuses on both language use and communication needs. The investigation used a standardized test and an end-of-course evaluation. The results may contribute to teaching disciplinary knowledge through English. It is hoped that this study will help to utilize EMI in universities more effectively.

Keywords: *EMI, ESP, evaluation, goal, standardized test.*

INTRODUCTION

Since there are many global views regarding merits of applying EMI in education at the secondary and the tertiary level (Dearden, 2014), English is now being used as a language of scientific knowledge to display the technological advancement. It can be said that one of the most significant educational tendencies in the modern world is a variety of courses taught in universities through English (Graddol,

1997). Therefore, it is the inevitable factor that English will somehow become the language mainly used in education (Coleman, 2006) as EMI courses and programs have been offered in schools and universities in the world, across East and Southeast Asia (Maiworm & Wachter, 2002, 2008, as cited in Kirkpatrick, 2017, p. 22), and especially in Vietnam since 1986 when teaching and learning English began to play an important role (Vu & Burns, 2014). The development of EMI courses and programs in Vietnamese universities is due to the creation of the English-speaking environment to make sure that students who have taken EMI courses and programs or twinning programs in domestic universities can find jobs after their graduation in the context of globalization when many foreign companies are doing foreign direct investment in Vietnam.

This paper illustrates how EFL Vietnamese students learn academic subjects through EMI after they have learned ESP at the International University – Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City (IU – VNU HCMC). The reason for IU to be chosen in this study is that it is one of the member universities of VNU- HCM and is the first public university in Vietnam to apply EMI. Up to now, IU has always made continuous efforts to achieve the best quality of education as well as the most professional and dedicated faculties and staff members. The investigation focuses on ESP students taking EMI courses in terms of how English ability prepares ESP students for taking EMI courses, and how ESP students respond to EMI. The data were collected from the results of the standardized test of English as a foreign language, and students' feedback when they finished disciplinary courses. This study may contribute to working out an EMI model for English-medium institutions in Vietnam to accelerate the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ESP versus EMI

According to Anthony (2018), ESP aims at providing the language and skills for the academic or occupational needs of language learners through the application of general or disciplinary materials. It can be said that ESP does not aim at improving students' English proficiency, but at helping students to study this language for particular reasons.

After mapping out these reasons, teachers can help them reach their goals, such as reading a manual, writing a dissertation, listening to a lecture, or delivering presentations at a sale. The design of the specific ESP curricula should follow contextual factors. The texts to be used in ESP courses may differ widely even when the development of the same skill is being targeted. Therefore, the texts to be used in ESP should relate to the tasks that the students have to undertake in their daily routines. In other words, ESP is defined to meet the needs of language learners; the content and the method are decided according to why learners are determined to learn (Hutchinson et al, 1987, cited in Anthony, 1997, p. 117).

While ESP makes the best use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplinary subjects, focusing on the use of language in these activities such as grammar, vocabulary, register, discourses and genre (Dudley-Evans, 1997), EMI focuses on the content that is the priority without taking much into account any particular language learning goals since English language learning is not evaluated only to ensure that learners can understand the content (Aguilar, 2017, p. 726). The majority of students and lecturers in EMI programs are often conducted in non-English-speaking countries that use English. This results in a diversity of Englishes and different understandings of language norms.

From ESP to EMI in the EFL context

EMI is the use of English in the instruction of academic subjects in countries where English is not the native language (Macaro et al, 2018, as cited in Çağatay, 2019, p. 29). In the context of disciplinary communication in EMI, teaching and learning disciplinary subjects used to be the domain of ESP (Mancho & Arnó, 2017). Since the focus of EMI is on the content of subjects while the focus of ESP is on the language use to convey the meaning of the content (Anthony, 2018), it can be said that ESP training can support EMI lecturers and students alike. The widespread adoption of EMI has transformed ESP practice.

According to Çağatay (2019), though there are a great number of definitions and studies on EMI, the advantages and the disadvantages of this teaching program in the environment of English as a Foreign language is still under scrutiny as it always has a primary concern.

Pecorari and Malmström (2018) suggest that teaching English to speakers of other languages is carried out in the way of instruction that focuses on form. In addition, when the goal is not on the integration of language and content, EMI can be used to teach the non-language content (Paulsrud, 2016). EMI can be exploited much more when non-language courses in many fields such as natural sciences or social sciences that are taught in English can be taught to EFL learners. In practice, EMI lecturers target EFL issues during their teaching (Anthony, 2018).

EMI education around the world

According to Coleman (2006), in Europe, English has been used in universities in the global context since globalization influences these institutions. English emerges as a world language to be used in the fields of sciences, technologies, culture, economics, mass media and in many other areas. The reason for the use of EMI in higher institutions has been due to the fact that there is an urgent need to teach courses and programs in content and language that are relevant to internationalization, student exchanges, learning, teaching and researching materials.

According to Kirkpatrick (2017), in the countries in East and Southeast Asia such as Malaysia, the Philippines, Japan, Hongkong, China and South Korea, EMI is currently developed strongly. EMI policy in Malaysia has been introduced and implemented in many fields of sciences for the purpose to have a quality workforce for the country. In the Philippines, there are about 90 private universities using EMI. In Japan, EMI is developed to attract international students to Japan to study in 30 universities. In China, many universities are offering their programs through English. In Hong Kong, the government aims at developing EMI with the involvement of Cantonese, Putonghua, and Chinese. In South Korea, the EMI policy for universities went into effect in early 2000.

EMI education for EFL Vietnamese learners

The Doi Moi (the renovation) in state policy in 1986, helped Vietnam's economy open up to the world and since then, many relationships with other countries in the world have been developed. Teaching and

learning of English has affected the national language planning and policy. The need for language proficiency in many disciplines has led to the implementation of many EMI programmes (Dang, Nguyen, & Le, 2013). EMI programs have been developed in many universities in Vietnam which come in existence along with other Asian higher institutions where EMI programs are being implemented (Nguyen, Walkinshaw, & Pham, 2017). In order to increase their income and to enhance their ranks and competitiveness in the region and in the world, universities in developing countries including Vietnam have tried to improve educational quality to have many local and international students to come and study. These strategies consist of co-operations with high-ranking universities in advanced countries, especially those in English-speaking countries (Nguyen, Hamid, & Moni, 2016). Therefore, the reasons for EMI to be developed in universities in Vietnam, where English is learned as foreign language, are closely related to the teaching of content and language, internationalization, student exchanges, learning, teaching and researching materials

In this study, IU is the case chosen for the illustration of how EFL Vietnamese learners' acquisition of academic subjects when they go from learning ESP to EMI. IU's prominent features of teaching and researching through the implementation of EMI make it a very successful model of EMI. IU is now on the path of integration at the macro-level, the meso-level and the micro-level with the countries having advanced education. To achieve this goal, the EMI policy requires that IU should implement the learning and the practice simultaneously in the process of constant construction and adjustment of the training programs so that EMI courses and programs must have a strong connection with lecturers, teaching methodology, course content and learning conditions (i.e. what the lecturer does and what the students does.) All the courses taught at IU are immersion courses in English. The application of EMI at IU is supported by the English program including ESP as displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. IU Intensive English Language Pathway

| | INTENSIVE ENGLISH | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| | SEMESTER 1 | SEMESTER 2 |
| Levels | IE1 | IE2 |
| Skills focused | - Integrated Reading & Writing - Integrated Listening & Speaking | - Integrated Reading & Writing - Integrated Listening & Speaking |
| Entry score range | < 35 | > = 35 Completing IE 1 |

Intensive English (IE), including IE1 and IE2, equips students with English competence to pursue their majors taught entirely in English. The program includes ESP to facilitate students in learning their major programs at the academic English level. From the literature review above, regarding how EFL Vietnamese learners study EMI courses and programs at IU on ESP background, this research study was to answer the following questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. *How does English competence prepare ESP students for taking EMI courses?*
2. *How do ESP students respond to EMI courses?*

THE STUDY

The investigation of EFL Vietnamese students learning EMI programs after they had finished studying ESP courses at IU was carried out through the collected data of the standardized test - the achievement test which was researched in a study by Fernández-Costales (2017), and the evaluation at the end of disciplinary courses. All participants, who were 19 years old, were highly motivated after they had acquired English at a high proficiency level which helped them to go up to EMI courses.

➤ Settings and participants

Phase 1

446 out of 711 students who were university students at IU enrolled in fifteen-week courses of Intensive English 2 (IE2) – the high intermediate level of English in the first semester, the academic year 2017-2018. All of them took the midterm test and the final test. Before learning IE2, all the participants had to pass an achievement test to finish IE1, which was the prerequisite condition to study IE2. Therefore, they were supposed to have the same level of English.

Phase 2

After finishing IE2, ESP students were enrolled in EMI courses in the second semester, the academic year 2017-2018. At the end of EMI courses, they answered a questionnaire in the end-of course evaluation at IU. For EMI students, there were 296 participants taking part in the evaluation. They were from departments and the schools of IU such as Biomedical Engineering, Bio-Technology, Business Administration, Civil Engineering, Computer Science & Engineering, Electronical Engineering, Industrial & Systems Engineering, Mathematics, and Physics.

➤ Data collection and analysis

In phase 1, the achievement test designed in the form of a standardized test covering the knowledge of ESP was given in the middle and at the end of IE2 courses by the Department of English. The IE2 test was administered by the IU Department of English and the results were kept in the Department of English. All the participants performed the midterm test for 180 minutes and the final test in the same allocation of time. After that, the lecturers scored the tests on the passing / failing basis, which means that each student would pass the test if he or she got the average score of 50 points or more out of 100 points.

In phase 2, the questionnaire designed by the Center for Quality Management, IU - VNU HCMC was given to EMI students when major courses ended, and their responses were measured on the basis of a 5-point Likert scale: (1) “strongly disagree”, (2) “disagree”, (3) “uncertain”, (4) “agree”, and (5) “strongly agree”. The lowest point in

the evaluation for a lecturer was 1 (strongly disagree) and the highest point was 5 (strongly agree). The questions in the questionnaire were based on the development of EMI courses at IU and were related to instructors, teaching methodology, course content and learning conditions in teaching and learning EMI in the EFL context, which was discussed earlier in the literature review.

Table 2. The end-of-course evaluation

| No. | Evaluation items | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Does the instructor seem to have deep knowledge of the subject matter? | | | | | |
| 2 | Does the instructor introduce the course syllabus at the beginning of the course? | | | | | |
| 3 | Does the instructor's teaching method encourage students to develop self-determination in learning? | | | | | |
| 4 | Does the instructor adequately explain how theoretical concepts inform practical applications? | | | | | |
| 5 | Does the instructor manage classroom time and the course properly? | | | | | |
| 6 | Is the instructor readily approachable when consulted with, in or out of the classroom? | | | | | |
| 7 | Are the assessment criteria well-defined and provided to the student at the beginning of the course? | | | | | |
| 8 | Is the content of the student assessment (presentation topics, assignments, projects, mid-term tests, final tests, etc.) appropriately related to the course content and the assessment criteria? | | | | | |
| 9 | Does the instructor use a variety of methods for student assessment, and give scores fairly and appropriately? | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 10 | Are the subject's objectives and expected learning outcomes well-defined at the beginning of the course? | | | | | |
| 11 | Does the course content clearly reflect objectives and expected learning outcomes of the course? | | | | | |
| 12 | Do the textbooks and reference materials recommended by the instructor satisfy the course content? | | | | | |
| 13 | Does the course fit well within the general curriculum (number of credits, logical course order, and relationship with other courses)? | | | | | |
| 14 | Do the textbooks and reference materials in the library satisfy the students' needs? | | | | | |
| 15 | Are supporting information systems effective for instructor and student interaction? | | | | | |
| 16 | Is the course helpful? | | | | | |
| 17 | General evaluation of the instructor: 1. poor 2. fair 3. satisfactory 4. very good 5. Excellent | | | | | |
| 18 | General evaluation of the course: 1. poor 2. fair 3. satisfactory 4. very good 5. Excellent | | | | | |

(Evaluation by the Center for Quality Management, IU– VNU HCMC)

The questionnaire was given to each IU student participating in the study and was completed in English without his or her name. Possible language-related difficulties were cleared up before students wrote responses. The students were also encouraged to comment on issues that they thought were relevant to the study at the end of the questionnaire. All the questionnaires were collected and sent to the Center for Quality Management. The data from the questionnaires were then processed for an evaluation at the individual and the institutional level.

Findings

The results of the achievement test in the first semester showed how ESP students made progress between the midterm exam and the final exam in their preparation for taking EMI courses. The midterm exam covered the questions related to the knowledge of ESP, and the final exam covered the questions about the knowledge of English and disciplines.

Table 3. The results of midterm test

| READING & WRITING | | | |
|--------------------|---------|---------|-----|
| | PASSING | FAILING | SUM |
| Number of students | 336 | 110 | 446 |
| % | 75.34 | 24.66 | 100 |

| LISTENING & SPEAKING | | | |
|----------------------|---------|---------|-----|
| | PASSING | FAILING | SUM |
| Number of students | 330 | 116 | 446 |
| % | 73.99 | 26.01 | 100 |

(Report from the Department of English, IU -VNU HCMC)

Table 4. The results of the final test

| READING & WRITING | | | |
|--------------------|---------|---------|-----|
| | PASSING | FAILING | SUM |
| Number of students | 341 | 105 | 446 |
| % | 76.46 | 23.54 | 100 |

| LISTENING & SPEAKING | | | |
|----------------------|---------|---------|-----|
| | PASSING | FAILING | SUM |
| Number of students | 331 | 115 | 446 |
| % | 74.22 | 25.78 | 100 |

(Report from the Department of English, IU -VNU HCMC)

The end-of-course evaluation was used to assess university faculty teaching. The results of the evaluation were shown at the individual level and the institutional level for each department and each school of IU. The student feedback in the survey on the departments and the schools of IU, untenured and tenured lecturers, was gathered from students in the second semester for EMI courses taught at 10 departments and schools of IU. Based on the statistics of student feedback through the evaluation, the study gained the following results in Table 5.

Table 5. Individual’s average evaluation score and university’s average score in the second semester, academic year 2017-2018

| No. | Department / School | Individual’s average evaluation score | University’s average score |
|-----|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Biomedical Engineering | 4.44 | 4.32 |
| 2 | Bio-Technology | 4.37 | 4.32 |
| 3 | Business Administration | 4.28 | 4.32 |
| 4 | Civil Engineering | 4.53 | 4.32 |
| 5 | Computer Science & Engineering | 4.24 | 4.32 |
| 6 | Electronical Engineering | 4.28 | 4.32 |
| 7 | Industrial Systems Engineering | 4.32 | 4.32 |
| 8 | Mathematics | 4.22 | 4.32 |
| 9 | Physics | 4.39 | 4.32 |
| 10 | Political Economy | 4.19 | 4.32 |

(Report from the Center for Quality Management, IU– VNU HCMC)

The results indicated that the student feedback offered insights for IU faculty. Employing student feedback was found to be instrumental in informing faculty about instructional quality of EMI courses and in improving student learning outcomes and to benefit EMI students in their acquisition of academic subjects.

DISCUSSION

This study was to examine the evidence from the standardized test, and the student feedback as an evaluation at the end of disciplinary courses to address the research questions. For the answer to the first question: “How does English competence prepare ESP students for taking EMI courses?”, the results of the midterm test and the final test in the first phase showed that the participants performed better in the final exam in comparison with midterm exam. As for the results of the midterm exam, out of 446 students, there was 336 students (75.34%) passing the reading and writing test and 330 students (73.99%) test passing the listening and speaking test. The students did better in the final exam with 341 students (76.45%) passing the reading and writing test and 331 (74.22%) test passing the listening and speaking test. The explanations for the results are that students could have met the requirement of IU English achievement test since the test has been designed and administered in such a way that can improve ESP students’ English competence. Moreover, the effective application of a clear English program such as Intensive English at IU may be quite helpful to EMI students.

For the answer to the second question: “How do ESP students respond to EMI courses?”, the data from the report of the Center for Quality Management can be seen in Table 5. The survey data from the evaluation in the second phase showed that ESP students responded positively to EMI courses through their evaluation of IU lecturers and the helpfulness of the courses. The average scores of all the items in the questionnaire processed by the Center for Quality Management in the evaluation ranged from 4.19 to 4.44 at the individual level and maintained 4.32 at the institutional level. The evaluation showed that the progress of EMI through the reflection of IU lecturers’ and students’ relative language proficiency, teaching methodology, course content and learning conditions. The data also showed that when both lecturers and students possess background knowledge of disciplinary areas, this can facilitate the use of EMI. Moreover, the good preparation of an ESP program at IU may be quite helpful to EMI students to equip students with the English competence to pursue their majors taught entirely in English.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

From the results of the investigation, there are some pedagogic implications from this study. First, teachers have to become aware of students' EFL acquisition and prepare ESP courses to help students to take EMI courses effectively. Therefore, there should be a close cooperation between English language teachers and EMI lecturers. Second, in terms of understanding the lectures provided by EMI lecturers, it was found out that teachers' methodology and English competence play important roles in implementing EMI courses. In this context, both students and lecturers require specific skills to adapt themselves in spoken interaction such as in-class presentations and in their written communication such as writing practices and end-of-course assignments. Moreover, Lecturers can boost their students' English proficiency by bringing about opportunities for students to strengthen their vision and develop their ability of English in their EMI classes. Finally, using student-centered and task-based methodology can help to get to this objective (Lasagabaster, 2016). Another important point that EMI lecturers should also take into consideration is that teaching subjects of humanities can provide EFL learners opportunities to easily have a natural access to EFL learning while teaching disciplines in natural sciences may not need much language production from learners (Coleman, Hultgren, Li, Tsui, & Shaw, 2018).

This study was carried out only at IU – VNU HCMC, where the data were collected from the achievement tests and the end-of course evaluation on a limited sample of ESP students learning EMI courses since IU is the one of very few institutions in Vietnam that implement the EMI model (Le, 2018, p.205). Therefore, the results reflected the EFL Vietnamese learners' acquisition of academic subjects from ESP to EMI to some extent. In addition, this study did not thoroughly deal with aspects in view of the specific implementation of courses and programs through English as a medium of instruction. Therefore, these matters are recommended to future studies.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the implementation of EMI going from ESP training for EFL Vietnamese students' acquisition of academic subjects at IU through the probe into the standardized test and the student

feedback in the end-of-course evaluation. This helps to put forward the ESP and EMI collaboration for further application. The increase in EMI courses and programs is inevitable but the implementation of these courses and programs still needs considerable cooperation between the training of ESP and the cultivation of disciplinary knowledge to make sure that lecturers and students' levels of English proficiency are adequately qualified for teaching and learning EMI courses and programs. If lecturers and students can use their language resources in implementing tasks through EMI, this will certainly help students learn more knowledge through English in a similarly native environment or help to prepare them for any possible future study abroad as in the case of IU.

In this study, given EMI courses provided by non-native lecturers to EFL Vietnamese learners, it was found out that linguistic instruction was not an objective for content lecturers. The linguistic instruction was the task of language lecturers who prepared ESP students to take EMI courses. Language literacy can be achieved through a long-term exposure to disciplinary materials with the help of ESP lecturers who can cooperate with EMI lecturers through the design of language course syllabi. It is hopeful that future research will deal with the issue that the implementation of EMI will help EMI students comprehend the contents of the disciplinary subjects as well as enhance their linguistic knowledge more effectively.

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IS IT ADVISABLE FOR VIETNAM TO APPLY DLE RATHER THAN EMI TO ENHANCE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' LEARNING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY?

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ABSTRACT

Using English to teach academic subjects in non-speaking English countries which is termed English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has been increasingly globalized. In addition to the many benefits EMI can offer its stakeholders, a great number of challenges in relation to EMI have been portrayed in the literature. In particular, questions as to whether approaching EMI monolingually is the best way forward have been widely concerned. Whereas, providing students with general academic instruction in two languages is proliferating rapidly in the world. This educational approach is termed as dual-language education (DLE). Evidenced-based research findings have shown that DLE can enhance both students' academic achievement and their bilingual competence. In this sense, the article is building up a rational argument for Vietnam to apply the united development of DLI and EMI to enhance university students' learning for professional development and their English proficiency as well.

Keywords: *university students, English as a medium of instruction (EMI), dual-language education (DLE) approach, learning for professional development, English proficiency.*

I. INTRODUCTION

It can be seen widely in all over the world that in non-English speaking countries, educational institutions at all levels are increasingly using English to teach academics to students. Since the late decade of 1990s, Vietnamese students have started getting opportunity to learn

undergraduate programs in English in their country. These English academic courses at higher education levels are called “international programs” which had been supported by some certain Western universities, taking place within the space of some Vietnamese public universities. Such an expansion of the professional programs which use English as a medium for instruction (EMI) is widely assumed to be a means to internalization and modernization of higher education in non-English speaking contexts (Byun et al, 2011). Indeed, Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training has coordinated with some major public universities, in which EMI is being widely and emphatically applied, to develop strongly the strategy for the internalization of Vietnam higher education at the stage 2017-2020 (Vietnam Ministry of Education & Training, 2017). More embedded in this national educational policy is the belief that English language learning and acquisition for students will take place naturally during content delivery in English medium instruction (EMI).

II. EMI IN IMPLEMENTATION

What EMI?

Documented internationally, the term English-medium instruction (EMI) as one of bilingual education models is referred to teaching academic courses in English with the primary goal to deliver course content rather than teaching students language skills (Dickey, 2001). Whereas, such three different forms of bilingual education as Immersion, Dual Language and CLIL are of a dual-goal teaching approach in which bilingual learners develop both content knowledge and language skills (Damaris 2017).

EMI instruction is theoretically underpinned by the rationale that students who are *exposed to English* language while learning course content are able to acquire English skills in the natural way similar to their first language acquisition (Krashen, 1995). Similarly, Hu’s study (2008) points out that in his country, the policy of improving English language ability for university students is often based on the idea that learning content in English will assist students with their language development. In this then sense, EMI seems to be agreed with ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education). However, the distinct difference of EMI from ICLHE is that EMI

lecturers focus on teaching their course content with ignorance of using pedagogical methods to improve their students' English language, whereas ICLHE methodology, as Wilkinson & Zegers (2008) address, emphasizes how to help bilingual learners develop both content knowledge and language skills. This form of bilingual education has proven successful empirically in a great number of countries, particularly in Europe and some English-speaking countries, the effectiveness of EMI is also being increasingly investigated.

How effective EMI?

Teachers' language abilities, students' proficiency

The increase of undergraduate students' levels of English proficiency while learning academic subjects in English has been identified. Rogier (2012) indicates that university students increase significantly in their English skills on the IELTS test with the most improvement made in the area of speaking after they participate in the four- year EMI courses. However, Rogiers shows a skeptical approach to these students' English proficiency increased with EMI. He questioned whether the students' language development is a result of being instructed in English or a result of that they are unintentionally exposed to English use outside of the classroom. Furthermore, Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Sierra 2013; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajir, 2017; Huang, 2017; Macaro et al 2018 all indicate that EMI learners show their resistance to curricula and pedagogy that are not supportive enough to their course content learning and English language as well. Their essential claim is that to date there have not been sufficient research evidence to assert that use English language in EMI would damage or benefit content learning, particularly in the context where both lecturers and students' English proficiency are not very high. In other words, EMI students demonstrate their English for academic purposes with academic study skills tends to be much lower than their interpersonal and communicative English language. Similarly, lecturers often face the challenge of presenting orally their subject clearly and concisely in English. Therefore, this linguistic challenge might cause surface understanding of academic knowledge content in EMI students (Chang, 2010).

Pedagogical issues as resulted from ambiguous educational goals

In a number of EMI contexts, it seems that ambiguous educational goals aggravate teaching situations in the classroom. In terms of the main learning outcomes of EMI, concentrating on learning the academic subject or on improving English for students is always questioned by content lecturers. Moreover, the assumption that the exposure to English while getting EMI makes students' English proficiency be higher over time without spending time learning language may lead such a situation with unplanned teaching processes for educational intentions to help students attain English proficiency. In other words, poor teaching with unwell prepared teaching plans might occur. In the pedagogical aspect, to help students maximize their learning, teachers need to keep teaching purposes in mind and work out their teaching plans in a very thoughtful way for each student to attain expected learning outcomes (Slavin, 2012). On the other hand, the ambiguity in educational goals can lead lecturers to be unclear in their pedagogical responsibilities. Wiseman and Odell's study (2014) found that EMI lectures recognize their roles differently. Some think their role is to deliver course content, others think that they must help their students to make progress in English language skills.

The case EMI in HE Vietnam

Five major challenges facing EMI at higher education in Vietnam are identified by Vu and Burns (2014). These challenges involve English proficiency of students and lecturers; teaching and learning methodologies and teaching resources and environment. From all the findings of their longitude research, these authors conclude that lecturers of HE Vietnam face multiple challenges in adopting EMI. In their view, Vietnam is a specific context which is likely to experience all common problems and challenges that are facing EMI stakeholders.

So it is inferable that the application of EMI in Vietnam has not been considered carefully from the bottom-up perspective yet. It means that the EMI with international programs imported from western countries with better facilities for maximizing learning should be more modified to fit in the context of HE in Vietnam with shortage of qualified lecturers and teaching resources. Overall, Vu and Burns' findings on EMI are in agreement with Tran (2013) and Phan's (2017) findings on

a number of perceived challenges facing ELT teachers in schools of Vietnam.

III. THE SPECIFIC ADAPTATION OF DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION (DLE) TO THE CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) IN VIETNAM

International integration is contended to be both a goal and a motivation and a measure for Vietnam to renovate their higher education. Autonomous choice of good experiences from other developed countries and then tailoring these experiences to fit their national context of education is considered as the plausible way to absorb scientific advantages brought from the academic globalization.

Dual language education (DLE)

This section would recommend an adaptation of Dual Language Education (DLE) specified for the higher educational context of Vietnam.

As a form of bilingual education, the dual language approach is characterized as using of two languages for teaching and learning of academic content. Gonzales and Lezama (1974) broadly defined dual language programs as educational programs to provide students with opportunities to learn academic content in their mother tongue and additional languages. Featuring benefits of these programs are identified as bilingualism, biliteracy, and intercultural awareness for learners. Soltero and Ortiz, (2017) contend that dual language education programs have not been much conducted at tertiary levels although they are commonly implemented in schooling settings. The positive effects on cognitive, affective and social aspects of individuals from bilingual development are documented widely (Bialystok, Craik and Luk, 2012). Along with the bilingual competence, this form of bilingual education can help ELLs develop biliteracy which has been linked to long-term academic, sociocultural, and economic skills for the 21st century learning (Soltero, 2011).

An adaptation of DLE for the higher educational context of Vietnam

It is widely claimed that the worldwide adaptation of bilingual education has occurred differently in such aspects as pedagogical methodologies, linguistic goals, language distribution and more

(Soltero, 2011). In this sense, the dual language approach as the one form of bilingual education should be adapted specifically in harmony with the real context of Vietnam higher education.

The context

Nowadays, in Vietnam, along with Vietnamese language as a fundamental instrument for each Vietnamese people to perform their schooling and work, English is largely regarded as an additional tool for individuals' schooling, work and life. Research shows with good cognitive skills acquired in their first language, learners would be able easily transferred these skills to learning English as their second language. This helps learners to gain professional competencies in both languages for marketability and globalization. According to Cummins (2000), professional competency in English involves academic English proficiency which takes between five to seven years in comparison to the 2-3 year length for daily communicative language.

In practice, this English proficiency of Vietnamese students who took more 7-10 years to learn English before entering university is not often good enough for them to use in learning for being qualified in their professional work at the higher education. Similarly, regarding university lecturers who are legally expected to attain B 2 or higher levels or proficient at using English in their professional work, are mostly at the lower level of L 2 competence than that assigned by educational authorities. On the other hand, they are often better at reading and writing L2 than oral language for instruction (Tran, 2013; Vu & Burns, 2014; Nguyen, Fehring & Warren, 2015).

Furthermore, one of the major aims of the fundamental and well-rounded renovation in education proposed by The 8th National Agenda of Vietnam Communist Party (2013) is to build up a workforce that is well-qualified enough to make a good contribution to the development of Vietnam nation. Language education regarding this national strategy is the preparation of the workforce equipped with English competence to bear in solving societal and professional issues, making it better able to meet the global economy's high demands. However, this urgent need for more high-quality workforce at the national level has not been met properly. The Report on Potential Competitiveness Indicators-PCI from FDI (2017) shows that the quality of training and efficiency of Vietnam

labour force account for only 3.8 points. Therefore, university graduates have mostly been retrained when being recruited.

A specific dual language education (DLE) in universities of Vietnam

From the above discussion, it is recommended that a specific dual language education should be established in Vietnam. It means that the process of changing the dual language approach to suit specific different conditions in HE Vietnam should be carried out. In general, the linguistic model of DLE in HE Vietnam would be a balanced distribution of Vietnamese and English in teaching and learning. Its educational goals are dual. It means that learners are expected to reach satisfactory levels of both academic competency and English proficiency after their completing DLE programs.

How can dual language education (DLE) be specifically tailored to universities of Vietnam?

First of all, it can be seen the world-wide conceptualization of “dual language education” is relevant to the internalization of higher education context in Vietnam, a non-speaking English environment in which most learners use Vietnamese as L1 and English as FL. Thus, the application of DLE in HE of Vietnam should be characterized by that students and lectures simultaneously use two languages to access academic content. Specifically, the course content is instructed in Vietnamese, and then extensively developed with group or individual learning tasks, problem-solving assignments and projects which require students to use learning resource in English to do for completion. This learning procedure should be routinized with the lecturers’ scaffolding teaching in which the lecturers’ guides to accessing learning resources and implementing strategies are input. Particularly, it is necessary that explicit criteria for a good performance in leaning products are using English resource and embedding this English stuff into them.

Next, implementing such a specific dual language education can assist with minimizing disadvantages of EMI such as student’s low English ability; student’s improper learning methods; instructors’ dissatisfactory English language and inappropriate methodologies; inadequate teaching resources.

The first, dual language programs instructed in the first language would allow content lecturers to ensure their students to have a clear understanding of the discipline content. Such use of L1 in DLE is in relation to codeswitching or translanguaging which is seen an appropriate EMI pedagogy when students do not have adequate proficiency of English and lecturers perceive difficulties in instructional interaction. Indeed, codeswitching or translanguaging is thought to be able to offer efficient pedagogical and educational usage. Barnard & McLellan (2013), Cook, (2010), Macaro, (2013), and Bruton (2013) emphasize that future research on the use of codeswitching with translanguage strategies and the way that instructors perceive their pedagogical knowledge and skills would be done. Such research is believed to provide EMI lecturers and policy-makers with practical ideas to enhance the quality of bilingual programs (Barnard & McLellan, 2013; Cook, 2010; Macaro, 2013, Bruton, 2013).

The second, support for students to exploit written English resource to extensively learn the course content may be potentially applied for content lecturers whose academic English is not proficient yet, particularly their oral English instruction. In some cases, academic English teachers may pair with content lecturers to support students' extensive learning and working in and with English. This model has been commonly served as a specific teaching model in bilingual education forms (The Glossary of Educational Reform).

The third, DLE at higher education of Vietnam should give equitable opportunities for learners regardless of their English language ability to succeed in their professional learning. According to Soltero and Ortiz (2017), DLE is in need of using dual-language strategies with specific instructional goals for each. This requirement is to ensure learners to simultaneously develop academic English language and professional knowledge. Indeed, as the goal itself of dual language education, the specific bilingual academic programs in HE Vietnam mentioned above could help students with low English proficiency to use their limited English for their professional learning in the way that cooperative learning from group work can give their peers' mutual support to each student. They could go forward and back to investigate meaning of terminologies and principle ideas from English materials they work with.

On the other hand, students can use translanguage strategy for DLE, translating English documents into Vietnamese to help them take a co-created summary of learning from some certain scientific investigation conducted. Thus, they can absorb and extend their content knowledge for their own. On this path, the students can turn shared knowledge into their personalized understanding purposefully but in natural manner of an investigation for the content knowledge internalization and improve their English skills as well.

The fourth, when applied, the specific bilingual academic programs in HE Vietnam might reach other learning objectives which are relevant to 21st century lifelong skills needed for students such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking and doing, particularly information or computer literacy with which students learn how to exploit online resources available in Google or electronic libraries in an intelligent and responsible approach to their community.



Eventually, in regard to the policy of national workforce development, when applied, the specific bilingual academic programs in HE Vietnam could help a lot in developing the national workforce equipped with English competence and professional knowledge to solve societal and professional issues. As a result, this workforce would be able to marketize in the world economy. This means that DLE serves mass education which is an educational process is for a large proportion of cohorts in contrast to EMI which tends to serve elite education with a fairly small proportion of cohorts (Trow, 1974). In this sense, it seems that DLE specified for mass education society could contribute to the

internalization of higher education in Vietnam because Underdal (2010) contends that today university student enrolment in the world is largely in the range of mass education. As a result of this, the national labour force would be more competent in making great contribution to the overall development of Vietnam country.

IV. CONCLUSION

From the above analysis of EMI and a specifically modified DLE in HE Vietnam, it is concluded that a united development of EMI and DLE in HE Vietnam as mentioned should be gone forward. The former is for elite education; the latter is for mass education. Both would make it the national workforce visualized in reality in high quality that is able to compete with the world labour market in the era of globalization. Enhancing existing libraries and other teaching resources of all teaching and learning professions must be improved so that learners can get rich resources to conduct their professional learning bilingually. Secondly, the improvement of pedagogical methodologies is needed for both approaches in order to obtain the dual educational goals: professional content learning and English skills. Particularly, pedagogical strategies should strongly support both content lecturers and students with limited English proficiency. In such a methodological adaptation for DLE at HE in Vietnam, it is desirable to apply Ngo and Hendricks' model (2018), as cited:

This model concentrates on the following three methods used simultaneously by both language and content instructors: (1) the use of modern information technical facilities, (2) the use of creative thinking skills, and (3) the use of the student-centered method. Prior to implementing this method, the following stages should be undertaken: (a) teaching observation in which the language instructor visits and observes the content instructor's classes and vice versa, (b) cooperation in which language and content instructors work together on student's language and academic difficulties including reading materials, writing report and essay, and solving problems, (c) textbook research in which the instructors are to anticipate difficulties students might face when reading textbook and solving problems, (d) agreement of language and content topics and objectives in which the language class'

topic is to respond to the theme of the content class, and (e) identification of terminologies in which content and language instructors help students understand the terminologies used in the lecture (pp. 3)

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

AN INVESTIGATION OF VIETNAMESE TEACHERS' CHANGE IN THEIR BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Most of the contributions to the literature regarding teachers' beliefs about teaching methodology and belief changes have involved novice teachers or teachers in elementary or high schools in 'majority language' environments. No study to date has investigated teachers' change in Vietnamese teachers' beliefs at tertiary level. This study examined the pedagogical beliefs and the changes in beliefs of a group of Vietnamese English language teachers in one university. Thirty-two teachers participated. A quantitative method design using two survey questionnaires was employed. The two issues were analysed: (a) the teachers' current beliefs and (b) changes in teachers' beliefs. The findings suggested that the participant teachers demonstrated progressiveness in their current beliefs about teaching methodology and they experienced changes in their beliefs during their career life.

Keywords: *teachers' beliefs, teacher change, professional development.*

INTRODUCTION

Challenges have been noted in English language teaching in Viet Nam. The demands of society and learners in relation to language proficiency are raised through the Ministerial policy document "by 2020, the majority of Vietnamese tertiary level graduates should be able to communicate effectively in another language, as well as live, study, or work in multicultural and multilingual settings." (1400/TTg, 2008:1). Language teachers are being called on to change their teaching methodologies and to implement new methods to respond to the needs of society. Traditional, grammar-based instruction has been criticised as being ineffective in promoting communicative competence

(Taylor, 1987). Partly in reaction to these criticisms, the communicative approach has been extensively applied in Vietnam in recent times (Le, 2001; Pham, 2004; Sullivan, 1996). Although proposed as a preferred alternative, is not without critics. However, not all kinds of educational innovations or changes have been welcomed by those involved, as people may have different reactions to change: they can resist, or interpret, or adapt change based on their own beliefs, attitudes or experiences (Murray, 2008). Understanding the nature of changes of teachers' beliefs could contribute to professional development which is part of the educational innovation process. The issue has been raised recently by researchers in different aspects and fields (Erdem & Demirel, 2007; O. Lee, 2004; Richards, Gallo, & Renandya, 2001). However, recent literature has shown that no study to date has been conducted to investigate change in teachers' beliefs, especially at tertiary level, although Communicative Language Teaching and Task-based Teaching has gained teachers' and researchers' interests as innovations in language teaching.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To explore perspectives that could contribute to an understanding of teachers' beliefs and their belief change in Viet Nam, the following questions are addressed:

1. *What are Ho Chi Minh City Open University teachers' current pedagogical beliefs? How "progressive" are these beliefs?*
2. *Do teachers change their beliefs during their professional life?*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of Beliefs

Teachers' beliefs serve as key factors in directing or guiding behaviors (M. Borg, 2001; Erdem & Demirel, 2007) and they are complex to identify and study. The teachers' beliefs are referred to by M. Borg (2001) as pedagogic beliefs, which are related to convictions about language and the teaching and learning of it. These beliefs can influence teachers' teaching approaches, selection of materials, activities, judgments and behaviors in the classroom (S. Borg, 1998;

Woods, 1996). Pajares (1992) argues that teachers' beliefs can influence how teachers conceptualize teaching while Schommer (1994) believes that epistemological beliefs have strong relations with experience and offer scope for change.

The sources of teachers' beliefs

Different factors contribute to teachers' systems of beliefs from a variety of sources. As summarized by Richards and Lockhart (1994) these factors are:

- Teachers' experience as language learners.
- Experience of teaching.
- Teacher's own personality.
- Expectation from the school, parents, the government and the local society.
- Education-based or research-based principles.

Similarly, Gilakjani & Sabouri (2017), S. Borg (1998, 2006) confirm that the educational and professional experiences of the teacher could be the part of their belief system. The third factor may have stronger effects than others as the pressures from schools and learners require immediate responses. These sources of beliefs could be grouped as internal (personality, experience) or external factors (expectations from other people, organizations) factors that drive change in teachers' beliefs.

Change in teacher beliefs

Change in teachers' beliefs has played an important role in the change motivation and the process has gained significant attention from scholars. There are arguments for the possibility of change in beliefs as well as arguments against this possibility. Both Olafson and Schraw (2006) and Yadav and Koehler (2007) noted that teachers' beliefs are varied and may change. Studying the circumstances under which teachers develop or change their beliefs, Beijaard and De Vries (1997) concluded that teachers' beliefs are formed through changes in their career. Similarly, Szydlik, Szydlik, and Benson's study (2003) explored

changes in 93 pre-service elementary teachers' mathematical beliefs in the US and reported that the participants experienced changes in beliefs. Richards' & Rodgers' (2001) study of 112 teachers from Southeast Asian countries and 14 from Australia pointed out that a change in beliefs seems to be behind the changes in learner-centeredness, or in teaching philosophy. Busch (2010)'s investigation of the effects of the introductory second language acquisition (SLA) course on the beliefs of 381 pre-service teachers over a three-year period at a state university in California revealed significant changes in beliefs in several areas, including the length of time for acquisition, difficulty of language acquisition, the role of culture, the role of error correction, the importance of grammar, and the efficacy of audio-lingual learning strategies.

On the other side, Pajares (1992) viewed change in beliefs pessimistically and argued that teachers do not tend to develop or change their beliefs. Similarly, Peacock (2001) investigated changes in the beliefs about second language learning of 146 trainee ESL students over their 3-year program at the City University of Hong Kong and found that no significant changes had been recorded.

As seen in the above discussion, there is some evidence that teachers develop or change their beliefs, but the extent of change or its viability is contested. Influences on changes in teachers' beliefs, personal motivation and social requests, have been mentioned.

In conclusion, although some researchers (Pajares, 1992; Peacock, 2001) found beliefs hard to change, changes in teachers' beliefs have been recorded by others in the literature (Garmon, 2004, 2005; Hew & Brush, 2007; Lewis & McCook, 2002; Ng et al., 2010; Schommer, 1994). The causes that bring about changes have been noted as being, above all, personal and subjective (Beijaard & De Vries, 1997). This has encouraged me to work with the area of beliefs since there seems to be evidence that teachers do change their beliefs.

New approaches in English language teaching

It has noted that for a long time in English teaching and learning history, grammar-translation was one of the dominant influences on the teaching methodologies chosen by most teacher in Viet Nam (Le,

2001; Nguyen, 2004; Pham, 2005). Recently, with new demands for the labor market, learners are required to be more competent in communication skills, raising the issue that traditional approaches to language teaching no longer match the requirements of the new generations of learners. In addition to the needs of learners, teachers also need to prepare themselves to ensure the best outcomes for learners. Newly developed methods and strategies in language teaching have been applied for more positive results to meet the learners' diverse needs. The recent approach in teaching has shifted from the traditional approach, "teacher-centered" to the "new" one, the "learner-centered" in which the students' role has been redefined as being more actively and decisively involved in the learning process (Nguyen, 2004). Communicative language teaching has been a major trend in Viet Nam (Nguyen, 2016).

In summary, teachers' beliefs about English language teaching are argued to be changed through time in the Vietnamese context, where there is a mixed picture of approaches and methods in language teaching methodology.

METHODS

This present study employed quantitative method of research. Method used in my study is a questionnaire-based survey used to obtain information from a number of participants in order to identify teachers' beliefs and their belief change in language pedagogy.

Participants

The population of this study was limited to teachers who were teaching non-English majors at Ho Chi Minh city Open University (HCMCOU) which was actively promoting change in teaching methodology. These teachers taught the four macro skills of English to non-English major students at a tertiary level. As the purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' beliefs and the change in their beliefs, I also considered their teaching workload at HCMCOU. Those who taught fewer than 6 periods per week were not selected for the study due to their loose teaching commitment to the university. As a result, teacher participants must meet both requirements: teaching more than 6 periods per week at the research site and having 3 or more years of

teaching experience.

32 teachers were the participants in the current research. Their demographic information will be presented in more detail in the following sections.

Research instrument design

I have two research instruments: two survey questionnaires. The two questionnaires were designed to be similar in form, asking for similar information related to teachers' changes in their beliefs. They were identical but respondents were asked to give information about their beliefs at different times: the present time in Questionnaire 1 and an earlier time (three years ago) in Questionnaire 2. The first questionnaire's focus was on the teachers' current beliefs. The second questionnaire was delivered 3 months later asking about their beliefs in the past. These questionnaires were delivered at different times, and then were compared to find out about teachers' changes in their beliefs. I sequenced the questionnaires in this order so that the teachers did not sense an implicit message about current beliefs needing to be an 'improvement' on earlier beliefs.

Survey questionnaires

I drew on Lamie's study of changes in Japanese teachers conducted in 1997-1998 reported in 2002 and 2005 to design my research questionnaires. Lamie used two questionnaires delivered at different times to gain data about teachers' changes. Lamie based her work on Brown (1994) and Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983). The items therefore had a strong theoretical base. Content validity for this survey instrument was established through a review by three of my colleagues who were teaching research methodology in a Master of TESOL course for clarity, suitability and validity of the instruments and the translated versions. Generally, they gave some comments about the wording of the items, which were then revised to avoid potential ambiguity in the items.

Questionnaire 1: Current Beliefs

In detail, the Questionnaire consisted of two parts: Part A asked about demographic information; Part B was designed to gain information

about teachers’ beliefs about ELT. Instead of using 5-point Likert scales as Lamie did, I reorganized this into 4-point Likert scales with four responses: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree* so as to prevent the “between”, “safe” or “neutral” choices that are very common ways of responding to questionnaires, especially in light of Vietnamese face-saving behaviour.

Part A: Demographic information.

In this part, the participants were identified with a code by asking them to provide the last four numbers of their mobile/home phone. This helped me to make a comparison between the same teachers’ responses in **Questionnaire 1** and **Questionnaire 2** and identify those who made or did not make change.

Part B: Beliefs about teaching methodology

Part B sought information about teachers’ beliefs about English language teaching (ELT).

Please read each statement and circle the letters which best represents your views

I strongly agree: SA I agree: A I disagree: DA I strongly disagree: SD

| | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|----|
| Teachers should only use the target language (English) in class. | SA | A | DA | SD |
| Students should read and translate passages from their textbooks. | SA | A | DA | SD |
| Students should memorize dialogues or passages from their textbooks. | SA | A | DA | SD |
| The main aim of foreign language teaching is to enable the students to read and write the language. | SA | A | DA | SD |
| A teacher teaches most effectively at the front of the class. | SA | A | DA | SD |

Questionnaire 2: Earlier Beliefs (3 years ago)

Questionnaire 2 was mostly similar in form and content with Questionnaire 1. Part A asked about demographic information. Part B

was designed to gain information about teachers' beliefs about ELT 3 years ago.

Grouping of the questionnaire items

The questionnaire items were mainly adapted from Lamie (2002, 2005). They were grouped and analysed by categories with the theoretical background provided by Lamie (2005) as **Audio-lingual (traditional), Grammar-translation (traditional) and Communicative Language Teaching (progressive)**. The statements relating to key points in the teachers' current beliefs were grouped in one of the following five categories.

Category 1: *Aim in English language teaching*

Category 2: *Classroom activities and organization*

Category 3: *Grammar and error correction*

Category 4: *Vocabulary learning and language use*

Category 5: *Four language skills*

Data collection

With these two self-reported questionnaires about changes, I looked for teachers describing their current teaching beliefs before they talked about what they believed in the past. It helped me disguise my focus so that the teachers (hopefully) felt less pressure to show changes. The second questionnaire, which asked about what the teacher believed in the past was delivered to the participants one and a half months after the first one had been completed. The two questionnaires were translated into Vietnamese, the participants' native language to make sure the participants' understood the questionnaires.

Data analysis

The SPSS version 23.0 was used for data analysis. The following sections present data related to teachers' current beliefs obtained in Questionnaire 1. Questionnaire 2 gave information about the participants' the beliefs in the past. The data from Questionnaire 1 and 2 was compare to explore the teachers' change in their beliefs. General information about participants obtained in Part A is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the teacher participants

| Characteristics of teacher participants | | Frequency | Percent |
|--|--|-----------|---------|
| Gender | | | |
| | Male | 13 | 40.6 |
| | Female | 19 | 59.4 |
| | Total | 32 | 100.0 |
| Age | | | |
| Minimum: 26 Maximum: 69 Mean: 46.66 SD: 12.72 | 20s | 1 | 3.1 |
| | 30s | 13 | 40.6 |
| | 40s | 3 | 9.4 |
| | 50s | 11 | 34.4 |
| | 60s | 4 | 12.5 |
| Teaching qualifications | | | |
| | Bachelor degree | 9 | 28.2 |
| | Master degree (Master in TESOL/AppLx: 16 MBA: 4) | 20 | 62.5 |
| | DBA | 1 | 3.1 |
| | Other (Post-grad diploma) | 2 | 6.2 |
| | Total | 32 | 100.0 |
| Teaching experience | | | |
| | 3-10 yrs | 12 | 37.5 |
| | 11-15 yrs | 6 | 18.8 |
| | 15-20 yrs | 8 | 25.0 |
| | > 20 yrs | 6 | 18.8 |
| | Total | 32 | 100.0 |
| Periods/wk | | | |
| | 11-20 | 7 | 21.9 |
| | > 20 | 25 | 78.1 |
| | Total | 32 | 100.0 |

Overall teachers' beliefs

The scoring employed in relation to the teachers' current beliefs is described. The degree of their (dis)agreement with the survey items was assessed using a 4-point Likert scale in statements asking about current beliefs. The following section will focus on trends in the teachers' beliefs. In order to discuss the distributions of teachers' beliefs in different categories, the levels referring to teachers' progressiveness in beliefs are labelled as follows: means ≤ 2.5 : Least progressive (in which means ≤ 2 is sub-defined as toward traditional), means >2.5 - 2.75 : Intermediate progressive, and means >2.75 : Most progressive (in which means ≥ 3.5 is sub-defined as relatively high progressive). The overall mean scores for teachers' existing beliefs are presented in **Table 2** in order from lowest to highest mean score, showing the scale from least progressive to most progressive in their beliefs about teaching methodology.

Table 2: Overall teachers' beliefs (Current Beliefs-CB)

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|----|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| CB -C3 - GRAMMAR AND ERROR CORRECTION | 32 | 1.00 | 2.50 | 2.15 | .34699 |
| CB -C1 - AIM IN ELT | 32 | 2.13 | 3.00 | 2.58 | .25717 |
| CB -C4 - VOCABULARY LEARNING AND LANGUAGE USE | 32 | 1.50 | 3.50 | 2.59 | .46925 |
| CB -C5 - FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS | 32 | 1.83 | 3.33 | 2.60 | .32201 |
| CB -C2 - CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & ORGANIZATION | 32 | 2.50 | 4.00 | 3.17 | .38853 |
| CB - TEACHERS' BELIEFS -TOTAL | 32 | 2.10 | 3.02 | 2.62 | .24221 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 32 | | | | |

Note. Belief means on a scale from 1-4, higher scores indicated more progressive teaching beliefs and lower scores indicated more traditional. C: Category

Category 3 consisted of items relating to *Grammar and error correction* and had the lowest mean score, 2.15 on a scale of 4, showing the teachers had the least progressive beliefs about grammar in English teaching. Teachers' beliefs relating to *Aim in ELT* came next, revealing a slightly more progressive position with 2.58 as the mean. Following were *Vocabulary and language use*, *Four language skills* and *Classroom activities and organization*, all with means from 2.59 to 3.17, showing that teachers' beliefs in these categories were relatively more progressive. It can be seen that teachers had lower means in the categories relating to teaching and learning "products" or goals or results in language teaching and learning: students' performances, learning outcomes, exam results and what teachers believe students should gain in their study, which all were concerns of students and stakeholders such as administrators, parents etc. The three categories with relatively more progressive beliefs such as *Vocabulary and language use*, *Four language skills* and *Classroom activities and organization* are closely related to the process of teaching, how classes should be conducted and the ways teachers present their lessons. In other words, teachers' beliefs were likely to be more progressive in the areas of their performances in class - the "process" of teaching that could be directly observed and evaluated by students, colleagues or administrators and their beliefs seemed to be more toward traditional in the areas relating to the students' learning outcomes - the "products" of their teaching. The overall mean for all categories is 2.61 on scale of 1-4 indicating overall relatively progressive beliefs about English language teaching methodology among the participants.

That teachers' beliefs in this current project showed relative progressiveness in communicative activities items could reflect that the communicative approach has been spreading throughout ELT in Viet Nam in terms of textbooks with CLT-based classroom activities and processes, workshops, training and that this spread could be a factor in shaping teachers' beliefs. On the other hand, grammar-translation and audio-lingual based activities also seemed to be regarded as effective in teaching, as seen in the fact that experienced teacher participants indicated agreement with such activities, reflecting the popular accuracy-oriented and written testing system in non-English major education.

As stated in Table 3, when classified according to their mean scores for beliefs, teachers fell into three different groups: Group A (10 teachers) with mean scores ranging from 2.1 to 2.5 on the scale of 4 described as the group with the least progressive beliefs; Group B (12 teachers) with the mean >2.5 to 2.75 indicating their intermediate position in relation to progressive beliefs; and Group C (10 teachers) holding the highest mean scores (above 2.75) consistent with the most progressive beliefs among the responses.

Table 3: Teachers’ beliefs (sorted scores) N=32

| GROUP A: LEAST PROGRESSIVE BELIEFS N=10 | | GROUP B: INTERMEDIATE PROGRESSIVE BELIEFS N=12 | | GROUP C: MOST PROGRESSIVE BELIEFS N=10 | |
|--|------|---|------|---|------|
| Teachers' code | Mean | Teachers' code | Mean | Teachers' code | Mean |
| 3 | 2.10 | 17 | 2.58 | 21 | 2.79 |
| 13 | 2.12 | 7 | 2.58 | 12 | 2.82 |
| 20 | 2.27 | 16 | 2.59 | 25 | 2.83 |
| 9 | 2.30 | 18 | 2.59 | 4 | 2.83 |
| 2 | 2.32 | 14 | 2.62 | 28 | 2.85 |
| 32 | 2.38 | 8 | 2.62 | 29 | 2.87 |
| 1 | 2.40 | 15 | 2.63 | 30 | 2.88 |
| 24 | 2.44 | 5 | 2.63 | 19 | 2.98 |
| 23 | 2.45 | 27 | 2.68 | 31 | 3.00 |
| 11 | 2.50 | 6 | 2.68 | 10 | 3.02 |
| | | 26 | 2.73 | | |
| | | 22 | 2.73 | | |

Note. Belief means on a scale from 1-4: ≤ 2.5: Least progressive, >2.5-2.75: Intermediate progressive, >2.75: Most progressive

Discussions of teachers' beliefs

The belief patterns among the participant teachers diverged most based on either a) the levels of progressiveness in two major areas: *Classroom activities and organization* and *Vocabulary learning and language use* or b) whether teachers were toward traditional in *Grammar and error correction* or *Aim in ELT*, the categories related to students' skills and performances.

The results suggested that although teachers' beliefs are distributed widely, the majority of teachers' beliefs seemed to reflect different methodological approaches in the ELT context in Viet Nam at different periods of time, consistent with changes and reforms in language education and political contexts that have occurred since 1970 to the present time. In language education, teacher training programs have advanced various methods and approaches through time: grammar translation methods, audio-lingual methods and CLT. Teachers' beliefs may have their roots in teaching methodological approaches developed in their local sites. Also, they could be influenced by a number of other factors including the teaching context, facilities, students' demands or administrators' requirements (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). The distributions of the teachers' beliefs in the sample demonstrate the complexity of teaching methodology shifts in the country: Vietnamese teachers see CLT as a progressive method but not the complete solution to language learning, and aspects of other methods are still regarded as valuable in language teaching and learning. Like teachers in the study conducted by Lewis and McCook (2002), they incorporate new ideas at the same time as they maintain valued traditional features in their teaching contexts.

Overall change in teacher beliefs

In order to investigate changes in teachers' beliefs, data from Questionnaire 1 (current beliefs) and Questionnaire 2 (earlier beliefs) were analyzed. A paired-samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant change in teachers' scores for their beliefs between their Time 1 (Questionnaire 1: current beliefs) and Time 2 (Questionnaire 2: earlier beliefs) data. The results (Table 4) show that there was a statistically significant change in Category 4 *Vocabulary learning and language use* ($p=0.018<0.05$) and in total

($p=0.018<0.05$) between their earlier and current beliefs. Differences in means between the earlier and current beliefs were found in all categories, with lower values for the earlier beliefs (Questionnaire 2) indicating that in general, teachers' beliefs had moved toward progressive methodologies in ELT. This reflects a shift in ELT in the Vietnamese context: from more traditional to more progressive communicative teaching (Pham, 2001; Utsumi & Doan, 2008).

Table 4: Comparison of teachers' earlier and current beliefs

Paired Samples Statistics

| Beliefs (Earlier, EB and Current, CB) by Category | | Mean | Std. Deviation | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--|---|-------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Pair 1 | EB- C1-AIM IN ELT | 2.51 | .31167 | .224 |
| | CB- C1-AIM IN ELT | 2.58 | .25717 | |
| Pair 2 | EB- C2-CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & ORGANIZATION | 3.04 | .42173 | .117 |
| | CB-C2-CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & ORGANIZATION | 3.17 | .38853 | |
| Pair 3 | EB -C3- GRAMMAR AND ERROR CORRECTION | 2.02 | .38290 | .069 |
| | CB- C3-GRAMMAR AND ERROR CORRECTION | 2.15 | .34699 | |
| Pair 4 | EB- C4- VOCABULARY LEARNING AND LANGUAGE USE | 2.35 | .56746 | .018* |
| | CB- C4-VOCABULARY LEARNING AND LANGUAGE USE | 2.59 | .46925 | |
| Pair 5 | EB- C5- FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS | 2.51 | .34518 | .110 |
| | CB- C5-FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS | 2.60 | .32201 | |
| Pair 6 | EB- TOTAL | 2.49 | .24221 | .018* |
| | CB- TOTAL | 2.62 | .30315 | |

Note. EB: Earlier beliefs, CB: Current beliefs, C: category

The significant change found in Category 4 *Vocabulary learning and language use* between the two times suggests a change in teachers' beliefs regarding monolingual or bilingual use of language in ELT classes, showing more support for more use of the target language in teaching. As there was a significant overall difference between the teachers' current and earlier beliefs, further data analysis was carried out in order to determine how changes took place in teachers' beliefs.

There were 13 teachers whose beliefs showed mean scores decreasing when comparing their current beliefs (Questionnaire 1) and their earlier beliefs (Questionnaire 2), suggesting that their beliefs used to be more progressive than now.

There were 2 teachers reporting no change in their means, indicating that their beliefs remained the same in relation to the two research times.

The largest group showing a shift toward progressiveness in their beliefs about teaching methodology consisted of 17 teachers.

Table 5: Teachers' belief change-Differences in means between current and earlier beliefs

| Teachers with decreased mean scores N=13 | | | | | Teachers with no change in mean N=2 | | | | | Teachers with increased mean scores N=17 | | | | |
|---|-------|------------|---------------|----------|--|-------|------------|---------------|----------|---|-------|------------|---------------|----------|
| Current TB | Group | Earlier TB | Diff in means | T's code | Current TB | Group | Earlier TB | Diff in means | T's code | Current TB | Group | Earlier TB | Diff in means | T's code |
| 2.63 | G.B | 2.87 | -0.24 | 15 | 2.40 | G.A | 2.40 | 0.00 | 1 | 2.30 | G.A | 2.29 | 0.01 | 9 |
| 2.12 | G.A | 2.35 | -0.23 | 13 | 2.83 | G.C | 2.83 | 0.00 | 25 | 2.85 | G.C | 2.82 | 0.03 | 28 |
| 2.44 | G.A | 2.58 | -0.13 | 24 | | | | | | 2.38 | G.A | 2.34 | 0.04 | 32 |
| 2.79 | G.C | 2.91 | -0.12 | 21 | | | | | | 2.63 | G.B | 2.58 | 0.04 | 5 |
| 2.32 | G.A | 2.42 | -0.10 | 2 | | | | | | 2.98 | G.C | 2.86 | 0.12 | 19 |
| 2.58 | G.B | 2.65 | -0.07 | 17 | | | | | | 2.62 | G.B | 2.47 | 0.15 | 14 |
| 2.50 | G.A | 2.56 | -0.06 | 11 | | | | | | 2.68 | G.B | 2.50 | 0.18 | 6 |
| 2.88 | G.C | 2.93 | -0.06 | 30 | | | | | | 2.59 | G.B | 2.38 | 0.22 | 18 |
| 2.27 | G.A | 2.32 | -0.05 | 20 | | | | | | 3.00 | G.C | 2.78 | 0.22 | 31 |
| 2.58 | G.B | 2.63 | -0.05 | 7 | | | | | | 2.59 | G.B | 2.33 | 0.27 | 16 |
| 3.02 | G.C | 3.05 | -0.03 | 10 | | | | | | 2.83 | G.C | 2.54 | 0.29 | 4 |
| 2.10 | G.A | 2.11 | -0.01 | 3 | | | | | | 2.62 | G.B | 2.28 | 0.34 | 8 |

| Teachers with decreased mean scores N=13 | | | | | Teachers with no change in mean N=2 | | | | | Teachers with increased mean scores N=17 | | | | |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|---|-----|------|------|----|
| 2.45 | G.A | 2.46 | -0.01 | 23 | | | | | | 2.73 | G.B | 2.26 | 0.47 | 26 |
| | | | | | | | | | | 2.87 | G.C | 2.33 | 0.54 | 29 |
| | | | | | | | | | | 2.73 | G.C | 2.18 | 0.55 | 22 |
| | | | | | | | | | | 2.68 | G.B | 1.87 | 0.81 | 27 |
| | | | | | | | | | | 2.82 | G.C | 1.73 | 1.09 | 12 |
| 2.62 | | 2.49 | 0.13 | Total | | | | | | | | | | |

Note. G.A: Group of teachers with the least progressive current beliefs

G.B: Group of teachers with intermediate progressive current beliefs

G.C: Group of teachers with the most progressive current beliefs

The overall changes in teachers' beliefs were analyzed, as shown in Table 5, based on their mean scores noticing multi-directional changes in teachers' beliefs. It can be seen that teachers in all three groups changed in both directions, toward both more progressivism and more traditionalism and teachers from two groups A and C were in the 'no change' group so 'group' does not seem to be the major correlate of any particular change.

Discussion of change in teachers' beliefs

In conclusion, teachers in this project changed in their beliefs in different directions and to different extents and there was variation in the specific areas of change. That changes occurred in all categories relating to teaching methodology has also showed the rather promising shift of language teachers' beliefs about teaching methodology in Vietnamese teaching context, from more traditional to more progressive communicative teaching (Nguyen, 2016; Pham, 2001; Utsumi & Doan, 2008). The study adds evidence of multi-directional change: teachers' beliefs move toward progressivism or vice versa, or they change in opposite ways and helps confirm that teachers move in their career (Briscoe, 2006; Levin & Wadmany, 2005) and is consistent with the conclusion of a number of researchers that beliefs can be changed and restructured and these changes in beliefs can occur in different aspects with different directions (Garmon, 2004, 2005; Lewis & McCook, 2002; Ng, Nicholas, & Williams, 2010; Özmen, 2012; Schommer, 1994).

Changes in teachers' beliefs could be partial (in some categories), or comprehensive (in all categories). At the same time, it also shows that change is hard and takes place gradually as teacher could take no change or moved toward less progressivism. There are also misconceptions and the coexistence of multiple conceptions during transitions (Guskey, 2002; Levin & Wadmany, 2005). As a result, the multi-directions of change and the complicated issues of transitions in teacher belief should be considered in educational reforms.

The key findings, implications and recommendations

The current study shows two key findings on teachers' beliefs and belief change during their teaching career. Regarding teachers' current beliefs, the finding has noted the current trend toward progressive teaching methodology beliefs of teachers teaching English at a tertiary level with the diversities and complexities shared among the group of participant teachers. Investigating teachers' change in their beliefs, the research finding indicates that all teachers changed at least to some degree in their beliefs during their professional life. However, their changes were multi-directional. That teachers can also change back toward less progressivism suggests change is a hard, gradual experience while teaching is a challenging job requiring teachers to change all the time; and that there must be ongoing and different forms of support from a variety of levels: schools, administrators, colleagues in promoting positive, sustaining, generative change (King & Newmann, 2004; Pritchard, McDiarmid, Grodenboer, Zevenbergen, & Chinnappan, 2006), while emphasizing the active, central role of teachers in a way of moving forward seeking for the best.

Based on the findings, some implications and recommendations have been drawn out. The multi-directions of change and the complicated issues of transitions in teacher belief should be considered in educational reforms at different levels from ministerial, university, department and individuals when fostering teacher change. A quite concrete implication of this recognition is that, as teachers' belief systems could be amendable to change, professional development training needs to provide evidence of possible outcomes and teachers need time to test and evaluate the students' responses and the learning outcome to facilitate change theoretically and systematically.

Moreover, this research has added more information about in-service teachers' beliefs as well as their change in their career life which seemed not to be addressed satisfactorily in the literature which has been dominated with related studies about the beliefs of pre-service teachers (Ng, Nicholas, & Williams, 2010; Özmen, 2012) or in-service teachers in elementary school or high schools (Roger, 2007), or immediately after the training course (Lamie, 2005).

Following will be some recommendations for educational practice for university, professional development, and individual teachers.

University: The diversity and complexities in the process of teachers' belief change found in the study indicate different directions of changes in beliefs. This finding shows that is necessary to invest more time examining regularly why teachers change in different areas and directions in their beliefs. The university needs to review teachers' changes and share their findings with others in relation to the teaching context and other issues. Further, when designing language programs, curriculum developers need to create extra space for change implementation in teaching methodologies.

Professional development: Professional development is tightly connected to teachers' change processes as one of the sources of belief change for teachers.

a. Formal training: It is important to value different kinds of formal training in teacher education: postgraduate studies, workshops, seminars with systematic, consistent development in language teaching and learning theories and applications. However, all these forms also need follow-up evaluation regarding changes in teachers' methodology.

b. Informal training and self-learning: Professional collaborative participation should be encouraged where in-service teachers may share ideas and problems, and interact around new theories or practices, books and journals on ELT methodology as sources of teacher change should be widely circulated within and between schools to update teachers' knowledge.

In addition, forms of professional development should be modified to take account of teachers in their particular teaching contexts. Most

current forms of professional development consist of presenting new things and asking people to make changes. I suggest that reflections on teaching should be taken into account as part of the training process.

For individual teachers:

The study indicates different types of change directions among teachers. Teachers can change toward progressivism or traditionalism in their beliefs. Collaborations and experience-sharing in teacher communities could help them to examine not only their own teaching but also provide opportunities to share their learnt lessons with others and learn from them to give more evidence and feedback for different stages of change. Formal action research on the teaching carried out by teachers themselves is recommended for teachers' deep, theoretically-based understanding of their own and their colleagues' beliefs and teaching in their teaching move.

Personally, as I have progressed on my journey in teachers' belief change investigation, I have found some points that have been really meaningful for my own career. In light of the literature in the field, the frequencies and the nature of change investigated and discussed in this research are relatively encouraging for educators in the field: overall, teachers have made significant changes in the past three years particularly, but also throughout their teaching careers. Change is absolutely part of our career life.

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FACTORS AFFECTING ENGLISH LEARNING MOTIVATION OF THE FINANCE-BANKING STUDENTS AT HO CHI MINH CITY UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, foreign languages have become indispensable global integration of all nations in general, and of Vietnam, in particular. Foreign language is compulsory for Vietnamese university students and helpful to their future careers. This study aims to determine the factors which affect English Foreign Language (EFL) Learning and makes recommendations for learning motivation improvement. This study employed questionnaires to directly survey 470 students who are pursuing mainstream programs in the field of Finance-Banking at Ho Chi Minh City Open University (HCMCOU) and Saigon University (SGU). Based on the findings, this paper produces recommendations with regard to the advancement of EFL learning motivation of finance-banking students at Ho Chi Minh city universities.

Keyword: *English as Foreign Language (EFL), learning motivation, finance-banking, Ho Chi Minh City Open University, (HCMCOU), Saigon University, (SGU).*

INTRODUCTION

Statistically reported by Education First (Dan Tri, 2017), Denmark, Netherlands and Sweden were the countries with top English proficiency; meanwhile, Vietnam was placed thirty-fourth on the list. In Vietnam, overall English proficiency of students in big cities like Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi has been dramatically increased; however, that of the students in smaller cities and provinces is still inferior.

A research by the World Bank suggests poor English proficiency and insufficiency of soft skills have disadvantaged Vietnamese students in

job interviews. It is calculated approximately 400 thousand graduates annually; sixty percent of whom, however, fail to fulfill those interview requirements, and the majority of the graduates cannot properly employ English to communicate with foreigners (Dan Tri, 2017).

Considering the importance of teaching English to university students, universities in Vietnam have been focusing on syllabus and learning program designs so that required English proficiency, learning outcomes, employer demand satisfaction, or higher education pursuit in Vietnam or in developed countries can be achieved. Practically, learning motivation among students in HCMC universities is not strong enough; therefore, this study is conducted to determine the factors motivating students to study EFL, and hence makes scientific grounding provision for EFL teachers at educational institutions, especially popular universities in HCMC, so as to improve students' learning motivation in learning English. Additionally, the results of this study can hopefully make contributions to the high-quality human resource training process, the need of internationalization of Vietnam.

At HCMC universities, students are required to choose one out of four foreign languages: English, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. All in all, most of the students in the field of finance-banking select English for its superior popularity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theories

Some view “motivation” and “motive” as the same thing. While Vroom (1964) regards “motivation” as a mind state that occurs as an individual expects to achieve a particular desired result or reward if he or she focuses his or her effort on it, Mitchell (1982) refers the term “motivation” to the degree at which a person wishes to achieve, and selects to behave accordingly. In addition, Robbiun (1998) defines the word as “the readiness to maximize gained results”.

In contrast, some differences exist. Alderfer (1977) finds some dissimilarities between the two terms. As stated by Alderfer (1977), “motive” is regarded as the internal factor(s) that a person has when he or she desires to do a particular thing, whilst the term “motivation” is related to both the external and internal factor(s); or, “motive”

means START WITH WHY, and “motivation” means BEYOND THE WHY; “motive” is Particular, and “motivation” means Universal. Also, both internal and external energy are required by “motive”, but only the internal is required by “motivation”. Additionally, “motive” refers to restricted, but “motivation” is non-restricted. Moreover, “motive” means LIKE or WANT, but “motivation” means DESIRE.

Therefore, “motivation” is desirous and purposeful, aiming at achieving the targeted objectives, with the influence of effort. Namely, “motivation” is the “reasons that push human beings to perform acts”. Signs of “motivation” include readiness, efforts, and enthusiasm for work so that organizations’ and employees’ aims can be reached (Alderfer, 1977).

Three factors that affect “motivation” include internal, environmental and work field-related; such are constantly changeable and difficult to grasp.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943) reveals that human needs result in human behavior. The needs are represented in five-tier pyramid form, according to the significance of each category. The need of learning is placed in two higher groups, which would translate this as “existing”, and for those with or without the achievement of lower tier needs, they still focus on the need of learning as it directs them towards higher tier levels of EFL needs, specifically self-actualization and self-esteem. Hence, should their needs and qualities be discovered, they can be well satisfied. Therefore, a research on their need of learning would hopefully bring success to our syllabus design and implementation.

According to the expectancy theory of Vroom, et al. (1983), based on individual’s cognition, the Maslow’s pyramid of needs is implemented. The theory hints a person’s decision to perform an action in one direction is made, and this action leads to another action, which is dependent on the “WANT/DESIRE” cognition of that person. The desirable result of an action plays a decisive role in the urge to perform the action. A person will act according to how the result is expected or how appealing to the person the result is.

Locke’s Goal-Setting theory (2002) shows that particular goals are likely to bring better performance. Also, the belief hints that the wish

to reach the goals is the main derivation of work motivation. In order to generate work force, it is vital to have clear and demanding goals, and attract workers to define goals. The belief shows those who have defined goals tend to be more successful than those who do not. Setting goals relies on each individual's characteristics; still, it uses five rules: challenge, clarity, feedback, commitment, and complexity. Hence, those with defined learning goals and determined demand for learning can enjoy good study results.

Gardner (1985) presents Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery, focusing on integrative and instrumental motivation, which finds instrumental motivation the primary motivational inclination for learners to study English. However, later validations by other researchers bring inconsistent results. Gardner and Lambert (1972) debate that factors including EFL learner feelings about a particular foreign language, its values of culture and behavior, and learners' own reasons for learning that language contribute to the general success of learning the language.

Many researchers in the field of psyche and behavior like Murphy & Alexander (2000) and Pintrich (2003) share the view that the process of motivation is internal, which supports the push, orientation, and continuous maintenance of actions, which are needed in the foreign language learning process. In relation to motivation, people are urged to take actions to obtain the targeted goals. Social and cognitive groups have the strongest impact on foreign language learning motivation, as suggested by Tella et al. (2007). Meanwhile, Duong (2013) reveals the influential factor of social motivation includes related factors (i.e. parents' wishes).

Previous studies related to the topic

Luu (2017)'s research uses Dornyei's third foreign language learning theory (1990) as a reference to study the motive of second language learning. The language in use is Chinese for English language students at the University of Banking, Ho Chi Minh. A manipulation of a 5-point Likert scale with 32 questions is used to survey foreign language motives, Chinese, of 89 students at HCMC University of Banking. Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded learning environment has the biggest impact on their learning motivation,

followed by language range and other related factors.

In addition, Nguyen (2013) undertakes an investigation "The correlation between English learning excitement and some factors influencing and predicting the level of interest of secondary school students in English". Over 690 students from 4 different schools in Hanoi capital and Vinh Phuc province participate in the survey. The research's results show that the factors of teaching methodologies, learning objectives like objective factors such (families, teachers, and peers), learning attitudes, and learner abilities of English in junior high schools were most impacted.

In relation to Lee's study (1979), it is more understandable, energetic and colorful in the lecture process with the employment of games in classrooms. Moreover, games can assist student in identifying and correcting their learning mistakes, and enhancing their English skills like pronunciation, communication. Besides, games give them a lively learning environment to create new ideas with joyfulness as mentioned by Rixon (1981).

From the studies of Zhang (2007) and Bouzidi (2009), English language learning should originate from learner real needs, using workplace language. Hutchinson & Water (1987) argue that English teaching adapt individual needs. Additionally, if curriculum is given priority, teachers and learners may become less creative and active, thus professional English teaching will not be effective (Widdowson, 1978; Savas, 2009; Luka, 2009).

A study in second language acquisition by Myles (2016) focuses on the factors which affect learning and teaching in foreign language classes. The findings indicate that landscape and atmosphere of the classrooms, methods of inspiring students and teacher-student communication influence the results of language learning.

Quan & Pham (2014) carry out a study of the factors affecting English learning at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Can Tho University. With the participation of 160 surveyed respondents, and the use of a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, data are analysed, presenting findings that the influential factors are (i) fundamental concerns; (ii) difficulties in learning and testing; (iii) practical

application; (iv) Hobbies and entertainment; (v) Study guides and learning materials and (vi) Value of the certificate. Using Anova, EFA and CFA analyses, the authors find three factors that affect students' needs to study English: Difficulty in learning and examination, Practical applications, Hobbies and Entertainment.

The research project "Analyzing Factors Influencing Student Motivation for Economics Students of Can Tho University", by Hoang & Nguyen (2016), also uses a 5 point Likert scale and employs multivariate regression, Cronbach 'Alpha, and EFA analyses to illustrate the motivational forces of students in the Faculty of Economics at Can Tho University. The survey of 495 economics students finds that the impact factors including movement, quality of trainers, training programs, learning conditions and learning environment exert beneficial effects on student learning motivation.

Phan and Nguyen (2011)'s research focuses on factors that impact the student attitudes in learning at Dalat University. The model of research is comprised of seven elements: teaching methodology, materials, syllabuses, content, practice, learning motivation, accommodation and living condition, instructors. Quantitative research (5 scores with 5 variables) involves 812 year-two students. Results indicate all the above-mentioned elements have effects on students' attitudes, with curriculum, learning motivation and content being the three most powerful.

While the above-mentioned authors research on separate factors affecting student foreign language learning motivation, a research on EFL learning as an official requirement in a university training programs, and a comparison on learning motivation among university students in Ho Chi Minh City have not been conducted. Accordingly, this study aims to compare ESL learning of students pursuing Finance and Banking (including high-quality and regular programs) between HCMCOU and SGU.

3. Research model

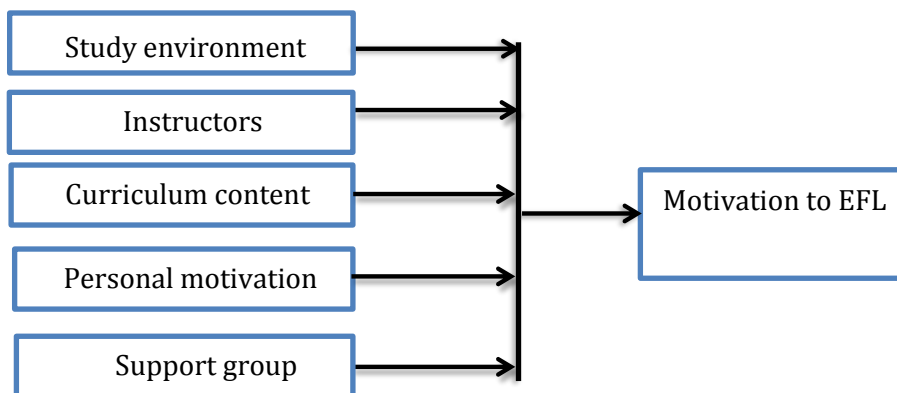


Figure 1. Recommended research model

Based on Maslow (1943), Vroom's theory of motivational theories (1964), Gardner & Lambert (1972), and previous studies (e.g. Murphy & Alexander, 2000; Schunk, 2000; Stipek, 2002; and Pintrich, 2003, Phan & Nguyen, 2011; Hoang & Nguyen, 2016; Luu, 2017), recommended research model (Figure 1) is formed.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative research was conducted by expert interviews - lecturers who have been teaching English for at least 10 years at Ho Chi Minh City Open University, to supplement and adjust the scales. Quantitative research used primary data, using questionnaires to collect students' answers. The questionnaire was comprised of closed questions, in form of a Likert scale, interval, and nominal scale. This research uses SPSS 22.0 software for data analysis. Data were mainly analyzed in terms of descriptive statistics, crossover statistics, Cronbach'Alpha and EFA scale reliability, linear regression analysis. This study used the surveys of 470 full-time students studying in Finance and Banking (including high-quality programs and regular programs) of Ho Chi Minh City Open University and Saigon University (SGU). The number of valid tickets was 470.

Table 1: Research hypotheses

| Hypotheses | Bases of hypotheses | Expectation |
|---|--|-------------|
| H ₁ : “Study environment” positively affects “Motivation to EFL” | Luu (2017), Myles (2016), Phan & Nguyen (2011) | Positive |
| H ₂ : “Instructors” positively affects “Motivation to EFL” | Lee (1979), Myles (2016), Quan & Pham (2014), Phan & Nguyen (2011) Nguyen (2013) | Positive |
| H ₃ : “Curriculum content” positively affects “Motivation to EFL” | Hutchinson & Water (1987), Savas (2009), Luka (2009), Phan & Nguyen (2011) | Positive |
| H ₄ : “Support group” positively affects “Motivation to EFL” | Nguyen (2013) | Positive |
| H ₅ : “Personal motivation” positively affects “Motivation to EFL” | Zhang (2007), Quan & Pham (2014), Nguyen (2013) | Positive |

Research results

Descriptive statistical analysis

Table 2: Sample statistics by education and sex, residence status of students

| | Sex | | residence status of students | | Total |
|--------|--------|------|------------------------------|---|-------|
| | Female | Male | Other | Permanent residence in Ho Chi Minh City | |
| HCMCOU | 154 | 63 | 59 | 158 | 217 |
| SGU | 233 | 20 | 49 | 204 | 253 |
| Total | 387 | 83 | 108 | 362 | 470 |

(Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018)

The sample size required for data analysis was 470 students in Finance and Banking faculty of HCMCOU & SGU, of which there were 387 female and 83 male students. In particular, most students have permanent residence in Ho Chi Minh City (362 students), and in other provinces (108 students, accounting for 27%)

Table 3: Sample statistics by school year and curriculum program

| | School year | | | Curriculum program | | Total |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------|
| | 1st year students | 2nd year students | 3rd year students | High-quality programs | Mass programs | |
| HCMCOU | 52 | 117 | 48 | 92 | 125 | 217 |
| SGU | 80 | 13 | 160 | 84 | 169 | 253 |
| Total | 132 | 130 | 208 | 176 | 294 | 470 |

(Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018)

Samples were made up of 470 students at studying Finance and Banking program of HCMCOU & SGU. Among the 253 students who have enrolled in Finance and Banking program at SGU, there are 84 high-quality program students, 169 regular program students. Among 217 students who have enrolled in the Finance and Banking program at HCMCOU, there are 92 students studying in high-quality programs, 125 students studying the regular program. Samples of this study were also based on the academic years. The number of students in each academic year correspondent to fields of study is similar, ensuring the number of samples as required ($n \geq 30$).

Table 4: Sample statistics by learning times

| | ≤ 5 years | | From 6 - 10 years | | From 11 - 15 years | | ≥ 15 years | |
|--------|-----------|------------|-------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Numbers | Ratios (%) | Numbers | Ratios (%) | Numbers | Ratios (%) | Numbers | Ratios (%) |
| HCMCOU | 32 | 6.81 | 118 | 25.11 | 62 | 13.19 | 5 | 1.06 |
| SGU | 24 | 5.11 | 175 | 37.23 | 52 | 11.06 | 2 | 0.43 |
| Total | 56 | 11.91 | 293 | 62.34 | 114 | 24.26 | 7 | 1.49 |

(Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018)

62.34 percent of the students who have six to ten years of English proficiency have sufficient time to study, and 24.26 percent of the students with eleven to fifteen years of learning English have a sufficient time to study and thus obtain minimum English proficiency. All in all, those students have their study time in range from 6 to 15 years, accounting for 86.6 percent.

Table 5: Results of descriptive statistical analysis of independent variables

| | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---------|---------|------|-------------------|
| Spacious study room | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.69 | .86 |
| Suitable teaching and learning facilities | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.04 | .72 |
| Classrooms have a reasonable number of students | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.18 | .80 |
| Positive atmosphere in class | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.19 | .79 |
| Foreign language learning creates nice friendships. | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.96 | .84 |
| The competition needed in the classroom | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.49 | .89 |
| Instructors have professional knowledge | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.58 | .61 |
| Instructors have easy ways to communicate | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.65 | .64 |
| Instructors have a lively way of communicating | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.54 | .69 |
| Instructors always encourage students to study | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.35 | .76 |
| Instructors are available for expert advice when students request | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.40 | .71 |
| Students easily communicate with instructors | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.37 | .72 |
| Instructors are strict in teaching | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.48 | 1.08 |

| | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|---------|---------|------|-------------------|
| Instructors are fun, funny | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.10 | .84 |
| Instructors' feedback helps students know their strengths and weaknesses in the course | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.28 | .77 |
| Instructors always help students set deadlines to complete their learning goals | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.16 | .78 |
| Instructors respect the student's personal expression and choice | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.18 | .79 |
| The training program has a reasonable length. | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.34 | .71 |
| The curriculum meets the requirements of future career development of students. | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.24 | .75 |
| Number of hours (time) taught in the training program is reasonable | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.11 | .71 |
| The books and learning materials are adequate and appropriate | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.18 | .79 |
| The enthusiastic support of Faculty and subject when students needed | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.91 | .80 |
| Fairness and seriousness in examinations | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.19 | .83 |
| The library has a full source of reference material | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.07 | .82 |
| Online applications for learning have a full source | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.07 | .78 |
| This subject is compulsory for study. | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.42 | 1.05 |
| You learn English because it is needed for your study and your life now | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.29 | .80 |

| | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|---------|---------|------|-------------------|
| You learn English as a necessity for your study and life later | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.40 | .75 |
| English is a foreign language that your parents do not encourage you to learn. | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.41 | 1.12 |
| English is a language that helps you discover the values of other cultures in the world | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.97 | .90 |
| Studying English makes you feel like you can actively participate in activities that take place overseas | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.97 | .92 |
| Students learn English because students love English culture | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.60 | 1.01 |
| You learn because you feel confident that you learn | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.65 | .98 |
| You learn to prove you have good education | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.45 | 1.06 |
| Students learn English because they want to be socially recognized. | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.57 | 1.05 |
| Students learn English because it is taught in high school | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.48 | 1.02 |
| Personal motivation decides motivation in EFL | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.12 | .78 |
| Instructor decides motivation in EFL | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.85 | .89 |
| Curriculum Content decides motivation in EFL | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.78 | .91 |
| Study Environment decides motivation in EFL | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.91 | .86 |
| Support Group decides motivation in EFL | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.63 | .97 |

Valid N (listwise) = 470

(Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018)

The study used the Likert scale of 5 (1: Very unimportant, 2: not important, 3: average, 4: important and 5: very important). Thus, most variables had a minimum value of 1 and a maximum of 5. The majority of opinions are similar in respect of ratings, except: “Instructors are strict in teaching”, “This subject is for compulsory study”, “English is a foreign language that your parents do not encourage you to learn”, “You learn to prove you have good education”, “Students learn English because they want to be socially recognized.”, “Students learn English because it is taught in high school”, and “Students learn English because students love English culture” are factors with high standard deviation variables (Std Deviation ≥ 1), which means that students are different in recognizing the importance of these three variables. All variables have an average value of over 3 (mean ≥ 3.00) indicating that the students studied direction of factors from important to very important.

Table 6: Summary of Cronbach's Alpha analyzes

| Numerical order | Scales | N of Items | Corrected Item-Total Correlation (Minimum) | Corrected Item-Total Correlation (Maximum) | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----------------|---|------------|--|--|------------------|
| 1 | Study environment | 6 | .334 | .594 | .731 |
| 2 | Instructor | 11 | .319 | .700 | .864 |
| 3 | Curriculum content | 4 | .506 | .616 | .781 |
| 4 | Support group | 4 | .558 | .649 | .793 |
| 5 | Personal motivation | 11 | .300 | .667 | .884 |
| 6 | Motivation in EFL (Dependent variables) | 5 | .301 | .668 | .776 |
| | Total | 41 | | | |

Cronbach's Alpha analysis of all variables belonging to the independent and dependent variables shows Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.7 and Corrected Item-Total Correlation ≥ 0.3 . Therefore, the scales in the model are reliable and qualified to conduct exploratory factor analysis (EFA). All 36 independent variables were included in the EFA analysis.

The analysis results show that variable "Foreign language learning creates nice friendships." has a factor load less than 0.5. So this variable was removed. The analysis results (EFA analysis again), results of the final EFA analysis showed that KMO = 0.888, Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05, initial Eigenvalues = 67.534 with 9 element groups, all variables have a satisfactory loading factor (≥ 0.5).

Table 7: Summary of exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

| | Component | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Instructors are available for expert advice when students request | .723 | | | | | | | | |
| Instructors always encourage students to study | .714 | | | | | | | | |
| Students easily communicate with instructors | .702 | | | | | | | | |
| Instructors has a lively way of communicating | .699 | | | | | | | | |
| Instructors have easy ways to communicate | .667 | | | | | | | | |
| Instructors feedback helps students know their strengths and weaknesses in the course | .667 | | | | | | | | |
| Instructors have good professional knowledge | .581 | | | | | | | | |

| | Component | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Instructors are fun, funny | .563 | | | | | | | | |
| Instructors respect the student's personal expression choice | .548 | | | | | | | | |
| Instructors always help students set deadlines to complete their learning goals | .532 | | | | | | | | |
| Classroom atmosphere is positive | .530 | | | | | | | | |
| English is a language that helps you discover the values of other cultures in the world | | .788 | | | | | | | |
| Studying English makes you feel like you can actively participate in activities that take place overseas | | .777 | | | | | | | |
| Students learn English because students love English culture | | .693 | | | | | | | |
| You learn because you feel confident that you can learn it | | .632 | | | | | | | |
| Students learn English because of social recognition | | | .841 | | | | | | |

| | Component | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|---|------|------|------|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| You learn to prove you have good education | | | .837 | | | | | | |
| Students learn English because it is taught in high schools | | | .707 | | | | | | |
| Books and learning materials are adequate and appropriate | | | | .733 | | | | | |
| The curriculum meets the requirements of future career development for students. | | | | .705 | | | | | |
| Number of hours (time) taught by the training program is reasonable | | | | .683 | | | | | |
| The training program has a reasonable capacity | | | | .645 | | | | | |
| The library has a full source of reference material | | | | | .728 | | | | |
| Online applications for learning has a full source | | | | | .666 | | | | |
| Fairness and seriousness in examinations | | | | | .652 | | | | |

| | Component | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|---|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| The enthusiastic support of Faculty and subject when students needed | | | | | .574 | | | | |
| Spacious study room | | | | | | .796 | | | |
| Suitable teaching and learning facilities | | | | | | .756 | | | |
| Classrooms have a reasonable number of students | | | | | | .573 | | | |
| The competition needed in the classroom | | | | | | | .728 | | |
| Instructors are strict instructors in teaching | | | | | | | .722 | | |
| You learn English because it is needed for your study and your life now | | | | | | | | .762 | |
| You learn English as a necessity for your study and life later | | | | | | | | .605 | |
| English is a foreign language that your parents do not encourage learning | | | | | | | | | .816 |
| This subject is compulsory in study | | | | | | | | | .763 |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. | | | | | | | | | |
| KMO = 0.888; Bartlett's Test ^a with Sig. = 0.000; Total Variance Explained = 67.534; Eigenvalues = 0.725 | | | | | | | | | |

Analysis of EFAs for the dependent variables and analysis of results show that the coefficient of KMO, Bartlett's Test with Sig, Total Variance Explained and Eigenvalues are all satisfactory. The results showed the coefficient KMO = 0.792; Bartlett's Test with Sig. = 0.000; Total Variance Explained = 55.594; and Eigenvalues = 2.187. The dependent variables group still had 5 observed variables.

Test correlation matrix and multicollinearity

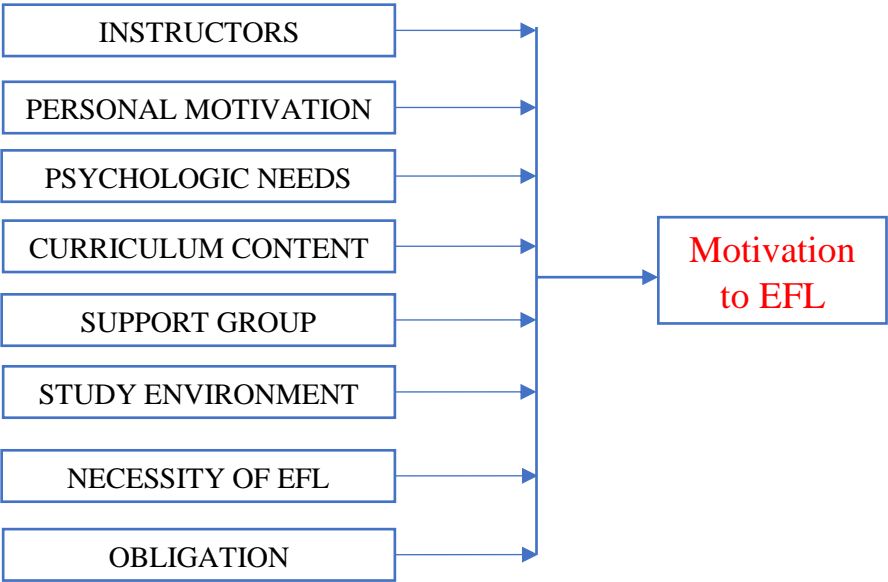


Figure 2. Adjustment model (after analysis EFA)

Table 8: Model test results and hypotheses

| Hypotheses | Expected | Record the regression result | Standardize d regression coefficient | P | Test results |
|-------------------------|----------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|--------------|
| H1 -> Motivation to EFL | Positive | Positive | .225*** | .000 | Accept |
| H2 -> Motivation to EFL | Positive | Positive | .224*** | .000 | Accept |
| H3 -> Motivation to EFL | Positive | Positive | .210*** | .000 | Accept |

| Hypotheses | Expected | Record the regression result | Standardize d regression coefficient | P | Test results |
|-------------------------|----------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|--------------|
| H4 -> Motivation to EFL | Positive | Positive | .162*** | .000 | Accept |
| H5 -> Motivation to EFL | Positive | Positive | .172*** | .000 | Accept |
| H6 -> Motivation to EFL | Positive | Positive | .091** | .027 | Accept |
| H7 -> Motivation to EFL | Positive | Positive | .119*** | .004 | Accept |
| H8 -> Motivation to EFL | Positive | Positive | .040 | .332 | Reject |
| H9 -> Motivation to EFL | Positive | Positive | .094** | .021 | Accept |

According to Table 8, the four factors included in the analysis and regression testing conditions has the "impact group" factor knocked out because the Sig is greater than 0.05. The remaining groups from F1 to F9 were significantly correlated with "Motivation to EFL" with 99% reliability. In Table 9, the adjusted R^2 of 0.219 means that 21.9% of students' "Motivation to EFL" change is explained by group factors in the model. Thus, the statistically significant assurance model with the tests was conducted; there was a close relationship between the variables independent and the dependent variable.

Table 9: Regression results

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | VIF | Correlation |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|-------|-------------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | | |
| (Constant) | -.001 | .041 | | -.029 | .977 | | |
| Instructors | .226 | .041 | .225 | 5.518 | .000 | 1.000 | .249 |
| Personal motivation | .225 | .041 | .224 | 5.494 | .000 | 1.000 | .248 |
| Psychological needs | .210 | .041 | .210 | 5.131 | .000 | 1.000 | .233 |

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | VIF | Correlation |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|------|-------|-------------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | | |
| Curriculum content | .162 | .041 | .162 | 3.968 | .000 | 1.000 | .182 |
| Support group | .172 | .041 | .172 | 4.217 | .000 | 1.000 | .193 |
| Study environment | .091 | .041 | .091 | 2.221 | .027 | 1.000 | .103 |
| Encouragement | .119 | .041 | .119 | 2.908 | .004 | 1.000 | .134 |
| Necessity of EFL | .040 | .041 | .040 | .971 | .332 | 1.000 | .045 |
| Obligation | .094 | .041 | .094 | 2.307 | .021 | 1.000 | .107 |
| <i>a. Dependent Variable: Motivation in EFL</i> | | | | | | | |
| R ² = .234 | | | | Durbin Watson (DW) = 1.714 | | | |
| R ² square = .219 | | | | F (sig) = 15.571 (Sig =.000) | | | |

Note: *** is level of significance 1%; ** is level of significance 5%; * is level of significance 10%;

Sources: Authors (2019)

With Prob (F-statistic) = 0,000, Durbin Watson = 1.714 và F=15.571 (table 10), it can be specified that the given model match with the data (99%). Table 10 for the current modifier found has an invalid parsing ANOVA with the trusty 100% (Sig = 0.00).

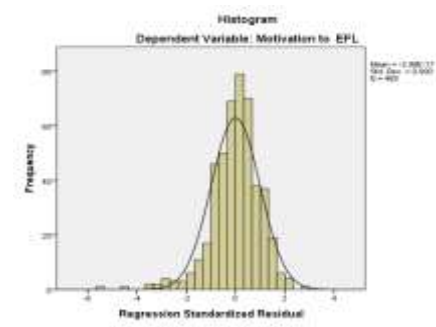


Figure 3: Regression standardized residual
(*Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018*)

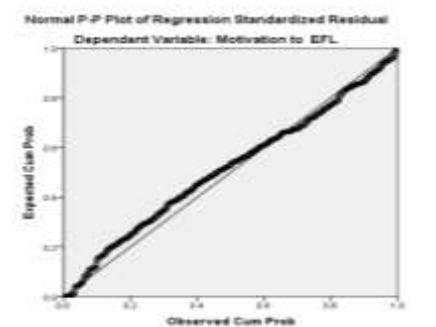


Figure 4: P-P Plot of regression standardized residual

According to Anova's analysis (Table 8 or 9), there is difference in motivation to EFL between OU students and SGU students (Sig. ≤ 0.1). OU students have motivation to EFL better Student's SGU (mean value higher - Table 10)

Table 10: ANOVA test

| Motivation to EFL | | | | | | Descriptives | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|--------|-------------|-------|------|--------------|-----|-------|----------------|---------|
| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum |
| Between Groups | 11.44 | 1.00 | 11.44 | 11.70 | 0.00 | OU | 217 | 0.17 | 0.98 | -4.12 |
| Within Groups | 457.56 | 468.00 | 0.98 | | | SGU | 253 | -0.14 | 1.00 | -3.69 |
| Total | 469.00 | 469.00 | | | | Total | 470 | 0.00 | 1.00 | -4.12 |

(*Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018*)

Regression analysis results

Factor “Instructors” has coefficients B = 0.226 (positive sign) and Sig. = 0.000. This result shows factor “Instructors” has a positive impact on “Motivation in EFL” of student. Factor “Personal motivation” has coefficients B = 0.225 (positive sign) and Sig. = 0.000. This result shows factor “Personal motivation” has a positive impact on students' "English dynamics". Factor “Psychological needs” has coefficients B = 0.210 (positive sign) and Sig. = 0.000. This result shows Factor Psychological needs” has a positive impact on “Motivation in EFL” of student. Factor “Support group” has coefficients B = 0.172 (positive sign) and Sig. = 0.000. This result shows Factor “Support group” has a positive impact on “Motivation in EFL” of student. Factor “curriculum content” has coefficients B = 0.162 (positive sign) and Sig. = 0.000. This result shows, factor “curriculum content” has a positive impact on students' “Motivation in EFL”. This is the group with the highest regression coefficient, which means that the strongest among the three groups has a positive effect on the dependent variable. All result also coincides with the results from the studies of Myles (2016), Hoang & Nguyen (2016), Phan & Nguyen (2011).

Factors “study environment”, “encouragement” and “obligation” have coefficients B= 0.091, 0.040 and 0.094 (positive sign) at the level of

significance 5%. The results also perfectly match the fact that the contents of the teaching and learning programs have an impact on student learning, creating passion, excitement for students, especially when they learn foreign languages. Accordingly, attractive study programs will create more motivation for students.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The initial research model consists of five groups of factors (with 36 independent variables) that affect motivation in EFL and dynamics of elementary students in HCMCOU and SGU. The test results show that the scale of measurement used is suited to ensure the reliability of the evidence. The results of linear regression analysis indicate that there are 8 groups of factors: Instructors, Individual Motivation, Psychological needs, Curriculum content, Support group, Study environment, Encouragement and Obligation. Of all the factors positively impacting the dependent variables, the Instructors have the strongest impact.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are provided as follows.

In terms of Instructors, there are several suggestions. First, instructors should improve and enhance their field-specialized knowledge and skills, especially intelligible and dynamic lesson delivery techniques, since such skills would greatly motivate student learning and active participation in the lessons. It is also advisable that instructors encourage their students in learning and give them professional support as asked by their students. Additionally, deadlines in student learning should be set by instructors so that students are likely to fulfill their objectives. What is more, instructors should actively participate in the classroom improvement process.

In terms of individual motivation and psychological needs, students should be aware of the importance of English competence in different life aspects: interpersonal communication, discussions/ seminars with the presence of foreign language use, cultural exchanges. In addition,

they need to determine their own learning demands so that their language learning can be more focused. Also, it is important that they stay confident in their learning and communication.

In terms of curriculum content and support group, universities could focus on updating, upgrading and adjusting contemporary learning programs; the purpose of this is to help students receive the latest knowledge, and enhance their future careers. Those in support groups should be more responsible and conscientious in assisting students, especially when students are in need of learning materials and other services.

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TEACHING ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LANGUAGE LEARNERS AT GRADE 5: TEACHERS' BELIEFS IN TWO CONTRASTING NATIONAL APPROACHES COMPARED, AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper was to investigate EFL (English as a foreign language) primary school teachers' beliefs regarding their teaching methods used in English at grade 5 in the classroom, which was a part of my PhD research (Son, 2018). Interviews (teachers at Grade 5 observed classes; Responses $N=2$, Sweden and $N=3$, Vietnam) and questionnaires to English teachers at grade 5 in Swedish and Vietnamese primary schools (additional teachers at Grade 5; Responses $N=10$, Sweden and $N=52$, Vietnam) were used. The content of the questionnaire was based on the COLT observation scheme (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995) and adapted to be suitable to the study (Son, 2018) of teaching methods at Grade 5. The teachers' answers showed the major different degree of focusing on communication and grammar in teaching English classes at primary level between the groups, in spite of some similarities regarding classroom activities (group work), source of material and the languages used in the classroom. The results not only casted light on teachers' beliefs in two contrasting national approaches in their English teaching methods for young language learners but also led the author to discuss further pedagogical implications.

Keywords: *Teachers' beliefs, English, Primary school, Communicative language teaching, Grammar, Focus on forms.*

INTRODUCTION

English has been one of the first foreign languages to be learned and taught at schools in Asia, Europe and many countries around the world

from an early age in primary schools. In Sweden, according to Skolverket (2011a, 2016), children receive 480 hours of English instruction in compulsory school. In Vietnam, according to the latest Decision 3321 (MOET, 2010), English is taught as a compulsory subject from Grades 3 to 5 for a total of 420 periods.

Both the syllabus in English at primary school level in Sweden (Skolverket, 2011) and Vietnam (with the new curriculum from 2010 based on Decision 3321 (MOET, 2010)) promote communicative language teaching. Communicative competence is valued in English language teaching in both contexts. In teaching practices, the current English teaching methods used at Grade 5 in some primary schools in Sweden are on communicative approach, which aligns with the curriculum, while form-focused instruction is prominent in Vietnamese context (Son, 2018).

Should there be grammar instruction or communication in English emphasized at primary level? This question raises many different answers. In second language acquisition (SLA) research, some researchers (e.g. Krashen 1982, 1985 and Prabhu 1987) argue that grammar instruction has little role in acquiring L2 language, while others (e.g. Doughty, 1991; Spada and Lightbown 1993; Dekeyser 1995; Robinson, 1995, 1996) believe that grammar instruction is necessary to promote language learning.

This paper presents a small part of my findings from my PhD study (Son, 2018), which mainly uses both quantitative and qualitative methods, and aims to contribute to our understanding of English in primary education in Sweden and Vietnam. In this paper, I focus on what teachers say about the methods used in teaching English as a foreign language at grade 5 in the classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical development of language teaching

From the historical perspective (viewed by Richards and Rodgers, 2014), Latin was the most widely studied foreign language in the Western world five hundred years ago. As the status of Latin diminished, the school curriculum in classical Latin was more about analyzing the grammar. When “modern” languages entered the

curriculum of European schools in the eighteenth century, they were taught the same procedures as Latin in which grammar rule was the goal but not speaking the foreign language. Textbooks were filled with many rules of morphology and syntax. It was the standard of studying foreign language at schools by the nineteenth century and this approach to foreign language teaching was known as the Grammar-Translation method (GTM).

Grammar Translation Method was first known in the United States as the Prussian Method developed in Germany by Johannan Seidenstucker, Karl Plötz, H.S.Ollendorf, and Johann Meidinger, and then it spread to other parts of the world (Kelly, 1969, 1976; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; River & Bernice, 1981). The characteristic of the GMT was to help the foreign language learners understand the grammar rules and to read its literature. Reading and writing were the main focus, and little emphasis on speaking or listening. In spite of some criticisms, the GTM is still widely used in the world even today.

Towards the mid nineteenth century, when there was an increased demand for oral proficiency in foreign languages, the GTM was rejected, and new approaches to teaching language through a Reform Movement in language teaching developed. The members of the Reform Movement had interests in developing principles for language teaching based on naturalistic principles of language learning in relation to first language acquisition. This interest lead to the birth of “natural methods” that later developed as the “Direct method” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Brown, 1994)

With the second World war, there was a need to develop language programmes for promoting oral proficiencies in the USA. Americans needed to understand the languages of their enemies as well as their allies (Brown, 1994), and the objective of the army programs was to reach conversational proficiency in different foreign languages. By this way, the “Army Method” was born, based on activities of pronunciation and oral pattern drills of the Direct Method. The Army method mainly involved contact with the target language rather than the methodological basis. Together with the growing demands for teaching English as a foreign language in the 1950s in the US, the method was developed by an American linguist Charles Fries (Fries, 1957) in

universities and became known as the Audio Lingual Method (ALM).

The theory of language underlying the ALM was derived from the view of structural linguistics. This approach was mainly concerned with teaching structural patterns of the language through oral repetitive drills. Learning and teaching activities were focusing on dialogues and drills (that were used for repetition and memorization) in audiolingual classroom practices. However, Chomsky (1966) rejected the structuralist approach to language description and behaviourist theory of language learning. In this way, learners are encouraged to use their innate and creative abilities in language use in which the cognitive Code Approach was developed. Influenced by Chomsky's view on second language acquisition, some new methods have been developed (such as the Natural Approach and Communicative Language Teaching).

Procedures in Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been seen as an approach (not a method) that aims at reaching communicative competence and developing procedures for teaching foreign language skills for communication

In CLT, traditional procedures are reinterpreted and extended (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Littlewood (1981) proposed a sequence of activities underlying CLT into two broad groups- pre-communicative activities and communicative activities. In pre-communication activities involving structural activities and quasi-communicative activities, teaching points are introduced in dialogues and grammatical items. The focus at this stage is more on form than on meaning, then the knowledge later used in controlled practice. In communicative activities, there are functional communication activities, and social interaction activities in which learners have chance to integrate their pre-communicative knowledge in using language and practicing functions and forms, typically within the activities of pair and group work and the focus now is on meaning. Nevertheless, there were also some arguments against the procedures. Savignon (1972, 1983) did not agree that learners must first get the individual skills (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary) before using them in communicative tasks. Instead she supposed that communicative practice should be provided from the beginning of the instruction.

Therefore, there are still on-going discussions on how to implement CLT principles in the classroom procedures, and it also addresses some other issues on the debate regarding teacher training, materials development and testing, and evaluation.

Howatt (1984) found a weak and strong version of the communicative approach. Weak CLT “lacks a principled basis for developing grammatical competent” (Ellis & Shintani 2014:46) while strong version offer an alternative to traditional approach in which classroom language learning in CLT will proceed more efficiently when it take takes place in ‘natural’ language learning. The methodology focuses on fluency to make students ‘use’ language for communication rather than to ‘practice’ the correct grammatical structures and usages, and the label for this strong version today is ‘task-based language teaching’ (Ellis & Shintani 2014). Some empirical studies have proved that there should be a mixture of traditional and communicative instruction to make the learning more effective than purely traditional instruction (Savignon, 1972; Montgomery & Eisenstein, 1985), but some other studies (Palmer, 1979; Allen et al., 1990) also failed to demonstrate that CLT is more effective than more form-focused instruction on accuracy. One thing pointed out by Ellis & Shintani (2014) is that different learners can benefit from different kinds of teaching. So, “what is needed is not the abandonment of method studies but better designed studies” (Ellis & Shintani, 2014:49).

In the 1980’s it was determined that there needed to be a way to measure L2 communication in the classroom. COLT “Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching” (COLT) (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995) was developed as a way to compare the results in different teaching methods. It has been used in several studies, as it used to describe differing teaching methods.

Focus on forms and Focus on form

Long (1991) qualified the difference between ‘focus on forms’ where the teaching focus is on the grammar of the second language, and ‘focus on form’ where the teaching focus is on communication skills through linguistic items. The two different foci require naturally different ways of organizing the teaching and learning environment (Ellis, 2002, 2012; Doughty & Williams, 1998). ‘Forms’ focus naturally needs a structured

syllabus, where ‘form’ focus will center around meaning and communication skills.

Some classroom researchers have concluded that language instruction promotes language learning for instructed learners (Spada & Lightbown, 1993; Dekeyser, 1995; Robinson, 1995, 1996; VanPatten, 1996). Instruction can work ‘directly’ (an immediate effect on the learner’s ability to perform the target structures in natural settings) but not all linguistic structures are teachable - they need to be taught at the right time and it has a delayed effect, so instruction can work ‘indirectly’ (Ellis, 1990).

RESEARCH QUESTION

What do Vietnamese and Swedish teachers believe regarding their teaching objectives and approaches for English at Grade 5?

The Study

Settings and participants

Online and off-line questionnaires were used to measure teachers’ beliefs about the teaching methods in their Grade 5 English classrooms. Two Swedish teachers at two different schools, and three Vietnamese teachers at three different schools (whose lessons were observed in Son (2018)) participated in the interview as off-line questionnaire. Additionally, an online questionnaire was sent to other English teachers in Swedish and Vietnamese primary schools. There were totally 10 other Swedish teachers of English at grade 5 answering the online questions while there were 52 answers from other Vietnamese teachers of English. For a presentation of the participants, see Table 1.1

Table 1.1. Teacher interview and questionnaire.

| Classroom Data | Swedish group | | Vietnamese group | | |
|---|---------------|----------|------------------|----------|----------|
| | School 1 | School 2 | School 1 | School 2 | School 3 |
| Teacher interview (offline questionnaire) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Online questionnaire to other teachers | 10 responses | | 52 responses | | |

Data collection and analysis

The content of the questionnaire was based on the COLT observation scheme (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995) and adapted to be suitable to the study (Son, 2018) of teaching methods at grade 5. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale (varying degrees of agree/disagree) as well as open-ended questions (Dörnyei, 2003). It was created digitally and distributed by email to other primary school teachers in both Sweden and Vietnam. The digital distribution made responding to the questionnaire easier for the recipients. It was also distributed in hard copy to the five interviewed teachers participating in the core study.

Procedure

The questionnaire was first piloted with two Grade 5 English teachers who were not included in the study, one in Sweden and one in Vietnam. Then the questionnaire and cover letter were then emailed to the schools in Sweden via the school search from the Swedish National Agency for Education. In Vietnam, the questionnaire was forwarded by the Education department to Grade 5 English teachers in Vietnamese primary schools. Participation was voluntary. The participants were anonymous for ethical considerations.

The interviews (around 15-20 minutes/ each) were conducted (in English) in person directly after the lesson observations between the teacher and the researcher.

Findings

The results of the interviews with the individual teachers highlight some similarities and differences between the two groups (Sweden and Vietnam) that can be most relevant, as seen below.

i. How do you plan your classroom activities?

There was a significant difference in the way the teachers from the two countries planned their classroom activities. The Swedish teachers of English both agreed that classroom activities entail a lot of group work almost every lesson. 60% teachers from the online survey agreed on this point. Meanwhile, the three interviewed Vietnamese teachers agreed that group work was useful in the classrooms. However, the Vietnamese teachers said that since the children were small and in

large class sizes, they needed to have teacher-led activities and whole class interaction (63% Vietnamese teachers from the online survey agreed).

ii. Should the theme of activities in the classroom be on meaning (communication) or/and grammar?

In this question, the teachers in both groups agreed on the same point that communication in English at classroom was important. The interviewed Swedish teachers stressed that it should be used as the main activity in the classroom, and teaching grammar was another secondary focus (90% Swedish teachers from the online survey agree about this). While the three Vietnamese teachers of English agreed that it was important that the pupils were able to speak English and communicate in English, but they also needed to produce correct grammatical structures in English at a basic level. Therefore, grammar-based activities needed to be taught in classroom. Three of them agreed that a communicative and grammar translation approach should be used in the classroom for the young learners (this was in the same line of agreement from 78% Vietnamese teachers in the online survey).

iii. How do you assign the pupils' activities in your English classroom?

Another important difference seems to be the way in which the teachers in the two countries assigned the pupils' activities in the classroom. Both the Swedish teachers said that practicing English for communication was one of the main activities for the pupils in English classes (100% of the Swedish teachers who responded to the online survey also agreed with this approach). Meanwhile, according to the Vietnamese teachers, Vietnamese pupils often focused on activities in the textbook, which included: practicing speaking English, repeating simple sentences, the paragraph, learning grammatical structures and doing some grammar exercises, practicing pronunciation, and playing games with vocabulary (84% Vietnamese teachers on the online survey used this approach).

iv. How do you teach grammar in your English classroom?

One of the most interesting differences was how the teachers from

each country taught grammar of English at grade 5. Both Swedish teachers said that they sometimes taught grammar implicitly but more on conversation (but this was not the main focus), and almost no description on grammar rules (60% Swedish teachers from the online survey agreed on this point). Additionally, they did not correct grammar when the learners spoke since the learners needed to be confident, without being afraid of mistakes while speaking another language. On the contrary, two of Vietnamese teachers of English said that they preferred to use rule and examples to teach grammar and then doing exercises, and drills on those grammatical structures (82% Vietnamese teachers agreed on this). Three of them agreed that they needed to correct grammatical mistakes even in speech and writing.

v. What do you do to improve the pupils' communication in English in the classroom?

All five teachers strongly said that providing speaking activities could improve the pupils' communication in English in the classroom (90% Swedish teachers and 92% Vietnamese teachers agreed on this point). The only difference in their answers was that two Swedish teachers preferred to assign group work for the pupils to exchange the ideas and ask them to read some books at home and then retell in class so that they could practice speaking English in front of the class. Meanwhile, the two Vietnamese teachers preferred to provide them with a lot of vocabulary first, and then speaking practice. The other teacher tried to correct their grammar and pronunciation while they were speaking and asked the class to repeat in chorus.

vi. Which is the typical and usual source of material used in your English class?

All of the teachers in Sweden and Vietnam used the material that was specifically designed for second language teaching (L2-non-native speaker) such as textbooks, teacher-prepared exercises and material. This accorded with the opinion of the rest of the Swedish and Vietnamese teachers from the online survey.

vii. How much use of English is made in the classroom?

All of the teachers said that they tried to use mainly English but their mother tongue should also be used in order for the pupils to

understand the instructions and the lessons better. The teachers encouraged the pupils to use English in the lessons but it seemed that the pupils at this grade still used their mother tongue in a mixture with English. (60% Swedish teachers and 76% Vietnamese teachers from the online survey shared the same view).

This can be summarized as the following table on the typical differences between the groups.

Table 1.2. Comparison of the Swedish and Vietnamese teachers of English at grade 5 on English teaching in the classrooms from the interviews and online-survey.

| Questionnaire | Swedish teachers of English | | Vietnamese teachers of English | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | 2 Swedish teachers in the case study | 10 Swedish teachers throughout the country | 3 Vietnamese teachers in the case study | 52 Vietnamese teachers throughout the country |
| The primary focus of instruction should be on practicing grammatical structures | Disagree | 80% disagree | Agree | 80% Agree |
| The primary focus of instruction should be on speaking and listening skills so that the pupils can understand and produce English (L2) speech. | Strongly agree | 90% strongly agree | Agree | 57% Agree |
| A combination of meaning and form is needed, but focus on forms is the priority | Disagree | 79% disagree | Agree | 61% Agree 38% No opinion |

DISCUSSION

In short, there were not only some similarities regarding classroom activities (group work), source of material and the languages used in the classroom between the two contexts, but also some differences.

The typical difference between the two groups is the degree of focusing on communication and grammar in English classes. The Swedish teachers seem to place the stress on communication in the English classroom. This is aligned with a communicative view of language in the Swedish education system which permeates the curriculum starting from the primary school level (Cabau-Lampa, 1999a, 1999b; Lundahl, 2012; Malmberg, 2001; Skolverket, 2011a, 2011b). Meanwhile, the Vietnamese teachers prefer both meaning and form (typically pure/explicit grammar instruction) for teaching at a basic level in the classroom. Additionally, Swedish teachers of English do not prefer to correct the learners' grammatical mistakes while the Vietnamese teachers of English do make corrections. Moreover, in comparison with the other teachers throughout the countries (via online survey), they almost share the same views and agreement on the similar points as above-mentioned with the individual teachers from the interviews.

To some degree, the Vietnamese teacher still want to provide communicative language teaching besides teaching grammar. This matches with Hiep (2007) and Hoang (2011), who found that the teachers in their studies also believed in communicative language teaching but that in practice, was not easily conducted due to several constraints in reality.

Typological differences between English and Vietnamese may then generate different learning problems which many language teachers attempt to resolve declaratively, e.g., by giving a grammatical rule (when X occurs you must do Y). Additionally, Vietnamese teachers of English focus more on grammar rather than language use due to examinations in English on testing learners' lexicogrammatical knowledge (Le, 2000). Nevertheless, in Vietnamese, extramural English is not as popular as in Sweden (Son, 2018). The English language is not common in the media, music and on the Internet. As exposure to English is not common in Vietnam, it is important the learners also have chance to improve their communicative competence in the language classrooms, besides metalinguistic competence. The 2010 curriculum (MOET, 2010) reflects the Vietnamese Ministry of Education's desire to employ communicative language teaching in English lessons. Communicative language teaching might probably be emphasized

more in Vietnamese schools, especially at primary level when the children need to build up their confidence to speak the language, without being scared of being corrected.

Pedagogical implications and some suggestions

The findings of the paper and the research (Son, 2018) not only fill a research gap and provide some insights about how these types of knowledge develop and how teaching and exposure to out-of-school factors can support the learning of a second language, but also offer important new messages about the pedagogical implications for language teachers, ESL pedagogy, learners, educators, linguistics, material designers and policy makers. Several key issues for the pedagogical implications are concluded, followed by some suggestions.

Out-of-school factors

One pedagogical implication to consider is the learner's exposure to out-of-school factors. Research findings show that exposure to language outside school does promote language proficiency. As it is not likely that teachers can include all kind of activities in the classroom, it is necessary to encourage the young learners to explore out-of-school exposure to learn English. This can be done by connecting take-home tasks to out-of-school activities in which the young learners can make use of the media in English in order to have more interaction with the language outside the classroom. They can use the internet and English programs which are developing strongly, even in developing countries.

Supporting and developing the teachers

It seems that teachers in Vietnam, Sweden or elsewhere need to make further efforts to develop classroom techniques and activities appropriate to their conditions and their learners in order to further promote language learning. There is no best way to teach the language but it depends on the teachers feeling satisfied in creating the learning atmosphere to teach language skills that they believe will be useful for their own students in particular circumstances. However, it is important to stress that teachers should not be left alone in this process. This should be supported by peers, policy makers, school leaders at all levels, syllabus designers in curriculum development, and the children including their parents themselves. Additionally, both

Swedish and Vietnamese teachers of English at primary education have not had an educational background in teaching English specifically for young children (including the teachers in the present study). Based on evidence of teacher education provision in seven European countries and classroom data drawn from the Early Language Learning in Europe (ELLiE) project (Enever et al 2011), Enever (2014) highlights the current weakness in providing the specifically primary-focused teacherly skills in some European countries, including Sweden. The teachers involved are the language teachers working in European contexts where children increasingly learn English as a second or foreign language (FL) from the very start of compulsory schooling. In Sweden, English language teachers mostly are general teacher, not specialist primary FL teachers which do not specify a minimum FL competency level (Enever 2014). Their education did not include a compulsory strand for English language and age- appropriate methodology skills in all pre-service primary courses. This only recently introduced in 2011. Therefore, there should be more training in primary English language teaching methodology for young children and English language proficiency for the teachers in Sweden, Vietnam and elsewhere that strengthen the quality of specialist primary English teachers in order to develop the teachers' linguistic and teaching competence at primary level (Halliwell, 1992; slattery & Willis, 2001, Enever et al. 2011, Enever, 2014) since teaching children a second language can be more demanding at primary level than higher levels (Nguyen & Nguyen 2008), and teachers of young children play an important role in developing the children attitudes toward learning in the early years of schooling (Enever, 2014). This can be carried out when the appropriate policies are to be effectively implemented.

Feelings more than rules

Knowing a rule does not necessarily result in good communication, but they may or may not be able to succeed on a standardized test of English language. Other research has pointed out that noticing forms in the input is a prerequisite for acquisition (Robinson, 1995; Schmidt 1990, 1994; Doughty Williams 1998). In this way, to be good at something, one needs to understand how it works. It is not enough just to 'feel'.

In the Swedish context, the teacher can create more grammar-based exercises and writing that make the learners aware of the grammatical structures in their learning. When the children know at least some grammatical norms, it creates the basic foundation for the children to reach higher levels of linguistic knowledge in order to learn the language itself and/or any other languages later. It will also facilitate their ability to do any international tests in language proficiency at a later age. Swedish children do have the language environment and exposure to out-of-school language that helps them develop speaking skills, Swedish teachers of English for young learners can make the function more salient by raising the learner's consciousness of different language norms and forms in the classroom as they occur in communication and meaning-focused activities.

Classroom observations in Vietnam showed that there were very few interactive activities for children to develop their communication and build their own confidence. Practice in communicative activities should be involved to make the declarative become procedural (Dekeyser 1995, 1997). Additionally, it is important to develop the learner's confidence in communication rather than learning by heart the rules and words, and correcting the learner's grammar mistakes all the time. Language teachers should encourage students to use the target language frequently through communicative activities where they have a speaking environment. Then the children can fall in love with a language, instead of facing the burden of passing the exams or becoming discouraged or disinterested by the teachers' corrections while they try to engage in communication.

“Even if learners notice a form, or if it is pointed out through instruction, without a communicative need, or if language forms fulfil no (unique) function, acquisition may be delayed”

(Doughty & Williams 1998:219)

As suggested by Nguyen & Nguyen (2008), there should be more specific curriculum guidelines on requirements and implementation of English instruction at primary level in which the oral performance and communication should also be emphasized and be learnt at the early age. The size of the classroom should not be too big in order to allow the development of the communicative approach in the classroom. The

textbooks should be built in readiness of implementing the curriculum in which more extended texts should be introduced for communication purposes, not only for the learning of pure grammar.

Therefore, the research pointed out that both the nature of instruction and practice, including out-of school exposure, are important factors in language learning. This has the pedagogical implication that the primary focus of instruction should involve a combination of both meaning and form, both of which are supposed to be useful ways of learning and in developing linguistic and communicative competence. Previous empirical studies have shown that the kind of knowledge acquired during form-focused instruction can support learners in communicative language teaching to use their L2 not only with fluency but also with accuracy (e.g., Spada & Lightbown, 1993)

It is indeed a challenge for second language teachers at primary schools to combine various teaching methods for effective L2 learning. However, it depends on what the learners' needs are (communication or declarative rules), and how the teachers can develop their teaching methods. Therefore, when the teacher needs to design a lesson plan or assess the learner's ability, it is important to consider the learner's learnability first and then the teachability.

There is no absolute best teaching method, but I hope that the findings of this paper and my study (Son, 2018) can help teachers recognize some factors that can contribute to the development of an appropriate pedagogy for teaching a second language to young language learners. Teachers should be aware of the learners' linguistic knowledge and the potential effects on learners' language learning outcomes. By recognizing this, they can develop and implement appropriate methods in the classroom situation for those young language learners.

CONCLUSION

A major difference between the two national educational contexts was the degree of focus placed on communication and grammar in the classes based on the results of teacher interview and questionnaire. The Swedish teachers focused on the importance of teaching the children how to speak and communicate in a broad context rather than understand grammar points and basic vocabulary as the Vietnamese

teachers emphasised. The findings provide some insights about teachers' beliefs in their classroom activities of English teaching in different contexts. This gives some more information on language teaching for language teachers, ESL pedagogy, learners, material designers and policy makers. It is important that the teachers and policy makers for early ELT are informed about this, so that they can learn from each other and adapt to their own teaching.

It is important to remember that the sample in the interview and questionnaire cannot claim to be representative of the nations or regions where I collected the data, but only for the classes and individual teachers involved in the studies.

Finally, data sample should be larger in the future studies.

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ENGLISH MAJORS' ANXIETY IN WRITING AND SPEAKING ENGLISH CLASSES: A CASE OF TRA VINH UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

It has been led to believe that students can become more anxious while asked to speak than to write in foreign language classes. Therefore, many instructors may have a false conception of the issue. In order to test this belief, forty-one second-year English majors are asked to answer the questionnaires on speaking and writing anxiety. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale developed by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) is used to measure their speaking anxiety while the Daly-Miller Test (1975) is used to measure their writing anxiety. The finding shows no difference in the levels of anxiety in both speaking and writing. The majority of participants show their moderate anxiety during speaking and writing classes, which means they feel normal in language classrooms. Only one participant expresses intensive nervousness in the speaking classes and two of them experience writing apprehension. This finding gives foreign language instructors a new conception of what they used to think about the anxiety in foreign language speaking classes and they will be able to approach their students appropriately for lesson delivery.

Keywords: *speaking anxiety, writing anxiety, levels of anxiety, speaking classes.*

INTRODUCTION

English has become an international language for communication, businesses, culture exchange, education and so on. It cannot be denied that English has brought to people plenty of advantages. People can extend their business cooperation, gain more knowledge of the world

and become friends thanks to their English ability. These major benefits have inspired many English educators and students to do research on language learning, e.g. how to acquire English skills, retain vocabulary, invest in language learning, teach English more effectively and motivate learners in foreign language classes. English has become a compulsory subject in public schools in Vietnam. It is also one of the subjects that high school students must pass in order to complete their high school education. Although English has received much attention, many students in general are just unable to acquire it and this has challenged many educators. Then, at university, many students who have chosen English as their major have difficulties in using it effectively. The researcher has taught English for over 15 years and mainly taught it to English majors at Tra Vinh University located in a rural province in Mekong Delta. In addition to teaching English, the researcher has assessed the students' language ability. Assessment can be done continuously both formally and informally to have a clear picture of a student's language development. Nevertheless, most of the assessment is guided by a set of criteria that put more emphasis on the language ability than reasons to have that ability. During the process of acquiring a language, many factors are likely to affect learners' ability to express themselves in front of class or on their writing papers. Therefore, in this paper the factor of anxiety in foreign language classrooms is given a priority and under investigation to see how nervous learners are in their foreign language classes, particularly in speaking and writing classes. Furthermore, this paper looks into language learners' levels of anxiety in their writing and speaking classes. The findings of the study can help orient language teachers' attention to their students' feeling, motivation and class atmosphere in addition to linguistic knowledge or to avoiding pressure in classrooms. This means a teacher needs to adjust his or her teaching methodology to address students' desires and thus bringing a collaborative foreign language classroom in which a teacher can play many roles: a knowledge transmitter, a facilitator, a counselor and a care-giver depending on his or her classroom situation and groups of students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of anxiety

As defined by Hilgard, Atkinson & Atkinson (1971) “Anxiety is commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object (as cited in Scovel, 1978, p.134). Brown also defines anxiety as “the extent to which learners may worry about themselves” (2007, p. 73). As defined by Spielberg (1983), anxiety is “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the nervous system” (as cited in Král'ová & Sorádová, 2015, p.3). Of these definitions, Brown's can be best addressed in this paper. The nervousness derives from oneself – students' worries about doing things. For example, ‘I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes’.

Speaking anxiety and writing anxiety

According to Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert (1999), “Previous studies have shown that foreign language anxiety concerns all modes of communication, namely speaking, writing, reading and listening, but is often strongest for speaking” (as cited in Aichhorn & Puck, p. 751, 2017). Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986), before proposing the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), reported on a group of 30 students at the University of Texas in a “Supported Group for Foreign Language Learning” that “They spoke of ‘freezing’ in class, standing outside the door trying to summon up enough encourage to enter, and going blank prior to tests” (p.128). They also found some psychological difficulties relating to anxiety such as tenseness, trembling and perspiring. FLCAS was designed based on this experience and a majority of the statements in FLCAS reflective to foreign language anxiety supported by a third or more of the students surveyed and seven statements were supported by over fifty percent of the participants. Gaibani and Elmenfi (2016) reported on a study of age groups when engaging in public speaking that younger ages (below 25) were more anxious than older ages (25-34). The author also found some participants were able to understand the language, but could not speak it. In addition, poor skills caused public speaking barrier and thus increasing level of anxiety. This reflects the finding of EL-Sakka (2016) that if a learner is able to improve his or her speaking proficiency, his or her anxiety will reduce. In the study, the author also found that proficiently using strategies while speaking might have

bettered speaking performance. Gkonou (2011) conducted a pretty similar research on anxiety over English as a foreign language (EFL) speaking and writing in language classrooms. The survey recruited 128 students enrolling in general English classes in Greece. To assess writing anxiety, she adapted the English as a Second Language Writing Apprehension Test (ESLWAT; Gungl & Taylor, 1989) and adopted FLCAS; Horwitz et al., 1986) for speaking anxiety. The findings revealed that FLCAS has a strong speaking anxiety element as opposed to writing apprehension and that the level of writing anxiety depends on learners' attitudes towards their writing class. She suggested using techniques such as generating and expressing ideas and providing learners sufficient language for the required task would help learners feel psychologically secure. Ahmed (2016) also had a study to find what factors contribute to students' elevated anxiety when they were speaking a foreign language in Kurdish universities. The author employed two instruments: questionnaires (five-point-Likert Scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) and found that most of the participants (30) experienced anxiety when speaking albeit individual anxiety level difference. They worried about their failing in the English class, peers' negative feedback and being laughed at. Akkakoson (2016) used both quantitative and qualitative analysis to assess anxiety level of 282 Thai university students of English as a foreign language. The findings disclosed moderate levels of anxiety on items: test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension but interestingly these students showed their positive attitudes towards speaking English in their classrooms. Elmenfi & Gaibani (2016) looked into the role of social evaluation on speaking performance and found that social evaluation played an integral part in supporting speaking in the public and hence more positive and supportive from peers and the teacher can contribute to the learning motivation and reduction of anxiety. There is a useful finding from Kirmızı & Kirmızı's (2015) research on tracking causes of writing anxiety that the participants considered time pressure, negative evaluation of the teacher and lack of sufficient writing English are the core indicators. Han & Hiver (2018) also reported that participants in their study showed anxiety in genre writing and preferred a non-threatening learning atmosphere, more support from peers and a sense of security in classroom just similar to that in a friendly, collaborative

community. In the study conducted by Rezaeia & Jafari (2014), Iranian EFL participating students showed high levels of writing anxiety owing to fear of teacher's negative feedback, low self-confidence and poor linguistic background. Qashoa (2014) found in her study that the participants with insufficient vocabulary expressed higher level of anxiety. They were struggling with negative feedback and thought mistakes would make them improve later on, so this changing perception helps reduce their anxiety when writing. They preferred non-threatening learning environment, enjoying less stressful writing tasks/tests and supportive feedback. This can also best reflect the Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (2009), which consists of three categories: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. If learners are motivated, they can do their best in conquering a second or foreign language. If they are self-confident, they believe in overcoming difficulties. Anxiety as he said is something prevents learners from acquiring the language. Brown's (2007) socioaffective principles can be also included here as they are related to students' language ego, willingness to communicate and the language-culture connection. From these principles, it can be seen that students from different cultures can approach classroom atmosphere differently. These studies have disclosed many points about anxiety. Brown also mentioned self-efficacy, which refers to a person's belief in his or her ability to accomplish a task. In this situation, both anxiety and self-efficacy can cause language learners a kind of unrest feeling. The findings above can be summarized as follows: Firstly, the participants can be less stressed in their writing classes than in their speaking ones. Secondly, younger learners can be tenser than their older ones in public speaking. Thirdly, good language proficiency can help reduce stress in a foreign language class. Fourthly, negative feedback can prevent nervous students from acquiring the language. Finally, the learning environment can be also regarded as a factor influencing language acquisition. These findings can facilitate the current study, which is trying to address students' levels of anxiety and causes of anxiety in both English speaking and writing classes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the many of the related studies above and students' possible nervousness in their speaking classes, the researcher found that there

were needs of a comparison of anxiety in the speaking and writing classes in the School of Foreign Languages to see their levels of anxiety and causes of anxiety in both classes. The researcher chose a writing class for comparison because students are not usually asked to orally present their work in front of everyone and this leads the researcher to believe that the atmosphere is less tense. To test these things, the two following research questions were proposed.

1. *To what degree do second-year English majors feel anxious in their speaking and writing classes?*
2. *Which class, speaking or writing class has made students more anxious?*

THE STUDY

Settings and participants

There were 41 participants, 4 males and 37 females in the school year 2017-2018 participating in the survey. Their ages ranged from 19 to 20. By the time of the survey, they were in their second academic school year in a four-year English bachelor program at Tra Vinh University. Their English proficiency level was expected to be at intermediate according to the program curriculum. They were practicing their language using B1 level course books by Cambridge and Interactions 2 by McGRAW-HILL. All of them had experienced at least seven years of English education in public schools. This was the first time they participated in answering the questionnaires about anxiety in foreign language classrooms, more specifically, in speaking and writing classes.

Instruments

There are many subjects or courses in the English bachelor program. However, the researcher only wished to assess their levels of anxiety in writing and speaking classes. Speaking and writing are seen as productive skills or active skills, a learner's production, so it is easier to see their anxious feeling when they are asked to perform tasks in class. To see the levels of speaking anxiety, the researcher used the foreign language classroom anxiety scale developed by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) (see appendix 1) while the Daly-Miller Test of Daly and

Miller (1975) (see appendix 2) was deployed to measure the writing anxiety. The purpose of the tools is to elicit students' true responses about themselves in their speaking and writing classes. Thus, these useful instruments are used to collect participants' data about foreign classroom anxiety. However, to assert reliability of the questionnaires, the researcher had all of the items translated into Vietnamese (see appendices 3 and 4). Then the Vietnamese versions of a pair of the questionnaires were delivered to a group of teachers and students in the English Department for proof-reading. The translated items were fully understood by these two groups and the questionnaires were then delivered for data collection. The foreign language classroom anxiety scale is a free source, but its disadvantage is that the result is not calculated online and the researcher has to manipulate it. In contrast, scores of the Daly-Miller Test of Daly and Miller can be either calculated online or manipulated. These are tools used by many other researchers, so the researcher, except translating the items, did not adapt any items and the contents in the questionnaires, but adopted them instead.

Data collection and analysis

The questionnaires were delivered to the participants with the researcher's explanation in Vietnamese when necessary. It was conducted at the recess during their morning class session. The participants received some candies and snacks while giving their answers to the items. The researcher made an effort to create a friendly, helpful atmosphere so that all the participants did their best. After collecting the responded questionnaires, the researcher put all the responses in the Microsoft Excel. Then, the researcher grouped the participants' scores into ranges for both speaking and writing and finally used the Microsoft Excel to draw the charts. Both the Daly Miller and FLCA have their own interpretation guidelines which condition the researcher to interpret the results rather easily. After collecting the data from the two questionnaires, the researcher used the guidelines for interpreting the scores of the FLCA and Daly-Miller Test described below.

The FLCA consists of 33 items which are classified into three categories: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of

negative evaluation. The items for each category are clearly marked. Each item is worth 5 points to produce a range of score from 33 to 165. To show students' levels of anxiety, the total score must be applied; the interpretation is not based on each item's score since some items ask about students' anxiety and some about comfortable feeling in class. According to the interpretation of the scale, the higher the score an individual gets, the more anxious this individual is in the speaking class. Scoring from 33 to 75 indicates low anxiety, from 76 to 119 medium and above 120 high intensity of anxiety, respectively. The items belonging to communication apprehension are 1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30 and 32. The items for collecting the information about test anxiety are 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26 and 28. Items 2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31 and 33 elicit responses to fear of negative evaluation.

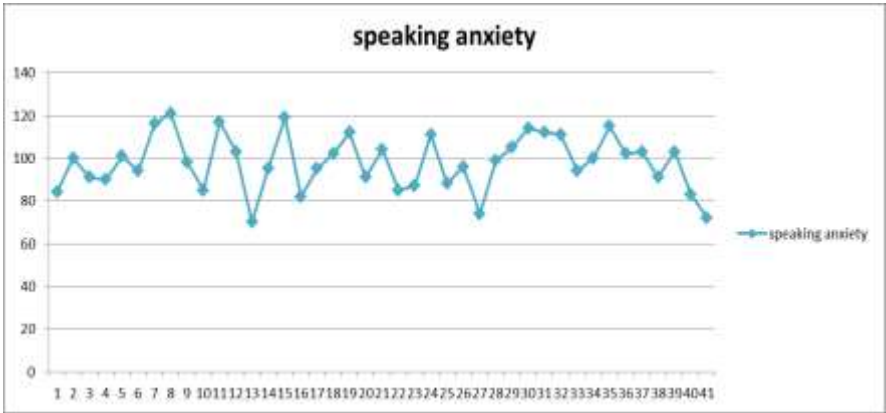
The Daly-Miller Test contains 26 items and it has its own interpretation. Each item is worth 5 points to produce a range of score from 26 to 130. The items fall into two groups: items of positive statement values and items of negative statement values. It applied the formula: writing apprehension = $78 + \text{PSV} - \text{NSV}$. Items: 2, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24 and 25 test an individual's evaluation apprehension. Items: 1, 3, 7, 10, 15, 21 and 26 test an individual's stress apprehension. Items: 6, 8 and 17 test an individual's product apprehension. Scoring from 60 to 96 shows normal feeling in the writing class. However, the closer an individual is approaching 60 or 96, this individual shares the characteristics of the next range. For instance, an individual scoring 60, close to 59 may not like the writing class and they may not want to take part in class discussion and even want to drop out of class. A range from 97 to 130 illustrates low level of writing apprehension and it is interpreted to be indifferent with writing tasks. The 26-59 range demonstrates high level of writing apprehension and that this individual needs to be treated with care.

Findings and discussion

The findings of the current study are so exciting since there is not much difference between the levels of anxiety in the speaking and writing classes. The participants are the second – year English majors who are more or less used to the learning environment at the school.

Also, it may be that many teachers of the School of Foreign Languages, as observed by the researcher in the faculty and in some of the classroom teaching observation hours, have a cheerful personality which helps make their classes cozy and helpful. This information reflects the findings of Han & Hiver (2018) that the participants prefer to be in a non-threatening atmosphere and a collaborative learning environment. The charts below illustrate the levels of anxiety in both classes.

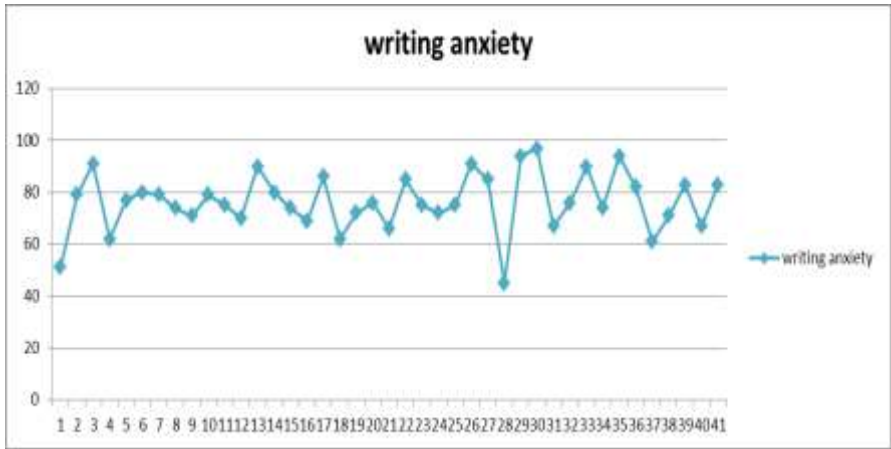
Chart 1: Level of speaking anxiety



As can be seen in chart 1 illustrating students' level of anxiety in speaking classes, a majority of students (37 students) scored between the range of 76 and 119, which means these students showed medium anxiety. However, when looking closer at the scores on the chart, five students scored close to the extreme maximum point of 119; it means they tended to be nervous. Moreover, five students scored close to 76 – the extreme minimum point; it means they were probably not nervous at all in speaking classes although they fell into this medium range. The finding also disclosed three students who fell into the range between 33 and 75, scoring 70, 72, 74 orderly, presenting a low level of anxiety. However, the scores are not so far from 76; that means these students shared the characteristics between low level of anxiety and an indifferent attitude in their speaking classes. They can also be insufficiently motivated in their speaking classes. Only one student scoring 121 reflected a high intensity anxiety and needed to be treated. This result is different from those of previous findings in that 37 out of

41 participants fell into the medium range of anxiety and only one participant stood out to have high level of anxiety while the participants in the previous findings revealed their anxiety in speaking classes. Nonetheless, this result aligned with that of Akkakoson (2016) when the participants showed moderate anxiety in speaking classes.

Chart 2: Level of writing anxiety



As illustrated in chart 2 presenting level of anxiety in writing classes, most students (38 students) showed moderate nervousness. Their scores fell into the range from 60 to 96. Students who fell in this range revealed normal feeling in their writing classes. However, when looking closer, two students' scores almost touched 96, meaning that they did not care much about their writing tasks and assignments in class or they were not motivated adequately to take a writing class. Furthermore, three students' scores were so close to the extreme minimum point of 60, meaning that they apprehended writing classes. The finding also revealed one low level of anxiety as the score was just right at 97, the minimum extreme point of the low anxiety range. This can be interpreted that this student usually did not worry much about writing assignments, or pay attention to due dates of homework and evaluation. This can also suggest that he or she may not be interested in writing. What is more, two students scored 45 and 51 in order, meaning that they experienced high level of anxiety while being in their writing classes. These two students were anxious about writing and fearful of evaluation and therefore needed to be treated. This

result is not similar to those of the mentioned previous findings of students' anxiety in writing classrooms. Overall, more participants chose the medium anxiety range for both speaking and writing anxiety scales. These students are just around 20 years old and they may not reflect what Brown (2007) called 'affective factors', which tend to have more effect on adults than children. In the study of Gaibani & Elmenfi (2016), when engaging in public speaking, younger ages (below 25) were more anxious than older ages (25-34). Conversely, the present study has proved contradiction. This result leads us to believe that a supportive and less competitive class can help reduce stress in studying and practicing a language. This can also lead the researcher to believe that possibly in many rural schools, teachers tend to be friendlier and more tolerant and may be less demanding on their students. They may just stick with their lesson plans. Therefore, these characteristics can create a better teaching and learning environment.

Implications and limitations

The result is interesting because the participants in either the speaking classes or the writing classes show low anxiety in this current study. The result is not quite similar to Gkonou (2011), who found a strong speaking anxiety element as opposed to writing apprehension and what Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert (1999) said anxiety was found to be the highest in speaking element. However, this study suggests that when teaching speaking, teachers may not want to worry so much about their students' anxiety, but rather possibly about other aspects such as the teaching and learning environment. Further, it can imply that factors causing anxiety can be students' low linguistic ability as many items in the questionnaires are related to linguistic ability. For example, question 15 in the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale "I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting" is one of those. This factor was found in EL-Sakka (2016), Gkonou (2011) and Rezaeia & Jafari (2014). Some suggestions are given based on the findings. First, teachers have to create a supportive classroom atmosphere in which the teacher plays a role of supporter who will contribute to lessening the anxiety in class and therefore encouraging many more shy students to participate in classroom discussions and taking risks and this was mentioned in the study of Han & Hiver (2018). Second, the great number of the students of both speaking and

writing classes showed moderate anxiety indicating that most their performances were not influenced by emotional aspects. Therefore, if their performances were not satisfied, the teacher could think of their linguistic barrier. Third, a questionnaire on linguistic areas, such as grammatical structures, pronunciation, cohesion and coherent devices, etc. should be developed based on specific language skills and from there the teacher can learn more about his or her students' linguistic ability in addition to classroom observation. This study cannot avoid limitations. Both the quantitative and qualitative data should be used concurrently to treat this group of the participants; we can do that by asking them to perform the same familiar tasks in front of class and at home to have a comparison and see task-performing stress. Akkakoson (2016) had applied this method. Next, due to time limitation, the researcher did not go in depth to see the levels of anxiety in each category for both writing and speaking classes. If this had been done, more transparent information would have been better recorded to see more specific levels of anxiety of each individual in each category. Finally, a research on learning and teaching environments should be conducted in some rural and urban schools to see levels of friendliness and supportiveness of both teachers and peers in class.

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to find levels of anxiety of English majors in their speaking and writing classes. From there, instructors of speaking and writing classes have more ideas on how to make their classes the most interesting and effective. Most students in this study experienced their moderate anxiety in both speaking and writing classes. This result can somehow reflect the friendly and supportive atmosphere in speaking and writing classrooms in the School of Foreign Languages and instructors can later base their judgment more on linguistic than psychological criteria when assessing their students' writing and speaking performances. Furthermore, more research on linguistic aspects should be investigated to pick up dominant specific linguistic factors which are likely to cause difficulties in their speaking and writing performances. If much more work can be done in striving to find solutions to better English majors' writing and speaking, many more students will benefit from this and contribute to the society of better use of English.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Speaking anxiety scale

FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY

Please put a check (√) in the column (1-5) you think suits you the most.

1: strongly agree; 2: agree; 3: neither agree nor disagree; 4: disagree; 5: strongly disagree

Your responses will be used for the purpose of the study only and will be kept confidential.

| Statements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class. | | | | | |
| 2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class. | | | | | |
| 3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class. | | | | | |
| 4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language. | | | | | |
| 5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes. | | | | | |
| 6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. | | | | | |
| 7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am. | | | | | |
| 8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class. | | | | | |
| 9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class. | | | | | |
| 10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class. | | | | | |
| 11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes. | | | | | |
| 12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know. | | | | | |
| 13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class. | | | | | |
| 14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers. | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting. | | | | | |
| 16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it. | | | | | |
| 17. I often feel like not going to my language class. | | | | | |
| 18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class. | | | | | |
| 19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. | | | | | |
| 20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class. | | | | | |
| 21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get. | | | | | |
| 22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class. | | | | | |
| 23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do. | | | | | |
| 24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students. | | | | | |
| 25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind. | | | | | |
| 26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes. | | | | | |
| 27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class. | | | | | |
| 28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed. | | | | | |
| 29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says. | | | | | |
| 30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language. | | | | | |
| 31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language. | | | | | |
| 32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language. | | | | | |
| 33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance. | | | | | |

Appendix 2: Writing anxiety scale

The Daly-Miller Test

Please put a check (√) in the column (1-5) you think suits you the most.

1: strongly agree; 2: agree; 3:; 4: disagree; 5: strongly disagree

Your responses will be used for the purpose of the study only and will be kept confidential.

| Statements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) I avoid writing. (+) | | | | | |
| (2) I have no fear of my writing's being evaluated. (-) | | | | | |
| (3) I look forward to writing down my ideas. (-) | | | | | |
| (4) I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated. (+) | | | | | |
| (5) Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.(+) | | | | | |
| (6) Handing in a composition makes me feel good. (-) | | | | | |
| (7) My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on my composition. (+) | | | | | |
| (8) Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time. (+) | | | | | |
| (9) I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication. (-) | | | | | |
| (10) I like to write down my ideas. (-) | | | | | |
| (11) I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas clearly in writing. (-) | | | | | |
| (12) I like to have my friends read what I have written. (-) | | | | | |
| (13) I'm nervous about writing. (+) | | | | | |
| (14) People seem to enjoy what I write. (-) | | | | | |
| (15) I enjoy writing. (-) | | | | | |
| (16) I never seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly. (+) | | | | | |
| (17) Writing is a lot of fun.(-) | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| (18) I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them. (+) | | | | | |
| (19) I like seeing my thoughts on paper. (-) | | | | | |
| (20) Discussing my writing with others is enjoyable. (-) | | | | | |
| (21) I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course. (+) | | | | | |
| (22) When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly. (+) | | | | | |
| (23) It's easy for me to write good compositions. (-) | | | | | |
| (24) I don't think I write as well as most other people. (+) | | | | | |
| (25) I don't like my compositions to be evaluated. (+) | | | | | |
| (26) I'm not good at writing. (+) | | | | | |

Appendix 3:

CẤP ĐỘ ÁP LỰC TRONG LỚP HỌC NGOẠI NGỮ

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY SCALE)

Anh, Chị vui lòng đánh dấu tick (✓) vào một ô trống cho các câu 1-33.

1 Hoàn toàn đồng ý; 2 đồng ý; 3 không có ý kiến; 4 không đồng ý; 5 hoàn toàn không đồng ý

(Câu trả lời của Anh/Chị được bảo mật.)

| Statements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Tôi chưa bao giờ thấy tự tin khi tôi nói tiếng Anh trong lớp học. | | | | | |
| 2. Tôi không cần phải lo lắng các lỗi sai khi nói tiếng Anh. | | | | | |
| 3. Tôi sợ khi tôi biết giáo viên sắp gọi tôi lên để nói tiếng Anh. | | | | | |
| 4. Tôi rất sợ khi tôi không hiểu những gì giáo viên tiếng Anh nói trong lớp học. | | | | | |
| 5. Tôi không ngại học thêm các lớp nói tiếng Anh. | | | | | |
| 6. Trong lớp học tiếng Anh, tôi không có gì phải làm, phải học cả. | | | | | |
| 7. Tôi lúc nào cũng nghĩ rằng người khác có khiếu học ngoại ngữ hơn tôi. | | | | | |
| 8. Tôi thường thấy các bài kiểm tra, bài thi tiếng Anh rất dễ. | | | | | |
| 9. Tôi hồi hộp khi nói tiếng Anh không có thời gian chuẩn bị trước trong lớp. | | | | | |
| 10. Tôi lo lắng về việc sẽ thi rớt tiếng Anh. | | | | | |
| 11. Tôi không hiểu tại sao một số người bị ám ảnh với lớp học tiếng Anh. | | | | | |
| 12. Trong lớp học tiếng Anh, tôi rung đến nỗi quên hết cả bài vở. | | | | | |
| 13. Tôi ngại xung phong trong lớp học tiếng Anh. | | | | | |
| 14. Tôi không hồi hộp khi nói tiếng Anh với người bản xứ. | | | | | |
| 15. Trong lớp học tiếng Anh, tôi bực lên khi tôi không hiểu những gì giáo viên đã sửa. | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 16. Trong lớp học tiếng Anh, dù tôi có chuẩn bị bài, tôi vẫn thấy lo. | | | | | |
| 17. Trong lớp học tiếng Anh, tôi thường tưởng chừng tôi đang ở nơi nào khác. | | | | | |
| 18. Tôi rất tự tin nói tiếng Anh trong lớp. | | | | | |
| 19. Trong lớp học tiếng Anh, tôi lo về việc giáo viên sẽ sửa bất cứ lỗi sai nào của tôi.. | | | | | |
| 20. Trong lớp học tiếng Anh, mỗi khi tôi bị gọi lên để phát biểu, tim tôi đập phình phật. | | | | | |
| 21. Càng chuẩn bị bài thi tiếng Anh, tôi càng thấy lúng túng. | | | | | |
| 22. Tôi không thấy áp lực để chuẩn bị tốt cho lớp học tiếng Anh. | | | | | |
| 23. Tôi lúc nào cũng cảm thấy những học viên khác nói tiếng Anh giỏi hơn tôi. | | | | | |
| 24. Tôi cảm thấy ngại khi nói tiếng Anh trước các học viên khác. | | | | | |
| 25. Trong lớp học tiếng Anh, mỗi khi lớp diễn ra nhanh chóng, tôi sợ theo không kịp. | | | | | |
| 26. Tôi cảm thấy căng thẳng, hồi hộp trong lớp học tiếng Anh hơn trong các lớp học khác. | | | | | |
| 27. Tôi thấy hồi hộp và lúng túng khi tôi giao tiếp tiếng Anh trong lớp học. | | | | | |
| 28. Trên đường đến lớp học tiếng Anh, tôi thấy tự tin và thoải mái. | | | | | |
| 29. Trong lớp học tiếng Anh, tôi càng lo lắng khi tôi hoàn toàn không hiểu giáo viên đang nói gì | | | | | |
| 30. Tôi cảm thấy bản thân phải học quá nhiều quy tắc để có thể nói được tiếng Anh. | | | | | |
| 31. Tôi sợ những học viên khác sẽ cười tôi khi tôi nói tiếng Anh. | | | | | |
| 32. Tôi có thể cảm thấy thoải mái hơn khi học tiếng Anh với người bản xứ. | | | | | |
| 33. Tôi hồi hộp khi giáo viên hỏi những câu hỏi mà tôi không chuẩn bị câu trả lời trước. | | | | | |

Appendix 4:

CẤP ĐỘ HỒI HỢP TRONG LỚP HỌC VIẾT

The Daly-Miller Test

Anh, Chị vui lòng đánh dấu tick (✓) vào một ô trống cho các câu 1-26.

1 Hoàn toàn đồng ý; 2 đồng ý; 3 không có ý kiến; 4 không đồng ý; 5 hoàn toàn không đồng ý

(Câu trả lời của Anh/Chị được bảo mật.)

| Statements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Tôi không muốn viết. (+) | | | | | |
| (2) Tôi không có việc gì phải lo khi bài viết của mình được chấm điểm. (-) | | | | | |
| (3) Tôi thích viết ra ý tưởng trước khi bắt đầu viết bài. (-) | | | | | |
| (4) Khi tôi biết bài viết nộp để lấy điểm, tôi bắt đầu lo. (+) | | | | | |
| (5) Tôi rất sợ khi tham gia lớp học viết. (+) | | | | | |
| (6) Tôi rất vui khi nộp bài viết cho Thầy/Cô. (-) | | | | | |
| (7) Khi bắt đầu đặt bút viết, tôi dường như không có ý gì để viết cả. (+) | | | | | |
| (8) Tôi ý trước khi viết chỉ tốn thêm thời gian. (+) | | | | | |
| (9) Tôi rất thích gửi bài viết qua các tạp chí để được nhận xét và xuất bản. (-) | | | | | |
| (10) Tôi thích viết ra ý trước khi viết. (-) | | | | | |
| (11) Tôi rất tự tin về khả năng diễn đạt ý rõ ràng trong bài viết. (-) | | | | | |
| (12) Tôi thích đưa bài tôi viết cho bạn bè đọc. (-) | | | | | |
| (13) Tôi lo lắng về môn viết. (+) | | | | | |
| (14) Dường như mọi người thích đọc bài tôi viết. (-) | | | | | |
| (15) Tôi thích viết. (-) | | | | | |
| (16) Dường như tôi chưa bao giờ diễn đạt ý rõ ràng trong bài viết. (+) | | | | | |
| (17) Tôi thấy có niềm vui khi tôi viết. (-) | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| (18) Tôi đã biết tôi sẽ viết rất tệ trước khi tham gia lớp học viết. (+) | | | | | |
| (19) Tôi thích diễn đạt ý mình qua bài viết. (-) | | | | | |
| (20) Tôi thích bàn luận về bài viết của tôi với người khác. (-) | | | | | |
| (21) Tôi gặp khó khăn khi sắp xếp ý trong bài viết. (+) | | | | | |
| (22) Khi nộp bài viết, tôi biết chắc tôi sẽ không đạt được điểm cao. (+) | | | | | |
| (23) Tôi thường có những bài viết hay. (-) | | | | | |
| (24) Tôi không nghĩ bài viết của tôi hay như những bài khác. (+) | | | | | |
| (25) Tôi không thích nộp bài viết để thầy, cô chấm điểm. (+) | | | | | |
| (26) Tôi yếu môn viết. (+) | | | | | |

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TECHNICAL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING ENGLISH: THE CASE OF THU DUC COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, HO CHI MINH CITY

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ABSTRACT

Motivation is a key factor to the success in learning a second language. This paper reports on an investigation into motivation for learning English among technical students at Thu Duc College of Technology (TDC) and examined if there was any gender difference in their motivation. The participants included a total of 355 students of different year groups undertaking different majors at TDC. The students were invited to complete a questionnaire survey and participate in focus group interviews. The findings show that the students had both instrumental and integrative motivation towards learning English and their instrumental motivation was stronger than integrative one. There was no significant gender difference in students' motivation for learning English. Based on the findings, implications are made to improve the quality of English training at the college.

Keywords: *motivation, gender difference, instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, EFL education.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, since English has become the most dominant international language due to globalization and internationalization, the demand for learning English in non- dominant English speaking countries has been increasing rapidly all over the world. Research has looked into factors

that enhance or hinder the success of second language (L2) learning including age, gender, aptitude, motivation, learning styles, learning strategies and personal traits (e.g. Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2005; Akram & Ghani, 2009; Xiong, 2010). Among them, motivation is considered as an important factor that influences the success of L2 learning. Several studies show that motivation plays an important role in learning a second/foreign language and students are not able to attain the highest desirable outcomes in learning English without motivation. Moreover, successful students tend to have a high level of motivation and positive attitudes while less successful students have a low level of motivation and negative attitudes in L2 learning (Gardner, 1985). Understanding students' motivation for learning L2 enables course instructors to design effective lessons to accommodate students' diverse needs and administrators to foster encouraging academic environment for language learning (Prapphal, 2003).

The relationship between motivation and gender in L2 learning has been investigated in several studies. Previous research shows that there is an influence of learners' gender on L2 motivation. However, learning motivation is also largely influenced by social, personal and educational dimensions. Most research in EFL contexts tends focus on the learning motivation of English majors whereas the learning motivation of non-English majors seems to be neglected. The current study was conducted to examine students' types of motivation and gender difference (if any) in learning English among technical students at a college in Ho Chi Minh city.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of motivation

Gardner (1985) defines motivation for learning a language as "the combination of effort, desire to achieve the goal of learning the language, and favorable attitudes toward learning the language" (p. 10). Richards and Schmidt (2010) considered motivation as "a combination of the learner's attitudes, desires, and willingness to expend effort in order to learn the second language" (p. 377). The two definitions indicate that learners' effort, desire and attitudes are essential and indispensable in learning a foreign language. In other words, these factors are considered as the "internal drive" that pushes

learners to put their endeavors and time towards learning a foreign language (Harmer, 1991, p.3). Gardner, Richards and Schmidt's perspectives of motivation do not examine external factors which determine or affect L2 learners' motivation in a specific cultural and historical context (Ngo, 2015). For instance, a student may make effort to study English to please his/her parents and teachers, or to obtain high marks or good job after graduation, but he or she does not truly have a desire or passion for the English language (Phan, 2011). Ellis (1994) puts forward four assumptions in developing L2 learners' motivation. First, motivation comes from an interest in the learning task the student is requested to perform. Second, successful students will keep in track but unsuccessful students will lose confidence or enthusiasm. Third, students bring to the learning situation a certain quantity of motivation as a given. Finally, external factors will influence students' motivation to obtain their goals. According to Ellis (1994), motivation is made of four components including effort, desire, attitudes, and effect. In this regard, L2 learners' motivation is influenced by both internal and external factors emerging in the process of learning a second or foreign language.

Types of motivation

There are various ways of categorizing language learning motivation. Gardner and Lambert (1972) define two types of motivation: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation which are described in detail as follows.

Instrumental motivation

Instrumental motivation refers to learning a foreign language to gain utilitarian purposes such as getting a good job with good salary or improving social status. Additionally, instrumentally motivated learners tend to learn a foreign language for personal development or personal fulfillment such as being multilingual or knowledgeable, furthering higher studies. Moreover, instrumentally oriented learners may learn a language to meet the requirements of schools such as passing exams, reading technical materials, or obtaining a degree. For these learners, learning a foreign language is considered as their obligation. In other words, they learn a second language in response to external pressure. Furthermore, instrumentally motivated learners consider learning the

target language as a means for travelling overseas.

Integrative motivation

Integrative motivation occurs when a student learns a language because of interest in the language itself. The student may have a desire to communicate with the native speakers of that language through engaging in their community (interpersonal situations) and wishes to understand the culture of that language. In other words, integrative motivated learners express their willingness and desire to socialize or integrate into the target language community, to merge in the target language culture and to become part of that society.

Generally speaking, learners with instrumental motivation are motivated to learn a second language for external motives, practical goals and personal benefits whereas integrative motivation refers to learners' inner passion to learn the target language.

Previous studies on learners' motivation towards learning a second and foreign language

Previous research suggests that students are highly motivated instrumentally and integrally to learn English language, and instrumental motivation tends to dominate integrative motivation (Wimolmas, 2013; Al-Quyadi, 2000). Vijchulata and Lee (1985) examined students' motivation towards learning English at the University Putra, Malaysia. Data were collected by means of questionnaires distributed among a thousand students. The results show that the students had high levels of instrumental and integrative motivation in learning English. Similarly, Al-Quyadi (2000) found Arabic EFL students had a high level of both instrumental and integrative motivation for learning English as a foreign language.

Instrumental motivation tends to exert a great impact on language learning. Vaezi (2008) examined Iranian undergraduate students' integrative and instrumental motivation for learning English as a foreign language. In the study, 79 non-English majors completed the questionnaire survey. The results show that Iranian students' instrumental motivation was stronger than their integrative motivation. Similarly, Redfield, Figoni and Levin (2009) conducted a study on 446 technical students in Japan. The results show that

Japanese students' instrumental motivation far outweighed their integrative motivation for learning English. The Japanese students in the study wanted to learn English mainly for academic and professional purposes.

Integrative motivation was considered as equally important as instrumental one in determining the success of second language learning. According to Gardner (1985), integrative motivation involves attitudes and predetermined goals which are very vital in the process of L2 learning. Learners with higher level of integrative motivation showed better ability. They also tend to put more effort to achieve greater success in learning the second or foreign language (Hernandez & Wang, 2008).

In Vietnamese EFL contexts, limited research on motivation for learning English was reported. Most previous research examined the learning motivation of university English majors whereas non-English majors' motivation for learning English received less attention. Few studies investigated motivation for learning English among technical students. Phan (2011) investigated university technical majors' motivation towards learning English and found that the students had stronger instrumental motivation than integrative motivation because the student in this study had limited contact with English native speakers and their cultures.

However, the learning motivation of tourism and English majors in Doan's (2011) and Vu and Lucas' study (2015) possessed both instrumental and integrative motivation. The students in these studies were more instrumentally motivated to learn English for practical reasons such as getting high-paying jobs. Dutta and Nguyen (2016) explored attitudes towards learning English among Vietnamese students before undertaking their university study programs in India and Taiwan. The students reported to learn English for practical reasons such as seeking good jobs, receiving a higher social status in society or having better lives. Also, they expressed their desire to integrate into the English speaking community where they resided.

Research questions

In order to add more insights into technical students' motivation for

learning English in Vietnamese context, the study sought to answer the following two research questions:

- 1. What types of motivation for learning English do the technical students possess?*
- 2. Is there any gender difference in motivation for learning English among these students?*

THE STUDY

Research setting

The study was conducted at Thu Duc College of Technology (TDC) in Ho Chi Minh City. The college has a total of about 300 lecturers and administrative staff. The college provides a variety of training programs at undergraduate level with a total of over 4,000 students enrolled in different disciplines including Information Technology, Mechanical Engineering, Automotive Engineering, Graphic design, Communications and Computer networks.

English is a compulsory subject for students undertaking different majors at TDC. The students are required to complete two General English courses as part of their study programs including English 1B, English 2B and an English for specific purposes course. Each course lasts for 12 weeks.

Participants

Participants in the study were 355 technical students learning English as a foreign language at TDC. Male students accounted for 65.6% (n=233) and female students made of 34.4% (n=122) of the total sample. The students were ranging from the 1st year to the 3rd year of their study programs and were enrolled in different majors. At the time of the study, the majority of the students had an average of 10 year experience of learning English (90.4%). The students had similar social and educational backgrounds and could be considered as representative of the entire student population in the college.

Research methods

The study employed mixed methods including quantitative and

qualitative components to collect data to answer the research questions in the forms of quantitative survey and qualitative interviews.

Survey questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from Wimolmas' (2013) study which examined motivation of engineer undergraduates for learning English language at a university in Thailand. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections:

Section 1: This section elicits demographic information of the students including gender, major, year of study and experience of learning English.

Section 2: This section investigates types of motivation students have in learning English. There are 20 question items about instrumental motivation (items 1-10) and integrative motivation (items 11-20). The questions use a 5-point Likert scale to obtain students' responses.

The questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese to ensure clarity and comprehension of the contents among the students who completed the survey.

Interviews

In order to add more insight into the issues under investigation, focus groups interviews were conducted with 15 students of different majors in the college. The interviews used open-ended questions to examine additional reasons for learning English among the technical majors.

Data analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS software. To identify types of motivation the participants have in learning English, the study uses a five-point Likert scale recommended by Al-Khasawneh and Al-Omari (2015) to rate the level of motivation based on the following criteria:

Table 1: Interpretation of mean scores of motivation level

| Scale | Mean range | Motivational level | Score range |
|-------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 5 | Strongly agree | Very high | 4.50 - 5.00 |
| 4 | Agree | High | 3.50 - 4.49 |
| 3 | Neutral | Average | 2.50 - 3.49 |
| 2 | Disagree | Low | 1.50 - 2.49 |
| 1 | Strongly disagree | Very low | 1.00 - 1.49 |

Source: Al-Khasawneh and Al-Omari (2015)

To investigate the possible gender difference in students' motivation, Compare Means analyses including independent-samples *t*-tests, paired-samples *t*-tests were performed at a significant level of .05. Data from interviews were analyzed by means of content analysis in which students' answers were studied in details in order to find the common themes in the data.

FINDINGS

Findings from the questionnaire survey

Types of motivation for learning English

There were 20 question items eliciting students' instrumental motivation toward learning English. Each item was measured using a 5 point Likert scale to indicate students' degree of agreement with the statement. Descriptive analysis was used to calculate the mean scores of types of motivation. Table 2 shows the mean scores for instrumental and integrative motivation of the students. Both the overall mean score of instrumental motivation ($M= 4.25$) and integrative motivation ($M= 3.97$) were within the range 3.50- 4.49. This indicates that the students were highly instrumental and integrative motivated towards learning English. In addition, their instrumental motivation was reported as higher than their integrative motivation.

A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to see if there was significance difference in instrumental and integrative motivation among the students. The results show that the difference was significant ($p= 0.00$).

Table 2: Students’ instrumental motivation versus integrative motivation

| Types of motivation | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>sig. (2-tailed)</i> |
|---------------------|----------|----------|-----------|------------------------|
| Instrumental | 355 | 4.25 | 0.24 | 0.0 |
| Integrative | 355 | 3.97 | 0.25 | |

Students’ instrumental motivation for learning English

There were 10 question items eliciting students’ instrumental motivation for learning English which were categorized into four groups including academic, utilitarian, personal development and traveling overseas purposes. The results show that the majority of students learned English for utilitarian purposes (*M*= 4.47), followed by for personal development (*M* = 4.40), academic reasons (*M*= 4.16), and traveling overseas purposes (*M*=3.98) respectively.

Table 3: Students’ instrumental motivation for learning English

| Instrumental motivation | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | Motivational level |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|--------------------|
| Utilitarian purposes | 355 | 4.47 | 0.293 | High |
| Personal development | 355 | 4.40 | 0.378 | High |
| Academic reasons | 355 | 4.16 | 0.393 | High |
| Traveling overseas | 355 | 3.98 | 0.606 | High |

Students’ integrative motivation for learning English

There were 10 question items divided into three groups of integrative motivation including culture, interpersonal communication, and interest in the language itself. The results show that the students were strongly interested in English as a language (*M*= 4.23). In addition, learning English to communicate in interpersonal situations was also favored by the participants (*M*= 3.99). Students were less likely attracted by the culture of the target language when they learn a foreign language (*M*= 3.69) although several students expressed a desire to read books, watch movies or listen to pop music in English (Table 4).

Table 4: Students' integrative motivation for learning English

| Integrative motivation | N | Mean | SD | Motivation level |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Interest in the language | 355 | 4.23 | 0.35 | high |
| Interpersonal situations | 355 | 3.99 | 0.37 | high |
| Culture | 355 | 3.69 | 0.34 | high |

Motivation for learning English by gender

In terms of gender, the results showed that female students had stronger motivation for learning English ($M = 4.14$) than male students ($M = 4.10$). Nevertheless, there was no significant difference between male and female students in their motivation towards learning English ($p = 0.06 > 0.05$).

Table 5: Motivation for learning English by gender

| | | N | M | SD | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--|--------|----------|----------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Motivation <i>(Independent samples t-test)</i> | Male | 233 | 4.10 | 0.18 | 0.06 |
| | Female | 122 | 4.14 | 0.19 | |
| Motivation <i>(Paired samples t-test)</i> | Male | 233 | 4.24 | 0.24 | 0.000 |
| | Female | 233 | 3.95 | 0.23 | |

Findings from interviews

The interviewees were asked about their motivation and reasons for learning English. The results show that learning English for utilitarian purposes were most frequently reported among the students (20.69%). Most students agreed that English is nowadays an international language. A high level of English proficiency would open more job opportunities for them after graduation. In addition, the students indicated that mastering English would help them to widen their social relationships and promote career development in the workplace. One student expressed opinions in this regard:

I think nowadays English is used universally and it's considered as a global language, many interesting documents or books related to my majors are also written in English. Moreover, the majority of candidates with good abilities of English are recruited by most of companies in Vietnam at the present time.

[.....] being good at English will support me in finding and understanding documents related to my major easily and quickly because many interesting materials and books are written in English, it opens more job opportunities for me after graduation as well as get more job promotions at the workplace [.....]

I think knowing English will help me expand my social relationships and support me in my work [...]

Reasons related to *personal development* were reported. The students expected to become multilingual and to enrich their knowledge of the world. A student expressed opinions in this regard:

[...] learning English helps me update information to improve my knowledge.

Having interest and passion for the English language motivated a third of the students to learn English. The students were attracted by the beauty of the English language itself. For example, a student was attracted by the sound of English and found it fun and enjoyable to learn English. These perspectives are reflected in the following statements:

I really like English, it's interesting. My cousin is working for a foreign company and he speaks English so well. When I hear him speaking English on the phone with his colleges or customers, I really like it [...].

I think English is interesting and I am really keen on listening to Michelle Obama speaking English, I usually learn English through watching videos [...].

Some students claimed to learn English in response to external pressure such as to meet requirements for college graduation or to prepare for assignments and exams. One of the students stated:

I just want to pass all of English courses at school, get a TOEIC certificate with a minimum score of 450 [...]

Some students indicated that opportunities to travel overseas motivated them to learn English:

[...] I want to travel abroad without an interpreter.

Other students expressed the need to communicate with native speakers of English:

[...], I want to be good at English to talk to foreigners, for instance, giving directions to foreign tourists [...]

A few students showed an interest in English cultures:

[...] I really want to learn more about the English language, the country and the people...

The findings from interviews were consistent with the results of the survey. Non-English majors possessed both instrumental and integrative motivation towards learning English although instrumental motivation was more dominant. Integrative motivation for learning English was occasionally reported among the interviewees. The summary of interviews' finding is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of students' reports on motivation for learning English

| | Reasons | frequency | % |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Instrumental motivation | <i>Obligation</i> | 9 | 15.52% |
| | <i>Utilitarian motives</i> | 12 | 20.69% |
| | <i>Personal development</i> | 11 | 18.97% |
| | <i>Traveling overseas</i> | 8 | 13.79% |
| Integrative motivation | <i>Culture</i> | 2 | 3.45% |
| | <i>Interpersonal motives</i> | 6 | 10.34% |
| | <i>Language itself</i> | 10 | 17.24% |

DISCUSSIONS

Research question 1: What types of motivation for learning English do the technical students possess?

Both quantitative and qualitative results show that the students had both instrumental and integrative motivation for learning English. Especially, the students tend to have stronger instrumental motivation compared with integrative motivation. The results from the current study are consistent with the findings from previous research by Qashoa (2006), Vaezi (2009), Redfield, Figoni and Levin (2009), Kyriacou and Zhu (2008), Wimolmas (2013), Vu and Lucas (2015). Besides, the results confirmed Brown's (2000) argument that both integrative and instrumental motivations in EFL students are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In other words, students may possess both types of motivational orientations in language learning and the combination of both types of motivation increases their proficiency in English. Moreover, the results of this study further confirm Brown's claim that students in EFL contexts have no or little chance to use the target language or no opportunity to communicate with people from English speaking countries and thus are more instrumental motivated to learn English.

The findings show that students' instrumental motivation was stronger than integrative motivation among the students. English is a compulsory subject in Vietnamese education system from primary to university level. Vietnamese students learn English for assignments and exams and for meeting graduation requirements. In addition, since Vietnam opens its door to foreign investors, more multinational enterprises have been doing businesses in Vietnam. This increases demands for skilled labor forces with high level of English proficiency. Vietnamese students acknowledge the need to learn English to widen their career prospects. Last but not least, Vietnamese students have few opportunities to use English in the wider society and few opportunities to interact with native speakers of English nor have frequent contact with English cultural products (Phan, 2011). This contributes to having strong instrumental motivation towards learning English among the students.

Research question 2: Is there any gender difference in motivation for learning English among the students?

The result regarding the gender difference in their motivation for learning English showed that there was no statistically significant difference between male and female students in their motivation. This result was in line with findings from previous studies (Abu-Rabia, 1997; Azarnoosh & Birjandi, 2012; Phan, 2011; Vu & Lucas, 2015). The findings further support Hyde's (2005) gender similarities hypothesis which claims that "males and females are alike almost, but not all, psychological variables". This contrasts with the stereotype beliefs that males and females are vastly different psychologically and girls are better at learning a language than boys whereas boys tend to study mathematics better than girls.

Moreover, the technical students at TDC must have been aware of the importance of English to their career. In addition, English is a compulsory subject for all students at TDC and both male and female students are equally motivated towards learning English. There may be a healthy competition in learning English between the male and female students in the study.

Implications

The findings further confirm that L2 motivation is sociocultural-dependent, by which different language learning contexts could exert an impact on students' language learning motivation. Non-English majors learn English differently and their motivation for learning English is influenced by different factors. Instrumental motivation exerts a great impact on students' English language learning. Understanding students' instrumental motivation could be of great value for the English faculty and English teachers in adjusting English syllabuses, teaching strategies, as well as language policies to accommodate students' learning needs and thus could promote students' motivation and achievement in language learning.

To foster students' motivation for learning English, the college could consider providing English courses with more credit hours and set higher assessment standard for English learning. Given the fact that students at TDC have to submit TOEIC or IELTS certificates as

requirements for graduation, English classes should be designed with orientation towards TOEIC or IELTS tests in order to help the students to become better prepared for these tests. In addition, the students should be encouraged to enroll in extra English courses in or outside TDC to improve their English proficiency for graduation and employment.

Besides, the English faculty as well as English teachers at TDC should take into account enhancing students' integrative motivation. The college could organize extra-curricular activities through English speaking contest, English speaking clubs, and English mini-talk-shows which involve foreign students and teachers. Such activities would create great opportunities for students to communicate in English so as to learn more about the people and the cultures of the target language.

In the classroom context, English teachers should vary teaching strategies to maintain and foster students' interest in learning English. If students have to complete English reading and grammar tasks all the time, they may feel bored with English lessons. Even when teachers usually give tasks which are simple and easy to students, they may not keen on doing such tasks and their level of motivation may decrease over time (Tollefson, 2000). Therefore, teachers must be flexible in employing various teaching strategies according to students' English proficiency levels.

In addition, teachers should employ technology and visual aids in presenting instructional materials and organizing activities. For example, PowerPoint presentations using audio, video, music and pictures may arouse students' curiosity and trigger their interest in learning English. Also, teachers can create blogs to enhance students' autonomy in learning English. Teachers must be flexible in choosing and designing teaching materials and selecting English textbooks, stories and reading or visual materials about English speaking countries. This could motivate and inspire students for learning English.

Conclusion

The findings of this study support the claim that motivation is a situated phenomenon by which different language learning contexts

exert different influences on students' motivation. Besides, it was found that gender did not play an important role in learning English. It is important for teachers to motivate students in the process of their English learning. It is expected that the results of the study could support the English faculty and teachers of English at TDC to have insights into the current practice of EFL at the college so as to modify the English curriculum and vary teaching strategies so as to accommodate students with different learning styles and needs.

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APPLIED LINGUISTICS

IRF PATTERNS REVISITED: AN ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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ABSTRACT

This study concerns the interaction between teachers and students, making it a classroom discourse study. The objective of this study is to find out how Initiation-Response-Feedback (henceforth called IRF) pattern is used and how IRF model by Sinclair and Coulthard may help teacher to deliver the lessons. The writer collected the data by recording the conversations between teachers and students and the results of which were analyzed in terms of the discursive patterns. An interview with a few teachers was conducted to substantiate the IFR patterns analysis. Based on the analysis, the writer found that most of the IRF patterns were used to elicit lessons or teaching materials, despite also finding some other non-IRF patterns, suggesting that they are still relevantly used to deliver teaching materials especially where early learners learning is concerned. The finding is vindicated by the interview responses that generally of agreement that such patterns are useable to assist teachers in delivering materials. This study also managed to disclose that the initiation is not only the domain of teachers, as students' initiation was also a noticeable phenomenon which may characterize an active-learners learning.

Keywords: *classroom interaction, discourse, IRF patterns, early learners*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching-learning is a two-way communication activity. The teaching and learning process is an integral activity involving students who are learning and teacher, a person who is teaching. This is a goal-oriented process which is didactically and methodically planned and implemented and the success of which is measured by the outcome of the activities.

In a classroom interaction both the teacher and students have to act and react in response to what is happening in the classroom. Responsive teachers are well aware about students' reaction to the teaching materials as can be noticeable through second by second progression of the instructional activities, even by the produced verbal or non-verbal language as the byproduct of the ongoing process of communication.

Interaction in class between teacher and students is manifested in the context of the teacher delivering the lesson and students reacting to the presented materials. Lesson delivery, mediated by the language use, is inextricable from communication between teachers and students. This is in accordance with the main function of language, namely as a communication tool. In this particular respect, language can be transactional and interactional. According to Brown and Yule (1985), language is used to express the contents of factual information or proposition through its transactional function, while its interactional function manifests through the disclosure of social and interpersonal relations between people involved in an encounter.

The process of communication or use of language in the interaction between teachers and students in the classroom may reveal various potentially interesting events worth investigating. Speech events that occur in the classroom achievable via the interaction between two parties in the classroom are observable in the language used in both interactional and transactional functions above. This is related to the use of teacher's language in delivering subject matter to students and the language used by the students in response to the teachers' interactional moves during an instructional process, although sometimes interaction among students can also be the object of classroom discourse investigation.

The success of English language learning in the classroom can also be seen through the interaction that happens during the class. The interaction between teachers and students using English is important because English is their instructional language they use. It can be analyzed using a variety of approaches, especially discourse, to see the effectiveness of the teaching method in the classroom. According to Johnstone (2008), Discourse Analysis provides immense contributions

to language acquisition that defines how speakers acquire the language. Jorgensen and Philips (2002) also stated that discourse is described as the language in use while discourse analysis (DA) is defined as the analysis of structures or meanings of the language used and produced by people.

The use of discourse in the classroom, called Classroom Discourse, can be a means by which students' comprehension during the lesson can be established. By then, teachers can improve their teaching process by examining the language used in the classroom and how students understand the concept of English through an exposure to different types of discourse (Jiang, 2012).

Among the most traditional classroom discourse moves to determine the extent the teachers are on their track in teaching and students comprehend the lesson is a type of classroom discourse that is generally referred to as a three-part sequence: teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation or feedback which is widely known as IRE or IRF. Lemke describes this format as 'triadic dialogue' (Wells, 1999), a model introduced and developed by Sinclair and Coulthard in 1975. This, however, recently has not been much researched, and therefore this is an attempt to revisit it.

Given the strategic importance of the patterns in the process of learning and considering that this area of investigation has not been given much attention by classroom discourse analysts, revisiting IRF patterns may open up an opportunity to provide valuable inputs to the quality of teaching as well know much teachers have been on the right tract in the teaching. Through a qualitative discourse analysis, this study attempts to explore the patterns of classroom interaction, Initiation-Response-Feedback, in English class at EduHouse Semarang; and second is to find out how IRF model by Sinclair and Coulthard applied in the classroom discourse activities may help the teacher to deliver the lesson.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The teaching-learning interaction in the classroom has special characteristics that distinguish it from social interaction in general. Below are the special characteristics of the teaching-learning

interaction that Sumardi (1980, pp. 16-17) outlines:

1. Having a clear goal to help children achieve a particular developmental stage by putting them in the center of attention.
2. There is a procedure, i.e. the way the interaction is planned and designed to achieve the stated goals.
3. Characterized by one specific material delivery (manifests in a topic or subject matter)
4. Characterized by student activity.
5. In the teaching- learning interaction, the teacher acts as a guide.
6. In teaching-learning interactions, discipline, defined as behaviour patterns that are arranged in such a way according to the provisions that must be consciously adhered to by all parties, both teachers and students, is needed.
7. There is a time limit for reaching the destination

The basic tenet of discourse is a unified whole language that is used to communicate both in writing and in verbal. So, an analysis of oral discourse, in this case, between teacher and students in the classroom can be categorized as a spoken discourse analysis. Discourse analysis can be defined as a method that examines the organization of language and the meaning of language above the level of a sentence or clause. That is why Stubbs (1983) studies larger language units such as conversations or written texts. Besides that, he too assesses the use of language in social contexts, including interactions between speakers of languages.

Yule (1996) argues that discourse analysis is an analysis of language use. The analysis cannot be limited to descriptions of language forms that are not bound by purpose or function of human language use in human's affairs. While linguists' interest is on determining the formal characteristics of a language, discourse analysts are obliged to investigate what the language is used for in the real world.

In carrying out the task, teachers are doing the teaching and doing an interaction process with students using language. Stubbs (1983)

presents the observations of teacher's talk as she/he converses with students in the class as follows. To attract students' attention teacher might say, "Don't do anything just yet, just listen!"; To control students' talk or responses such as to allocate time for students to talk, teacher might say, "Brenda you speak first or Any other opinion?"; To check understanding or if the delivery of the subject matter is well understood, teacher may ask, "Is it clear?" or "Please Steve, can you explain?"; To summarize or to recap the concept, teacher might say, "What I want to say is..." To conclude what I said..."; To define or to explain a particular idea, teacher may say, "Affixation is a process of adding a prefix or a suffix."; To comment or to correct, teacher may say, "Almost right, your answer can be improved, come on!"; To correct what is said by the students or find clarification, teacher may ask, "David, what does 'paramount' mean?"; To specify a topic, teacher might start by saying, "We will discuss this soon."

The above was to illustrate teachers' acts in the class. Students, on the other hand, will contribute to the classroom interaction, which in most cases, depends on the allocated time provided by teachers. Students' talk, most often if we don't want to say always, is to answer teacher's questions or to repeat what has been uttered by the teacher. The teacher starts a conversation or invokes the student's statement, if happens that students initiate, it may be because they might want to express their ideas, to start a new topic, or to ask a particular question. If that is the case, it can be said that, in the context of early learners, students' talks are predominantly an answer to teacher's initiation, especially where language teaching is concerned with language patterns, such as in the teaching aspects of pronunciation or grammatical rules and patterns.

Due to the reason that this study is focusing on how IRF is practiced in the investigated classroom discourse context, and the fact that classroom moves and acts are to be the highlight of the analysis, it is necessary to provide a brief illustration of what the classroom actions look like according to Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). They divide the classroom moves and acts into the following categories, complete with samples to serve as illustration. This is provided to clarify what is meant by moves and acts in this context of study. Below are the samples of classroom actions, as they originally record:

- a Markers: 'well', 'right', 'OK', 'now'
- b Starter: directing attention to a specific area
- c Elicitation: question demanding linguistic response
- d Check: 'Finished?', 'Ready?', 'Any problems? '
- e Directive: requesting a non-linguistic response
- f Informative: providing information
- g Prompt: 'Have a guess', 'Come on' quickly'
- h Clue: additional information to help student respond
- i Cue: 'Hands up', 'Don't call out'
- j Bid: 'Sir!', 'Miss!'
- k Nomination: names of pupils, 'Who hasn't answered yet?'
- l Acknowledge: 'Yes', 'Mmm', 'OK'
- m Reply: linguistic response to elicitation
- o Comment: additional information, expanding, exemplifying
- p Acceptance: 'Yes', 'No', 'Good', 'Fine'
- q Evaluation: 'Good', 'Interesting', 'Fine'
- r Meta-statement: helping pupils see the purpose and structure of the lesson
- s Conclusion: summarizing what the preceded
- t Repeat: 'Pardon', 'Again', 'What did you say?'
- u Aside: 'Where's the chalk?', 'It's freezing in here'

Sinclair and Coulthard Model

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) developed a model to describe the interaction between teacher-students in the classroom known as Initiation-Response-Feedback model. IRF model defines and shows the structures that appear in the classroom conversation between teacher

and students. The structure shows the portion of teacher's and students' talk during the lesson. This model is interestingly useful in learning process inside the classroom. It occurs during the teaching process of the classroom interaction. Walsh (2011, p. 18) points out that Sinclair and Coulthard's model gives a huge impact on the understanding of some ways in which the teachers and students communicate. He also adds that through IRF, teachers may evaluate the learners' utterance continually and give them some supporting feedback. Furthermore, through IRF sequence, teachers get better understanding whether the students comprehend the material given by the teachers. Beneficial feedback from the teacher helps the language teaching process run effectively by enlightening the students the importance of meaning of the text and some essential language elements (Jiang, 2012).

The Rank Scale

Sinclair and Coulthard's model was developed from the rank scale by Halliday (1985). The rank scale consists of four main parts. The smallest part is called act, followed by move, then exchange, transaction and lesson at the highest rank.

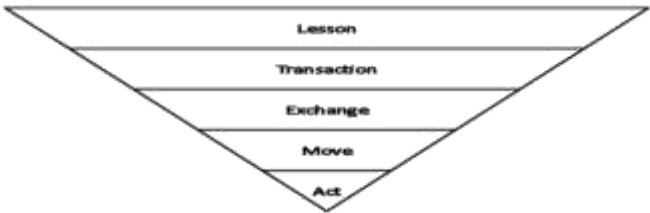


Figure 2. Diagram of Sinclair and Coulthard's model rank-level

(Adapted from Nicholson, 2014, p. 201)

As can be seen from the rank scale above, each rank relates to one another. Some acts, bond together to form moves, moves bond to form exchanges, and so on. For the purpose of this study, the writer only analyzed ranks of exchange, moves and acts in order to focus on the structure of Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF).

Exchanges and Moves

There are two types of exchanges, boundary exchange and teaching

exchange. Boundary exchange consists of two moves called framing and focusing moves. This exchange always starts by the initiation of the teachers. Framing moves are usually applied in the classroom to form the lesson. After that, these moves are followed by the focusing moves. Teaching exchange basically consists of Initiation (I) by the teacher, Response (R) by the student after the teacher initiates and then the student's response will be followed by the teacher's feedback. The feedback from the teacher may be the indicator of students' understanding in the classroom. There are three types of exchanges in the teaching exchange, they are informing, directing and eliciting.

Informing exchange

Informing exchange occurs when teachers gives explanation or information to the students. This exchange is usually conducted by the teacher that starts the teaching exchange. Responses from the students are optional; it means it is not compulsory for students to give response. The pattern that commonly occurs in this exchange is I(R). Commonly in the informing exchange, teachers do not expect any verbal or linguistics responses from the students. The feedback from teacher also is not expected to occur when the teacher informs something to the student.

- a. Directing exchange: Directing exchange always expects students to do something non-verbally such as writing, listening or any other non-verbal actions. This exchange requires non-verbal response from the students that come after direct command by the teacher. Feedback from the teacher, despite being optional, sometimes also occurs. The pattern of this exchange is labelled as IR(F).
- b. Eliciting exchange: Eliciting exchange is mainly used in the teaching exchange, as this exchange usually starts by the question of the teacher. The act which is mainly used in this exchange, an elicitation (e), is used to ask something related to the lesson or something else. This act is expected to provide linguistic answers from the students.

The focus of this current study is the IRF patterns that happen in the investigated classroom. The three moves above are intentionally provided because it is there where the IRF moves are situated.

Research Method

This chapter subsequently discusses (1) type of research, (2) research setting, (3) research data sources and data collection techniques, and (4) research data analysis techniques.

Type of Research

This is a classroom Discourse Analysis and due to its very nature this can be categorized as a qualitative research. Qualitative research according to Moleong (2010) is a research conducted on a natural setting or in the context of an entity inside which the researcher himself or with the help of others serves as the data collection agent. This research is qualitative because the data collected is mainly in the form of oral utterances that occur during teaching and learning interactions. The researcher also used the notes with detailed, complete and in-depth sentence descriptions that describe the actual situation to support the data analysis. This is in line with Lincoln and Guba (1985) that this is more sensitive to and can be adapted to assess the forms of influence and patterns of values that researchers may face.

Research Setting

This study took place in EduHouse School in Semarang city that provides services for students from the range of age of toddler to students of 12 years of age. It has approximately 120 students and the school lessons are presented bilingually in English and Indonesian. The research itself, however, only took one class of Kindergarten as the classroom discourse setting where a teacher was teaching 12 students.

Source of Data

The research subjects are teacher and students, but analysis is primarily based on the data generated from the interaction between the subjects. Prior to analysis, data were recorded and transcribed. This is in accordance with the purpose of the study, which is to describe and explain the structure of teacher and student oral discourse in the class at the time of the teaching and learning process in terms of IRF patterns.

The research subjects from which the data were collected were two Indonesian Language teacher and Kindergarten students attending an English Language class. To substantiate the discourse data, an interview with the teachers was conducted to find out their first-hand opinion about the advantages of using IRF patterns in teaching English for young learners.

Method of Data Analysis

This study took Sinclair and Coulthard 1975’s model as the analytical framework. First, the writer divided two exchanges: Boundary and teaching exchanges. By classifying these two exchanges, the writer was able to divide the moves as focusing, framing, informing, directing and eliciting. After that, the writer labelled each act of the speakers’ utterances to define the function of the speakers’ utterance. Data taken from the interview were transcribed and analyzed topically relevant to the focus of the investigation to substantiate the IRF data of the classroom interactions

Data Presentation and Analysis

The table below summarizes the overall data of the total number of exchanges and moves found in the classroom teaching.

Table 1: The Total Number of Exchanges and Moves

| Name of Exchange | Types of Moves/Exchange | Number |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Boundary Exchange | Framing moves | 15 moves |
| | Focusing moves | 13 moves |
| Teaching Exchange | Informing exchanges | 76 exchanges |
| | Directing exchanges | 32 exchanges |
| | Eliciting exchanges | 117 exchanges |
| Pupil Initiates | Informing exchanges | 11 exchanges |
| | Eliciting exchanges | 12 exchanges |

Based on the Table 1 above, the writer concluded that the teachers want the students to also join the class and actively communicate with them, as the most exchange occurred is eliciting exchanges used 117

times, followed by informing exchanges used 76 times. Kindergarten students usually do not start to elicit their teachers related to the lesson, although in this study the students are also can start the exchange by giving information or asking something, as shown by 12 occurrences of exchanges.

IRF

In this study, the writer only focuses on the IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) pattern only that appears in the teaching exchanges. After the writer analyzed the data, the writer not only found IRF pattern but also some other patterns.

Exchange 3 – Teaching Exchange (Directing)

T1 : Every-body listens first. (d) *Initiation
P1&P2 : NV (rea) *Response

From the exchange 3 above, we can see that T1 started the exchange by initiating her students. Those acts formed IR pattern, where there was no feedback (F) from the first speaker because T1 only asked them to do non-verbal action.

Exchange 49 – Teaching Exchange (Directing)

T1 : So, you write rib here. You write rib here.
[r] ^ with [ib] , rib.
Ya, P2. P2. (d) *Initiation
P1&P2 : NV (rea) *Response

Exchange 49 above shows that T1 starts the exchange by initiating them to do something. She asks her students to write down a word, rib. When her students did what she asked, she did not give them a feedback. This always happens in teaching exchange with directing moves.

Exchange 261 - Teaching Ex. (Directing)

T1 : Ayo, (Let's go) come on P2. (p) *Initiation
P2 : P2 buka looh. (I will open this) (rep)*Response
T1 : No, P2. (e) *Feedback

In the exchange number 261, the pattern occurred is IR(F). The initiation act by T1 is labelled as prompt (p) as it comes in the form of closed class of action – see Appendix A. The writer believes this act is considered as the directing exchange, because it comes in directive command where the teacher expected the student to respond the initiation with non-verbal action.

In the informing exchange, the patterns occur are usually I(R)(F) only, because the teacher does not expect any verbal response from the students. In the informing moves, ideally the teacher gives information or explains materials to the students. So the teacher does not expect any verbal response, but only look forward to a good understanding of the materials or information given. For the response from student is not expected to be occurred, teacher's feedback also expected to be the same. The teacher will not give any feedback when there is no response from the student.

Exchange 16 – Teaching Exchange (Informing)

T1 : So the food will not ^ Uhm ^

The food will not make the ^

The clothes dir ^^ dirty.Ya . Bib. (i) *Initiation

The pattern occurs in exchange 16 above is I(R), where responses (R) from the students do not always occur. This is because the students do not respond to the explanation given by T1. After T1 initiated the move, she also did not expect the students to respond what just she said. The act by T1 is labelled as inform (i), which is realized by a statement that provides information.

In this study, the writer classified three main moves in the teaching exchange: Directing, Eliciting and Informing. Those three exchanges have their own function related to the learning process. In this study, the writer found some problems when the writer classified those three exchanges in every teaching exchange from the data taken. The complexity of directing and eliciting exchanges' forms, which are similar to each other, needs a deeper analysis than the informing exchange. Informing exchange only happens when the speaker gives information or explains something to the listener. So, the writer found it easy to classify them based on the data taken. Different from

informing exchange, directing and eliciting exchange took longer and deeper analysis. This is because in this study, the class which is observed learns about phonics where teacher usually gives direct example of some particular sounds. When the teacher gives direct command by saying particular word, the students are expected to follow or repeat the word. The writer defines this exchange as eliciting because the teacher expects linguistic answer from the students.

Exchange 169 – Teaching Exchange (Eliciting)

T1 : fig. (f) *Initiation
P1 : fig. (rep) *Response

When T1 says the word fig, she expects P1 will repeat what she said. In this move, we can see that T1 is actually asking P1 implicitly to repeat what she said without gives him direct command. The move from T1 above is labelled as figure (f) for it has a function to give example to P1 how to say the word [fig] correctly. We can see from exchange 169 above that P1 already knows that his teacher asks him to repeat what she said. P1 automatically repeat what T1 said without ask her what to do. The answer from P1 also comes in verbal form which is related to the lesson. Whereas directing exchange happens when the teachers ask students to do something non-verbal, the writer decided to classified exchange number 169 as eliciting exchange.

Below is the report of the interview results with the Kindergarten teachers. The interview was recorded and transcribed and the analysis of responses relevant to the issue in question discovers that all the interviewees admitted that IRF patterns help teachers to teach in the classroom. The first reason is because IRF patterns made up of a good means of delivering English language teaching materials in the classroom. The two teachers interviewed have the same teaching style in that they find IRF is facilitative to the teaching of young learners, in addition to being fit to creating a better interaction between teacher and students.

IRF patterns are considered suitable for English language learning and teaching process. Both T1 and T2 who were interviewed were confident to keep on using IRF patterns in their classroom teaching. This is because IRF patterns promote a fun and alive classroom atmosphere, in addition to improving students’ participation in the

classroom, making the class more dynamic, less monotonous and boring, in particular as a result of teachers' initiation that arouses students' willingness to talk and to express themselves during the lesson. Teachers also believe that by applying IRF patterns, learning activities are more functional in helping students to understand the lesson. The result of learning can often be noticeable right after the students react to teacher's initiation and after the teacher provides them with feedback in the cycle of communication that happened in the classroom and that way instructional goals are achievable.

Findings and Discussion

This study attempts to explore the patterns of classroom interaction, Initiation-Response-Feedback, in English class at EduHouse Semarang; and second is to find out how IRF model by Sinclair and Coulthard applied in the classroom activities helps the teacher to deliver the lesson. Overall, the results of data analysis managed to satisfy the both the formulated problem and research questions. First, from the data interpretation and analysis, the writer found that most of the teaching exchanges which occurred in English classroom at EduHouse Semarang were used to elicit the lesson. There are 117 eliciting exchanges, 76 informing exchanges and 32 directing exchanges. Eliciting exchange started by the teachers happens when the teachers ask their students to answer some questions. Even though some teaching exchanges such as informing and directing also occur, eliciting exchange is still needed to happen most frequently for this is the basic exchange that helps teachers to check their students' understanding. In eliciting exchanges, teachers start with the initiation to ask students to answer questions which was followed by the students' response and then ends up with the feedback from the teacher.

After analyzing the data, however, the writer also found a few patterns other than IRF patterns, i.e. IR(F) and I(R) patterns. These patterns usually took place as the teacher make directing and informing exchanges. IR(F) pattern commonly occurs in the directing exchanges that are used to give students a direct command to do something. In such a case, feedback from teacher is optional meaning that it does not always come after students' responses. The I(R) patterns, on the other hand, happen when the teachers elicit or explain the materials to the students. This exchange starts with the initiation by the teacher which

was neither followed by students' responses nor feedback from the teachers. In contrast to the previous one, this time students' responses are optional.

From those three patterns, the writer discovered that complete triadic IRF patterns in elicitation exchanges happened most frequently which were obviously needed most by the teachers in the teaching. This finding is substantiated by the interview that students will learn better as they receive feedback from their teachers. Thus, it can be said that IRF patterns consisting of three moves of teaching exchange has an important role in the success of language learning and language teaching process.

Interestingly, the writer also found that initiation move is not only the domain of the teacher, but it was also performed by the students. The data recorded 23 exchanges initiated by the students. The initiation by the students is labelled as pupil initiation. The acts that happened come in two types, eliciting and informing. Elicitation performed by the students was to ask teachers about part of the lesson that somehow confused other students. Meanwhile the informing exchange is used to allow the teachers to be aware of something related to the lesson.

Second, from the interview that has been done with the teachers, the writer found that kindergarten teachers in EduHouse Semarang apply IRF pattern to teach in the classroom. Both teachers believe that if they do not apply IRF pattern in their class, the learning process will be boring and monotonous. Students will ignore the teachers during the lesson as they are still in the kindergarten age that requires fun and interesting learning method. Moreover, young learners still need both major input and feedback because they learn something like sponges that absorb all information given. Feedback is needed to help students check their answers. Students will comprehend that they make mistakes or not from feedback given by the teachers. The interviewed teachers also stated that teaching foreign language to young learners required teachers to give motivation and compliment to the students. Complement is part of feedback in IRF patterns. This is because students at that age demand someone to build their confidence by simply complimenting them and thus IRF patterns is directional but also motivational. Short phrases such as "good job" or "great" are usually used by the teachers to praise their students, a type of rewards

that educationally functional. When the students already developed their conviction during the lesson, they build courage to answer teachers' questions. This makes the communication between them successfully delivered which helps reach the instructional goals.

CONCLUSION

From the data analysis, two major conclusions can be drawn as follows. First, most of the IRF patterns were used to elicit lessons or teaching materials, despite also finding some other non-IRF patterns, suggesting that IRF patterns are still relevantly used to deliver teaching materials especially where early learners' learning is concerned. The finding is vindicated by the interview responses that generally of agreement that such patterns are useable to assist teachers in delivering English language teaching materials. Second, the most frequent exchange that happened in the investigation was eliciting exchange suggesting that in teaching kindergarten students, the teacher has to speak and initiate more to make the learning process alive. However, initiation is not only the domain of teachers, as students' initiation was also a noticeable phenomenon which may characterize an active-learners learning. Students also actively start the conversation without any intention to control the learning and teaching activities. The implication of the results of this research has brought is the need to accept the reality that teaching English for young learners is essentially guiding and building a strong foundation on language grammar patterns in addition to vocabulary mastery. In doing so, IRF cycle is well accepted to achieve the goals of instructions.

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DISCOURSE MARKERS AND QUALITY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' WRITINGS IN FILIPINO

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze how freshman teacher education students in various Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Ilocos Norte who were particularly enrolled in Fil 2, *Pagbasa at Pagsulat Tungo sa Pananaliksik* during the 2nd semester of SY 2014-2015, use discourse markers (DMs) in their 208 compositions in Filipino and how this influences the quality of their writings. It likewise determined the frequency and the types of DMs used by these students. The overall quality of the students' writings was analyzed using Robitaille's and Connelly's (2002) Analytic Assessment Scale for Written Work. Fraser's (1999) taxonomy of DMs served as the instrument in determining the types of DMs used. Moreover, the Pearson r was used to analyze the relationship between and among the variables considered in this study. Findings reveal that students slightly use and overuse various types of DMs while they neglect other types in both their writings, there is an overuse of a very limited set of DMs which makes the students' overall writing quality fair. The study also found that there is a positive relationship between the use of DMs and the overall quality of students' writings in Filipino.

Keywords: *discourse markers, personal narratives, argumentative writings, Filipino.*

INTRODUCTION

The basis of human interaction is communication. It is the primary means by which people obtain and exchange information. Through communication, people exchange and share information with one another and influence one another's attitudes, behaviors and understandings. When communication is thorough, accurate and

timely, any human organization tends to be vibrant and effective.

Interestingly, communication skills are essential for the successful future careers of students. Excellent written and interpersonal communication skills spell one's success in life. It means that if one is able to show that he or she can write concisely and with clarity, he or she possesses a key requirement in life, as well as in work. Being able to converse in a confident and effective manner with others from a wide range of background is a plus factor.

Significantly, writing well is an art that every student should master in order to be successful. Writing well means conveying thoughts, ideas and facts in simple, clear and coherent language. According to David (2009), good writing skills are important for college students for two reasons. First, students with good writing abilities have an edge over the others. Second, good writing skills are required for getting a job. Additionally, scholarships are often rewarded based upon the writing ability of applicants. For these reasons, any student who wants to further his or her career in academia needs to know how to write well.

Unfortunately, observations show that freshman college students find it very difficult to construct and organize a coherent text in Filipino. As difficult as composing an academic Filipino prose for native-speaker students, it is even more for non-native students, demanding not only a great linguistic competence but also a great awareness of how discourse segments can be effectively connected all together in a cohesive manner. Coherence is thus a distinctive feature and an essential quality of good writing and one way to cohesively join or relate sentences, clauses, and paragraphs with one another is through the appropriate use of discourse markers (DMs).

In essence, DMs are linguistic items or expressions that contribute to the integrity of discourse (spoken or written) through relating and joining discourse segments in a coherent way. In literature, however, there is little consensus among researchers on what to call DMs. Hence, as Fraser (1990) noted, they have been investigated under a variety of different terms, including but not limited to sentence connectives, pragmatic connectives, discourse connectives, discourse markers, and discourse operators. Moreover, there is no broad agreement among researchers on how they DMs are to be defined or

how they function. As a consequence, myriad definitions have been proposed and multifarious classifications of DMs have been suggested. Thus, in this present study, the researcher, for the sake of clarity and conciseness, relied on a definition and a classification proposed by Fraser who, after reviewing previous theoretical research, defined DMs in his 1999 article, *What Are Discourse Markers?* as follows:

A class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. With certain exceptions, they signal a relationship between the interpretation of the segment they introduce, S2, and the prior segment, S1. They have a core meaning, which is procedural, not conceptual, and their more specific interpretation is 'negotiated' by the context, both linguistic and conceptual.

DMs have been an interesting subject of inquiry in second language writing. A considerable body of research has investigated, among many inquiries, how language learners use DMs in their writings, how English native speaker writers differ from non-native speakers in the use of DMs and how the use of DMs contribute to the overall quality of writing.

Results of the said studies, in general, suggest that L2 learners underutilize DMs (compared with native speaker use), especially for their pragmatic functions. While the majority of these studies have compared DMs in L1 and L2, very few have examined the use of these DMs used in L2 only and in two different essay genres. In addition, the relationship between the use of DMs and writing quality is an issue that has not been attended to adequately and needs to be investigated particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context (Rahimi, 2011). Likewise, little is known about how college students utilize DMs in two different genres of academic writing, particularly in Filipino as a second language.

In an attempt to address the above-mentioned issues, the present study aimed to examine the use of DMs in the writings of college students which are written in Filipino.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was anchored on the cohesive theory proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), Mann and Thompson's (1987, 1988) discourse coherence theory, Blakemore's (1987) relevance theory and Fraser's (1999) discourse markers category as adopted by Casanova and Rubin (2001) in teaching writing in the Filipino language.

According to Halliday and Hasan's cohesion theory (1976), cohesion, as the major characteristic of coherence covering linguistic properties of the language, gives a sequence of sentences a coherent texture. Cohesion shows how semantic relationships are set up by lexical and syntactic features. Such overt lexical and syntactic features are called CDs, which signal the relationship among sentences.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed to analyze college students' use of discourse markers (DMs) and the quality of their writings in Filipino.

Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following:

1. *What types of DMs are used by college students in their personal narrative and argumentative writings in Filipino?*
2. *How do the college students use DMs in their writings in Filipino?*
3. *What is the overall quality of the students' writings in terms of:*
 - a. *content/ideas;*
 - b. *organization;*
 - c. *vocabulary/word choice;*
 - d. *language use; and*
 - e. *mechanics/conventions?*
4. *Is there a significant relationship between the students' use of DMs and their overall quality of writings?*

THE STUDY

Settings and participants

The study employed both the quantitative and the qualitative research design in describing and analyzing the use of discourse markers (DMs). Data were derived from the compositions written in Filipino by 335 freshman teacher education students who were taking either Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd), Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSE) or Bachelor in Technical Teacher Education (BTTE) who were enrolled in Filipino 2, *Pagbasa at Pagsulat tungo sa Pananaliksik*, during the second semester of S.Y. 2014-2015 from the public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the province of Ilocos Norte, namely: Mariano Marcos State University - College of Teacher Education (MMSU-CTE) and College of Industrial Technology MMS-CI), Northwestern University (NWU), Northern Christian College (NCC) and Data Center College of the Philippines- Laoag (DCCP) that offer the said degree programs. These HEIs are committed to provide quality teacher education through relevant instruction, research, extension and production for sustainable development and global competitiveness.

Data collection and analysis

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher sought permission from the University and College Administration Presidents through the deans of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) involved in the study. Upon approval of the request letter, the dean of the college endorsed the researcher to the Filipino instructors/professors who were handling the Ilokano teacher education students enrolled in Filipino 2, *Pagbasa at Pagsulat tungo sa Pananaliksik* during the second semester of academic year 2014-2015.

To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher through the subject teachers required the 335 freshman teacher education students who enrolled in Filipino 2 in the various universities and colleges in the province of Ilocos Norte to write two compositions. The essay revolved on the topic *Sino Ako Bilang Ilokano* (Who am I as an Ilokano) for the PN and Filipino: *Nararapat bang Tanggalin sa Antas Tersyarya?* (Filipino: *Is it right to be Removed in the Tertiary Level Education Curriculum?*) for the AW. The students were asked to write

within an hour an essay of not less than 250 words at one sitting and under the same conditions. However, before the students were made to write, the usual pre-writing activities were undertaken. These provided the context and purpose of the writing activity.

A total of 208 compositions in Filipino (106 PA and 102 AW) served as the corpus of this study were examined through two procedures. The researcher together with the individual raters who are experts in the field of Filipino evaluated the overall quality of the students' writings in Filipino using Robitaille and Connelly's (2002) Analytic Assessment Scale for Written Work. The rubric considered content/ideas, organization, vocabulary/ word choice, language use and mechanics/conventions. Also, the Fraser's (1999) taxonomy of DMs was used for the analysis of DMs in the students' writing.

Data on the types of DMS used and how these DMs are used in the students' writings were statistically analyzed using frequency counts, means and percentages. Pearson's *r*, was used to analyze the relationship between and among variables under the study.

FINDINGS

The researcher thoroughly examined students' writings and classified all the DMs in accordance to Fraser's taxonomy of DMs. The results of this preliminary analysis of the data reveals that students employ a variety of DMs in their PN with some types used more frequently than others. Based on the results, the *pagpapahayag ng pagdaragdag* (additive) attained the highest percentage of DMs used by the students with a frequency of 129 (35%), followed by the *pagpapahayag ng dahilan-resulta ng isang pangyayari o kaganapan* (resultive) with a frequency of 128 (35%) and *pagpapahayag ng kundisyon-bunga/kinalabasan* (causative) DMs category with a frequency of 50 (14%).

On the other hand, the most frequently used type of DMs used by the students in their AW in Filipino is the *pagpapahayag ng pagdaragdag* (additive) with a frequency of 130 (26%) followed by the *pagpapahayag ng dahilan-resulta ng isang pangyayari o kaganapan* (resultive) with a frequency of 125 (25%) and *pagpapahayag ng di pagsang-ayon* (contrastive) with a frequency of 110 (21%).

Apparently, the students do not know how to use the other varieties of DMs in their AW. Moreover, the study also shows the least type of DMs used by the students in their compositions are: *pagpapahayag ng probabilidad* (affirmative), *pagpapahayag ng pagbabago ng paksa o tagpuan* (adversative), *pagpapahayag ng pananaw o punto de bista* (perspective) and *pagpapahayag ng kabaligtaran o taliwas* (contrastive). Each of these DMs used by the students in their AW in Filipino obtained low frequencies.

Similar to the result of the types of DMs used in the students' PN writings, the result of this present study along the students' AW writing reveals that the limited use of DMs by the students reveals a weak area requiring more attention in the teaching of Filipino as a second language to teacher education students.

The second concern of this study was to determine how the students use DMs in their writings either extensively, appropriately, unnecessarily or incorrectly. As shown in the study, the marker *at* (*pagpapahayag ng pagdaragdag/additive*), *dahil* (*pagpapahayag ng dahilan-resulta sa isang pangyayari o kaganapan/resultive*) and *kung* (*pagpapahayag ng kundisyon/causative*) are the most frequently used in the students' PN writings in Filipino with frequencies of 105, 56 and 46.

Interestingly, from the 106 PA of the students, most of the DMs employed are used appropriately. However, most of the DMs used are overused in every single student writing. This result implies that the students are not familiar with the other cohesive devices. In addition, findings of this study reveal that there are no DMs which were used unnecessarily. This shows that the students know the function of each of the DMs used in their writings.

On the other hand, the study reveals that teacher education students underuse of certain DMs in their AW in Filipino. For instance, the marker *at* (91); *kung* (61); *dahil* (53); and *kaya* (31) were used extensively and appropriately which obtained the highest percentage of use.

DMs that are used *incorrectly* by the students in their argumentative compositions are, *at* and *bilang karagdagan* under the *pagpapahayag*

ng pagdaragdag/ additive particularly in the pagdaragdag sa unang sinabi na makikita sa una at gitna ng pangungusap bilang pang-ugnay sa dalawang sugnay; kaya (pagpapahayag ng dahilan-resulta ng isang pangyayari o kaganapan/ resultive) and gayunpaman (pagpapahayag ng pagbabago ng paksa o tagpuan/adversative).

The results suggest that the students do not really know how to use correctly DMs. As a result, the ideas are disconnected or not well organized which in turn affect the quality of the students' writings. They, therefore, need further input on the use of DMs for them to be able to enhance their writings.

In sum, it is obvious that the students in this study employed a variety of DMs with some categories used more frequently than the others. From the 106 students' PN, DMs which are *extensively* and *appropriately* used include the markers, *at* (105); *kung* (46); *dahil* (56). On the other hand, students' compositions along AW reveal that the markers, *at* (91); *kung* (61); *dahil* (53); and *kaya* (31) obtained the largest frequency count and are used *extensively* and *appropriately*.

Findings reveal that there is an *extensive* use of DMs in the students' composition but these are limited only to a few specific DMs. In fact, these are the simplest and most commonly used DMs in Filipino. Teachers in Filipino, should, therefore teach their students how to use other cohesive devices. Teachers should also work on broadening students' grammatical structures and vocabularies to enhance their academic writings. Further, students' incorrect use of DMs might be the result of students' insufficient understanding of the core meanings, and stylistic and syntactic functions of individual DMs.

Another concern addressed in this study was to determine the relationship between the number of DMs used by the students and the quality of their writings.

As shown in the results, the writing quality of the students under the PN writing obtained an overall mean of 54.94 which is interpreted as *fair* and with a standard deviation of 10.53.

Specifically, the table shows that the quality of the students' PN along *content/ideas*, *vocabulary/word choice* and *language use* obtained mean ratings of 15.95, 11.15, and 11.10, with standard deviations of

3.50, 2.40, 2.20 and 2.15, respectively, and interpreted as *fair to poor*.

Interestingly, the students' compositions obtained a mean rating of 11.69 along *organization* and 5.17 along *mechanics/convention* with standard deviations of 2.40 and 1.08 respectively, and interpreted as *good to average*. In general, the findings imply that students' written work lacks DMs that affect the quality of their PN writings. This confirms the idea that linking devices can improve the coherence of a text. On the other hand, the students' AW quality obtained an *overall mean* of 55.95 interpreted as *fair* and a standard deviation of 9.75.

As shown in the research findings, the quality of students' AW along the area of *content/ideas* and *vocabulary/word choice* obtained mean ratings of 16.34 and 11.26 with standard deviations of 2.83 and 2.08 and interpreted as *fair to poor* while *organization, language use* and *mechanics/conventions* interpreted as *good to average* obtained mean ratings of 11.71, 11.54 and 5.05 with standard deviations of 2.18, 1.94, and 9.75 respectively.

It can be specifically noted that the students' compositions gained a *fair to poor* rating. This means that the compositions are not well organized and with ideas not clearly supported. This is apparently due to their lack of use of DMs. It can be deduced from the findings that DMs are important in compositions and they affect quality.

These findings have important pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of Filipino particularly in writing. First, the use of DMs which is found to be a discriminating factor in the quality of the students' compositions merits special and long-term attention. Students should be encouraged to learn DMs as elements to improve the quality of their writing. It may be necessary that focused lessons be developed in this regard. It is also necessary to explain clearly to students with adequate examples the meaning and correct use of DMs in Filipino. Second, teachers should focus on the DMs within each type that the students do not use or use less. Examples of these are the DMs which are under the inferential and topic relating categories to increase the variety of their DMs, and to focus on the cases of misuse to enable them to write better Filipino compositions.

In the light of these results, the use of DMs plays a key role in

determining the overall quality of a discourse, and the results of this study are similar to previous studies indicating that there is a relationship or linkage between the use of DMs and the overall quality of students' PN and AW. Hence, lexical cohesion as a whole or some subtypes of it enhance writing quality. Thus, cohesive devices contribute to a better composition. In addition, students' vocabulary is an important factor affecting their writing quality

Meanwhile, study shows the overall quality of teacher education students' writings in Filipino. It can be deduced in the table that 52 (49%) of the students' PN obtained a descriptive rating of *fair* with range scores of 51-64. Meanwhile, 31 (29%) of the students obtained a descriptive rating of *poor* and only 13 (12%) of the 106 teacher education students obtained a descriptive rating of *average*. The results indicate that the *overall quality* of the students' PN in Filipino falls under the descriptive rating of *fair* as indicated by the mean rating of 54.94 and a standard deviation of 10.53.

The study also presents the overall writing quality of the teacher education students' AW in Filipino. The study shows that, 64 (63%) of the students' AW in Filipino obtained a descriptive rating of *fair* followed by 22 (21%) with a descriptive rating of *poor* and only 8 (8%) of the students' compositions obtained a descriptive rating of *average*. The results suggest that the *overall quality* of the students' AW is *fair* as indicated by the mean 55.95 and with a standard deviation of 9.75.

An important finding of the study is the statistically significant relationship between the scores of the compositions and the number of DMs used in the same compositions. Thus, the larger the number of DMs utilized, the higher the score of the composition. Hence, this study concludes that the frequency of use of DMs is an indicator of the quality of the compositions, and therefore, of the students' writing skill in Filipino. The researcher also found that some DM types have a stronger influence on the quality of the compositions.

In general, results of the analysis of the 208 papers (106 PN and 102 AW) of the freshman teacher education students reveal that there is an overuse of linkers/DMs in every single student writing. For instance, students significantly *extensively* use the markers *at*, *dahil* and *kung* with a frequency of 105, 56 and 46 in their PN. Interestingly, from the

106 PN of the students, most of the DMs used are used *appropriately*. This result implies that the students are less familiar with the usage of these cohesive devices.

A similar finding is found in the students' AW in Filipino. The findings of this study show that there is an overt *overuse /underuse* of certain DMs. For instance, the markers *at* (91); *kung* (61); *dahil* (53); and *kaya* (31) were used *extensively* and *appropriately*.

This study also aims to discuss the relationship between the students' use of discourse markers and the quality of their PN and AW in Filipino.

It can be deduced from the findings of this study that the obtained coefficients of correlation between the quality of the personal narrative writings of the students in terms of *content/ideas* ($r = .308$), *organization* ($r = .274$), *vocabulary/word choice* ($r = .308$) *language use* ($r = .218$), and *mechanics/convention* ($r = .386$) as well as the overall quality of their compositions ($r = .330$) are significantly related to their frequency of use of DMs particularly those that relate to *pagpapahayag ng pagdaragdag* (additive) as evidenced by the indicated by the obtained coefficient of correlation which are significant at the .05 and .01 probability levels. These results imply that the presence of the DMs that relate to *pagpapahayag ng pagdaragdag* (additive) in their PN, the better is the quality of their writings.

Also, it can be inferred from the obtained coefficients of correlation between each of the criteria used in evaluating the quality of the PN writings of the students and the presence of the DMs that relate to *pagpapahayag ng dahilan-resulta ng isang pangyayari o kaganapan* (resultive) in their compositions, the better the quality of their PN writings. This is evidently shown by the coefficients of correlation ranging from .220 to .316 which are all significant.

The students' use of other types of DMs in their PN is not related to the quality of their PN writings as indicated by their respective coefficients of correlations which are not significant. This finding is attributed to the fact that the students rarely use these DMs in their PN and some were not even used at all.

As shown in the research findings, the overall quality of the AW of the

students is significantly related to their use of discourse markers particularly those that relate to *pagpapahayag ng probabilidad* (affirmative) as indicated by the obtained coefficient of correlation of .211 which is greater than the critical value of .195 at the .05 level of significance with 100 degrees of freedom. This implies that students who frequently use discourse markers to show *pagpapahayag ng probabilidad* (affirmative) tend to have better quality of personal narrative writing.

A critical look at coefficients of correlation between the students' use of DMs and each of the specific criteria, one can deduce that the students' frequency of use of DMs that are used in *pagpapahayag ng kundisyon* (causative) is significantly related to the quality of the *content/ideas*, ($r = .228$), *organization* (.195) of their PN writings but not with the *vocabulary/word choice* ($r = .123$), *language use* ($r = .131$) and *mechanics/conventions* ($r = .091$).

It can also be deduced from the results of the correlation analysis that the students' frequency of use of DMs in *pagpapahayag ng probabilidad* (affirmative) is significantly related to the quality of the *content/ideas* ($r = .211$), *organization* ($r = .230$), *vocabulary/word choice* ($r = .217$), *language use* ($r = .208$) and the *overall quality* of their AW ($r = .220$) but not with the *mechanics/conventions* ($r = .138$). These results imply that the more DMs present and are used properly in the PN of the students the better the quality of their writings.

The study also reveals that there is no significant relationship between the overall quality of AW of the students and their frequency of use of DMs relating to *pagpapahayag ng pagdaragdag* (additive), *pagdaragdag kung saan may bahagi sa pangungusap* (substitution), *pagpapahayag ng dahilan-resulta ng isang pangyayari o kaganapan* (resultive), *pagpapahayag ng taliwas o salungatan o contrast*(contrastive), *pagpapahayag ng di pagsang-ayon* (contrastive), *pagpapahayag ng pananaw o punto de bista* (perspective), *pagpapahayag ng pagbibigay-linaw sa isang ideya, pagbubuod at paglalahat* (elaborative), *pagpapahayag ng pagbabago ng paksa o tagpuan* (adversative), *pagpapahayag ng pagpapatunay* (affirmative) and *pagpapahayag ng taliwas sa ulat o paniniwala* (contrastive) as indicated by their respective coefficients of correlation ranging from -

.131 to .153 which are not significant at the .05 probability level. Thus, the overall quality of the AW of the students is not related to their frequency of use of DMs along these categories.

In general, the results of this study reveal that teacher education students use few categories and types of DMs in their PN and AW. Hence, the lack of DMs in students' writings hinders the successful communication or leads to misunderstanding of the students' works or achieving a better quality of writing.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal that students slightly use and overuse various types of DMs in their writings in Filipino, thereby, rendering their compositions non-cohesive. This is the result of students' unfamiliarity of the types of DMs and their function.

The results also reveal that the students lack the use of DMs in their PN and AW which affect or influence the quality of their writings. Thus, the higher the density of the types/categories of DMs used in students' writings, the better the quality of composition.

In addition, the results reveal that there is an overuse of a very limited set of DMs. Moreover, the students' overall writing quality obtained a general descriptive rating of fair.

Furthermore, there is a relationship or linkage between the use of DMs and the overall quality of students' writings in Filipino. On the other hand, the overall quality of the students' writings in Filipino is not related to their frequency of the use of DMs along those categories.

In the light of the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study, the following are highly recommended:

- 1 Filipino teachers must attain a certain proficiency in the language so that he or she could teach the language efficiently. Hence, teachers in Filipino should make a move on how they could help their students need to understand and use discourse markers into their academic writings. Filipino teachers should incorporate the teaching of a wide range of DMs and encourage their students to vary their use of DMs through composition writing which must be given to the students every beginning of the school year to identify

who needs assistance. Thus, broadening students' grammatical structures and vocabularies to enhance their academic writing.

- 2 Filipino subjects' teachers are highly encouraged to improve their Filipino teaching activities and strategies for a better output for students' success in writing. In addition, they should form Filipino gangs or pairs and appoint students with superior written language proficiency that will facilitate discussions on the weaknesses of the students. Moreover, it is recommended among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) particularly the language department that they may initiate a program that will address the writing needs of the students.
- 3 Curriculum developers should integrate more writing communication activities and exposure to Filipino language to enrich the teacher-training experiences of the students, which could help them overcome their difficulty and eventually become effective communicators in their respective classrooms through writing as a means of communication.
- 4 The researcher also recommends and stresses the need for further research in this area of teaching writing to enhance the awareness of students regarding the significance of DMs in their academic writings.
- 5 Administrators should encourage their faculty to conduct the same study and produce resource materials that would suit to the needs of their learners in the development of the students' writing skills particularly in the use DMs types to make their academic writings coherent and/or with high quality of writing.

Implications and limitations

The following are implications and limitations of the study:

- 1 The students have limited knowledge on the use of DMs although they use a variety of them. There are more markers which are not used by the students and apparently they are not aware of these. The limited use of DMs reveals a weak area requiring more attention in teaching Filipino as a second language to teacher education students.

- 2 Students utilize a small number of DMs although these are used extensively. However, there are more markers which are not used by the students and apparently they are not aware of these. Results show that teacher education students are incapable of using DMs proficiently in their writing. Students' incorrect use of DMs might be the result of students' insufficient understanding of the core meanings, and stylistic and syntactic functions of individual DMs.
- 3 Students have no mastery on the conventions, on the use of punctuation and the mentioned discourse markers. In effect, these led to poor sentence construction.
- 4 That students have difficulty constructing sentences due to unfamiliarity with the types of DMs and limited range of vocabulary and little knowledge on writing conventions which create errors of punctuation and paragraphing in the constructed sentences/ paragraphs that resulted to a descriptive rating of *fair to poor* of their quality of writing.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings, it can be concluded that:

- 1 Coherence, indeed, is a distinctive feature and an essential quality of good writing through the use of discourse markers (DMs).
- 2 The limited understanding of the different types/categories of DMs in Filipino although they use a variety of them and the incorrect use of these DMs is due to the students' insufficient understanding of the syntactic role and function of certain DMs.
- 3 The students' vocabulary and the use of DMs contribute to a better composition and plays an important key role in determining the overall quality of a discourse. Hence, there is a relationship or linkage between the use of DMs and the overall quality of students' writings in Filipino.
- 4 The use of DMs and how writers use these can contribute to the overall quality of writing. Thus, the higher the number of DMs employed and used properly in the students' compositions, the better the quality of their writings.

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THE TRANSLATION OF TEMPORAL AND ASPECTUAL INFORMATION IN DEICTIC MODE FROM ENGLISH INTO VIETNAMESE

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ABSTRACT

The issue of whether tense and aspect exist in the Vietnamese language has been the matter of debate among researchers and scholars. In reality, the translation of the temporal and aspectual information from English into Vietnamese sometimes causes ambiguity as tense and aspect are compulsory in the English language, however, not usually considered a matter of grammar in the Vietnamese language. This article aims at investigating how the three well-known Vietnamese translators Mac Do, Hoang Cuong and Trinh Lu translated the novel entitled “The Great Gatsby” – a 1925 novel written by the American author F. Scott Fitzgerald into Vietnamese with regard to the rendition of the temporal and aspectual information in deictic mode in English into Vietnamese. Besides, the interpretation of non-tensed elements by the three translators is also analyzed in this article. Through the comparison and assessment of the three translation versions of the novel, it is hoped that the methods used by the three translators to render tense and aspect information from English will be clearly analyzed. The results would be a good reference for translators in their work. Moreover, the results may prove the fact that even Vietnamese has no tense and aspect to some people’s views, the translation of a tensed language like English into Vietnamese can still be done with ease.

Keywords: *tense, aspect, translation of temporal and aspectual information, deictic mode*

INTRODUCTION

In communicating between two countries even between two tribes or ethnic groups within a country that speak different languages, translation is an indispensable element contributing to a successful information exchange. Translation has a very long history of development. Its history dates back to 3000 B.C (Bassnett & Lefevere, Andre (eds.), 1990).

Translators of different languages, however, still confronts quite lots of difficulties in their work, among them equivalence is the most popular one. Equivalence in translation is not very common as non-equivalence between any two languages is a matter of fact. Even two languages such as English and French all belonging to the Indo-European family, have non-equivalence between them. Compare the English and French sentence expressing the same information in the following example: (1)A: She is a student; B: Elle est étudiante.

In the sentence (1A) the word “student” need not be defined in female form as this is not a feature of English grammar rule, whereas in the sentence (1B) the word “étudiante” is in female “form” and its male form is “étudiant” to be in consistent with the subject female “Elle”.

Thus, the Vietnamese, a language belonging to the Mon-Khmer branch of the Austroasiatic language family must possess more non-equivalences than the French language in translating from English or vice-versa. One of the non-equivalences between the two languages is the recognition of tense and aspect. English is a language in which tense and aspect are compulsory whether tense and aspect exist in the Vietnamese language remains a controversial topic. Accordingly, in translating from English into Vietnamese the difficulties related to tense and aspect cannot be avoided. One of the difficulties is in seeking for equivalence between the two languages in terms of tense and aspect. When mentioning equivalence, Baker (1992) divides five levels of equivalence including equivalence at word level, equivalence above word level, grammatical equivalence, textual equivalence and pragmatic equivalence. He details grammatical equivalence under five categories including number, gender, person, tense and aspect, and voice. Thus, the non-equivalence as regards tense and aspect between the English and Vietnamese languages is at grammatical level. There

have appeared some research studies on translation methods of tense and aspect in the world, nonetheless, not many of them have been applied by translators. The reasons for that are many such as the limited number of the research studies, the research is not various enough or not very systematic. As a result, these research studies have not become as popular references for translators, especially, in case of Vietnam. From the afore-said reasons, the researcher was inspired to carry out the study on how English tense and aspect translated into Vietnamese.

With the present study, the researcher is going to find out how tense and aspect information that is always expressed explicitly in English, a tensed language translated into Vietnamese, a non-tensed one.

Literature review

The system of tense in English

Jespersen (1931) is believed to be the first linguist who defines tense as "the linguistic expression of time relations, as far as these are indicated in the verb forms". Under the angle of perceiving tense through markers, "tense is generally used to refer to the morphological markers on the verb which function to describe the temporal relations between the situation and the time of utterance".

Also, in viewing tense as a grammatical category Comrie (1985) meant that it has to be "integrated into the grammatical system of a language" (p. 10). This integration is done by means of either bound morphemes (i.e., inflection on the verb morphology) or by grammatical words in line with the verbs such as the auxiliaries. Hence, this definition which is widely accepted as Comrie (1985) himself points out, "permits a highly constrained theory of tense" (p. 10). This does not recognize lexicalization of temporal location itself as tense. But it requires that tense is a grammatical category. Therefore, this necessary criterion can distinguish tensed and non-tensed languages, i.e. languages that do not have tense. Confirming 'tense' as a purely grammatical category, more importantly, reflects a long tradition in Linguistics of a fundamental division between grammatical and lexical or other categories regardless of any semantic interrelation. The distinction is also shared by Finch (2005) when he states that "tense refers to the grammatical

changes made to the form of a verb, as opposed to time, which refers to the semantic functions such changes signal"(p. 113).

Traditionally, English has normally been considered to have 12 "tenses". In trying to talk about the tense-aspect system and tense-aspect combination, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Feeman (1999) create a chart by combining the three tenses, present, past and future along the vertical axis. The four aspects—simple (sometimes called zero aspect), perfect, progressive, and their combination, perfect progressive—are arrayed along the horizontal axis.

Other similar viewpoints are from Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) as they consider "tense in relation to the perfective and progressive in which the verbal action is experienced or regarded". Accordingly, there are at least twelve major tenses in English identified in the English linguistic research.

The system of aspects in English

Jarvie (1993) claims that "Aspect is a category indicating the point from which an action is seen to take place. Two contrasts of aspect are marked in English: progressive aspect and perfect (or perfective) aspect.

In fact, Comrie (1976) states that the distinction between he read, he was reading, and he used to read in English is equally an aspectual distinction, so aspect is a category even in as familiar a language as English. Particularly in view of this terminological, and conceptual, confusion of tense and aspect, it is worth ensuring now that the meaning of the more familiar term 'tense' is understood, before embarking on discussion of the less familiar term ' aspect'. Tense relates the time of the situation referred to some other time, usually to the moment of speaking. The commonest tenses found in languages - though not all languages distinguish these three tenses, or indeed distinguish tenses at all - are present, past, and future: a situation described in the present tense is located temporally as simultaneous with the moment of speaking (e.g. John is singing); one described in the past as located prior to the moment of speaking (e.g. John sang, John was singing); one described in the future as located subsequent to the moment of speaking (e.g. John will sing, John will be singing). Comrie

(1976) believes since tense locates the time of a situation relative to the situation of the utterance, we may describe tense as deictic. According to Smith (1997), aspectual meaning of a situation results from interaction between situation types and viewpoints. Situation types are determined by the inherent lexical nature of verbs or verb phrases. Vendler (1967) first identifies three characteristics which determine the classification. These are boundedness or telicity, duration, and change. Bounded or telic verbs are those which have a natural endpoint, while unbounded or atelic verbs can continue indefinitely. Durative verbs describe events that span over a time, in contrast to non-durative events that are punctual or instantaneous. Change can refer to either a homogeneous event, which is identical from one moment to the next; or a heterogeneous event, which is changing from moment to moment. Based on these characteristics, Vendler proposes four verb classes: states, activities or processes, accomplishments, and achievements. Smith (1997) calls these situation types and she adds one more situation type, semelfactives.

For viewpoint types, English is customarily said to have two types of viewpoint: perfective and imperfective (Brinton, 1988; Comrie, 1976 & Smith, 1997). Perfective viewpoint is normally signaled by the simple form of the main verb (Brinton, 1988 & Smith, 1997). Perfective viewpoints generally refer to the totality of a situation including the beginning, middle, and end as a whole (Comrie, 1976 & Smith, 1997). As Comrie (1976) points out, the perfective "looks at the situation from the outside, without necessarily distinguishing any of the internal structure of the situation" (p. 4). According to Smith (1997), he asserts that "sentences with a perfective viewpoint present a situation as a whole. The span of the perfective includes the initial and final endpoints of the situation" (p. 66). The imperfective viewpoint in English is commonly considered to be signaled with the verb 'be' and the 'ing' (progressive) form of the main verb (Brinton, 1988 & Smith, 1997). Imperfective viewpoint focuses on part of a situation, including neither initial nor final endpoints (Smith, 1997). Thus, in Comrie (1976)'s words, the imperfective "looks at the situation from the inside, and as such is crucially concerned with the internal structure of the situation" (p. 4).

So far, we have seen quite many viewpoints towards tense and aspect

in English, thus it can be concluded that traditionally due to the combination of tense and aspect, the English language possesses twelve basic tenses. In the following section, with the case of the Vietnamese language, tense and aspect will be discussed too.

The system of tense and aspect in Vietnamese

The arguments whether Vietnamese has tense and aspect or not are still popular among linguists. In this section, the researcher is going to review some of the outstanding opinions either realizing or denying the existence of tense and aspect in Vietnamese. These opinions are drawn from the studies by Vietnamese linguists and also by foreign linguists.

Among the very first linguists stating that Vietnamese has tense, K.T.Trần is considered to have a remarkable opinion about tense. According to Trần (1940), in mentioning adverbials denoting time in Vietnamese, he divides these adverbials into different types depending on their expressions of meaning of: (1). Present tense: bây (rarely used), giờ, chừ, nay, rày, bây chừ, bây giờ. (2). Past tense: a. Indicating the moment: Khi này, lúc này, hồi này; b. Indicating day: hôm qua, hôm kia, hôm kìa, hôm trước, hôm nọ; c. Indicating month: tháng trước; d. Indicating year: năm ngoái, năm kia, năm kìa; e. Indicating the time which has just passed: mới rồi, vừa rồi; f. Indicating the time which has passed for a long time: xưa, ngày trước, độ trước, đời trước, trước kia, ngày xưa, thuở xưa, đời xưa, xưa kia. (3). Future tense: a. Indicating moment: chốc nữa, lát nữa, tí nữa.; b. Indicating day: mai, một, ngày mai, ngày kia, ngày kìa.; c. Indicating month: sang tháng, tháng sau. ; d. Indicating year: sang năm, năm sau ; e. Indicating indefinite time: rồi, mai sau, sau này, ngày sau, rồi ra.

Therefore, it can be inferred from the above-mentioned information that Trần affirms Vietnamese has tenses. Apart from other different adverbials locating time, at least three tenses are mentioned namely present tense, past tense and future tense that are expressed through adverbials denoting time.

According to Cao (1998), lots of other traditional Vietnamese grammarian states that Vietnamese has tense. As they strongly affirm that Vietnamese has three tenses: the present tense indicated by đang,

the past tense expressed by *đã*, and the future tense conveyed by *sẽ* (Rhodes, 1651; V.K.Trương, 1883; Bùi, 1952, Đào, 1979; to name a few). Đinh (2001), M.T.Nguyễn & Nguyễn (1998), Panfilov (1993) confuse as assigning tense meaning with lexical items, thus denying that tense is a grammatical category in Vietnamese. Cao (1998), however, remarks that countless examples in Vietnamese discourse are not difficult to encounter to illustrate *đã* does not always imply past, or *đang* does not always refer to the present, or *sẽ* does not always mean the future.

Cao (1998), Emeneau(1951), Jones & Huynh (1960), Nguyễn(1996) strongly affirm that "it is impossible to find in Vietnamese anything that resembles 'tense'... In other words, Vietnamese has absolutely no tense. What is meant is that Vietnamese does not have a grammatical category for tense.

Not many studies have been conducted into the classification and temporal properties of situation types in Vietnamese. Cao (1998) and Nguyen (2006) provide the most thorough descriptions of Vietnamese situation types. They are both under primary influence of the classification of situation types in English and other European languages. They both based their classification mainly on two characteristics: (a) telicity and durativity. Cao categorized Vietnamese verb phrases (VP) into four groups: telic, atelic, dynamic, and non-dynamic (stative) basing on these characteristics. His defines a telic situation basing on the definition by Hopper and Thompson (1980). Hence, his definition of a telic situation as one that consists of a process that leads up to an endpoint or an action that brings about a result. An atelic situation, however, does not bring about a result, so that part of the situation is the same as it is when it stops, or it does not have an endpoint.

Summarizing the discussion thus far, for the purpose of the study I will assume that though tense and aspect do not formally exist in the Vietnamese language as grammatical feature they exist in varieties of lexical items as adverbials expressing time.

Translation and equivalence in translation

Translation

Nida (1964) observes, "definitions of ... translating are almost as numerous and varied as the persons who have undertaken to discuss the subject" (p. 161). Jakobson (1959) was among the first scholars in the twentieth century to provide a definition of translation. According to Jakobson (1959), he states "translation from one language into another substitutes message in one language not for separate code-units but for entire messages in some other language" (p. 233). The view of translation as 'substitution' of messages by one language for another is shared by Catford (1965), who affirms translation as substitution of TL (target language) meanings for SL (source language) meanings or "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)" (p. 20).

Munday (2001) views translation from a broader perspective and proposes a more comprehensive definition, as follows:

The term translation itself has several meanings: it can refer to the general subject field, the product (the text that has been translated) or the process (the act of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating). Munday (2001) confirms that the process of translation between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL) (p. 4-5).

Equivalence in translation

Jakobson (1959) places equivalence in a close relationship with linguistic meaning. His so-called "equivalence in meaning" focuses on "differences in the structure and terminology of languages" rather than on the untranslatability of a message from one language to another. According to Venuti (2000), "equivalence has been understood as 'accuracy', 'adequacy', 'correctness', 'correspondence', 'fidelity', or 'identity'; it is a variable notion about how the translation is connected to the foreign text" (p. 5). Translation equivalence has been a dominant issue in translation studies (Munday, 2001). Kenny (1998) observes

that although it is a central concept, it is also a controversial one.

Nida's Equivalence Theories: Conversely, E.A. Nida (1964) has written that there are two kinds of equivalence - formal equivalence (also known as formal correspondence) and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence is more concerned with word-for-word translation and content faithfulness, while dynamic equivalence focuses upon context and sense-for-sense adaptation.

A very interesting discussion of the notion of equivalence can be found in Baker (1992) who seems to provide a more detailed list of conditions upon which the concept of equivalence can be defined. She investigates the notion of equivalence at different levels, in relation to the translation process, including all different aspects of translation, thus putting together the linguistic and the communicative approach. She proposes different levels of equivalence in translation - equivalence at word level, grammatical equivalence, textual equivalence and pragmatic equivalence. Amongst the grammatical devices that might cause problems in translation, Baker focuses on number, tense and aspects, voice, person and gender. The current study is to investigate the methods of translating tense and aspect; therefore, the researcher aims at finding out equivalence at grammatical level.

THE STUDY

In the previous section, different viewpoints on tense and aspect both in English and Vietnamese have been presented. Besides, theories of translation and translation equivalence have also been reviewed. It can be inferred that due to the combination between time and aspect, the English language traditionally has twelve basic tenses, whereas in the Vietnamese language, the notion tense and aspect is blurred. Thus, the current study is to investigate how translators choose the temporal sources in Vietnamese to convey tense and aspect information from English into Vietnamese. In detail, the study is set out to answer the following questions:

1. *How do the three translators translate tense information in deictic mode from English into Vietnamese?*
2. *How do the three translators translate aspect information in deictic mode from English into Vietnamese?*

To find answers to the above two questions, the researcher bases on the theories in the literature review mentioned above to develop himself a conceptual framework under a table format – table 1 in the following sections to contrast the equivalents of English and Vietnamese tense and aspect.

Data collection and analysis

The information in the source language (SL) is taken from the novel “The Great Gatsby” (TGG) - a 1925 novel written by the American author F. Scott Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald is now widely regarded as one of the greatest American writers of the 20th century. This novel is so famous that it has been adapted into film and television, literature theatre, opera, radio, ballet and even computer games. The information in the target language (TL) is collected from the translation versions by three well-known translators namely Mặc Đỗ, Hoàng Cường and Trịnh Lữ and the translated titles of the novel in Vietnamese “Anh chàng hào hoa” (ACHH), “Gatsby vĩ đại” (GVĐ), “Đại gia Gatsby” (ĐGG) respectively into Vietnamese. Notably, within the limitation of the study only deictic clauses in the SL are selected as the data.

The data analysis is as follows. Firstly, the tense form in each clause in the English source text (ST) was identified. The tense form found was categorized into one of the three main groups, present, past, and future. The present tense group might include the simple present, present progressive, present perfect, and present perfect progressive. The past tense group might consist of the simple past, past progressive, past perfect, and past perfect progressive. Equally, the future tense group might include the simple future, future progressive, near future, future perfect, and future perfect progressive.

The next step was to find an overt temporal device in the corresponding clause in the Vietnamese translation. The Vietnamese overt temporal resources consist of temporal adverbials, auxiliaries, and aspectual markers. If a Vietnamese locating adverbial is found in the translation of an English clause that contained a particular tense, it was concluded that the temporal information expressed by the English tense was explicitly conveyed in the Vietnamese translation. Likewise, If the Vietnamese progressive aspectual marker is found in the translation of an English clause that is expressed by the progressive

aspect, the aspectual meaning of the ST was concluded to be explicitly conveyed in the TL. On the other hand, due to the lack of agreement on the meaning of the Vietnamese auxiliaries, conclusions as to what temporal meaning is expressed by the Vietnamese auxiliaries had to be drawn from the results of the study.

When no temporal adverbial, auxiliary, or aspectual marker is found in the Vietnamese translation of an English SL clause in the deictic sections, the next step was taken to identify the situation type of the situation in the Vietnamese TL clause.

The frequency of occurrences of each English tense form and each Vietnamese temporal device or situation type that was found to translate the English tense was calculated and tabulated from proposed the Table (1) below.

Table 1. English and Vietnamese tense and aspect translation sample

| Source texts | | | | Target texts | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------|------|----|---------------------|------|-----|------|-------------------|------|-----|----------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Resources | | Freq | | Temporal adverbials | | | | Aspectual markers | | Aux | Situation type | | | |
| | | | | Pres | Past | Fut | Ao F | Prog | Perf | | St | Act | Acc | Ach |
| Present | Sim | 747 | ĐM | 18 | | | 12 | 10 | 22 | 8 | 612 | 52 | 5 | 8 |
| | | | HC | 16 | | | 14 | 12 | 24 | 10 | 610 | 50 | 5 | 6 |
| | | | TL | 16 | | | 10 | 13 | 24 | 10 | 611 | 50 | 6 | 7 |
| | Prog | 75 | ĐM | 4 | | | | 25 | 3 | 6 | | 21 | 9 | 7 |
| | | | HC | 6 | | | | 24 | 5 | 9 | | 19 | 7 | 5 |
| | | | TL | 5 | | | | 24 | 5 | 5 | | 22 | 8 | 6 |
| | Perf | 67 | ĐM | | | | | | 51 | | 7 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| | | | HC | | | | | | 49 | | 6 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| | | | TL | | | | | | 50 | | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| | PP | 29 | ĐM | | | | | | 11 | | 6 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| | | | HC | | | | | | 10 | | 7 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | TL | | | | | | 12 | | 4 | 3 | 6 | 4 |
| Past | Sim | 296 | ĐM | | 68 | | | | 101 | | 92 | 15 | 11 | 9 |
| | | | HC | | 67 | | | | 98 | | 91 | 14 | 10 | 8 |
| | | | TL | | 69 | | | | 104 | | 91 | 14 | 10 | 8 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|------|----|----|---|--|----|---|----|----|---|---|---|---|
| | Prog | 23 | ĐM | | | | | 2 | 10 | | | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| | | | HC | | | | | 4 | 9 | | | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| | | | TL | | | | | 3 | 10 | | | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| | PP | 16 | ĐM | | | | | | 16 | | | | | |
| | | | HC | | | | | | 16 | | | | | |
| | | | TL | | | | | | 16 | | | | | |
| | Future | Sim | 93 | ĐM | 5 | | 11 | | | 56 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| | | | | HC | 6 | | 11 | | | 55 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| | | | | TL | 3 | | 13 | | | 57 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| | | Near | 28 | ĐM | | | | | | 12 | 5 | | 6 | 5 |
| | | | | HC | | | | | | 13 | 6 | | 5 | 4 |
| | | | | TL | | | | | | 11 | 4 | | 7 | 6 |

Legend: Freq: frequency; sim: simple; prog: progressive; perf: perfect; PP: perfect progressive; AoF: adverbs of frequency; LA: locating adverbials; TA: temporal adverbials; act: activity; acc: accomplishment; ach: achievement; st: state; ĐM: Đỗ Mặc; HC: Hoàng Cường; TL: Trịnh Lữ

Findings and discussion

In this section is the discussion of the results of the data analysis of the English source information and their Vietnamese translations, which was performed to answer the research questions. Part 4.1 presents quantitatively the tenses/aspects found in the English deictic sentences and the temporal devices found in Vietnamese translations to render each tense /aspect information. In part 4.2, a detailed discussion of the results will be shown.

Quantitative analysis of the results

Tense and aspect clauses found in English SL and Vietnamese TL translated by Đỗ Mặc.

The researcher decided to select 1384 clauses in the deictic mode as data corpus. The tenses identified in the clauses consist of simple present tense, present progressive tense, simple past tense, past progressive tense, present perfect tense, present perfect progressive tense, past perfect tense, past perfect progressive tense, simple future tense and near future tense. The clauses of simple present tense are the

most common, appeared in 747 clauses, accounting for 54 percent of the total clauses. Then the clauses of simple past tense rank the second in terms of frequency in the novel. They account for 21 percent and the number of clauses is 296 clauses. The third most frequently found tense is the simple future tense as it includes 93 clauses, accounting for 6 percent. The other tenses occur much less frequently. The illustrations of the English tenses/aspects and the Vietnamese equivalents found to convey the meaning of tenses/aspects are depicted as follows.

Of the 1384 clauses in deictic mode, only 451(33%) were found to be explicitly conveyed in the Vietnamese translation by an explicit tempo-aspectual device. The explicit tempo-aspectual devices that were found most frequently were perfect aspectual markers, appearing in 214 clauses (equal 47 percent of the clauses marked with an explicit tempo-aspectual device) followed by temporal adverbials found in 118 clauses (26 percent). The Vietnamese auxiliaries were found in 82 clauses (18 percent). The progressive aspectual markers were used the least often, found in 37 clauses (8 percent).

Tense and aspect clauses found in English SL and Vietnamese TL translated by Hoàng Cường

Similarly, with exactly the same corpus in the SL clauses, below is the illustrations of the English tenses/aspects and the Vietnamese equivalents found to convey the meaning of tenses/aspects are interpreted as follows.

After calculating it is found out that 458 (33%) of the 1384 clauses in deictic mode, were found to be explicitly conveyed in the Vietnamese translation by an explicit tempo-aspectual device. The explicit tempo-aspectual devices that were found most frequently were perfect aspectual markers, appearing in 211 clauses (amount to 46 percent of the clauses marked with an explicit tempo-aspectual device) followed by temporal adverbials found in 120 clauses (26 percent). The Vietnamese auxiliaries were found in 87 clauses (9 percent). The progressive aspectual markers were used the least often, found in 40 clauses (8 percent).

Tense and aspect clauses found in English SL and Vietnamese TL translated by Trịnh Lữ.

The English corpus remains the same whereas the tempo-aspectual equivalents in Vietnamese are slightly different between the two first translation versions. With the last translation version, the difference will be a matter of fact but whether the difference affects greatly the content of the information in the novel or not needs a detailed analysis below.

As can be seen from the Table 1, of the 1384 clauses in deictic mode, 460 (33%) were found to be explicitly conveyed in the Vietnamese translation by an explicit tempo-aspectual device. The explicit tempo-aspectual devices that were found most frequently were perfect aspectual markers, appearing in 214 clauses (equal 47 percent of the clauses marked with an explicit tempo-aspectual device) followed by temporal adverbials found in 118 clauses (26 percent). The Vietnamese auxiliaries were found in 82 clauses (9 percent). The progressive aspectual markers were used the least often, found in 37 clauses (8 percent)

Detailed results illustrated by examples

The following are some illustrating examples taken from the data analysis. Firstly, the present simple tense clause in English is translated into aspectual marker progressive in Vietnamese.

(2) The abnormal mind is quick to detect and attach itself to this quality when it appears in a normal person. (TGG, p.3)

“Một kẻ đầu óc không bình thường **sẽ rất nhanh chóng phát hiện** và gắn bó với đức tính ấy khi nó biểu lộ ở một con người bình thường. (GVĐ, p.5)

Secondly, the present perfect tense in English is translated into aspectual marker perfective in Vietnamese.

(3) ‘I believe we’ve met somewhere before, Mr. Buchanan.’ (TGG, p.109)

Ông Buchaan, hình như **chúng ta đã gặp nhau** ở đâu rồi thì phải

Then, of the two examples below, one is to explain the simple present tense clause is translated from English into Vietnamese by using a situational verb. The other example is the description of the translation of the a simple past tense clause in English into a situational verb in Vietnamese, too.

(4) 'At least they're more interesting than the people we **know**,' (TGG, p.109)

Ít nhất họ cũng thú vị hơn những người mà bọn mình **biết**, (ĐGG, p.153)

(5) "She **ran** out in a road. Son-of-a-bitch **didn't even stop** us car" (TGG, p.149)

"Bà ấy **chạy** ra ngoài đường. Thằng khốn nạn **không thèm đỗ** lại" (ĐGG, p. 196)

Finally are illustrations of which simple future tense in English are translated into temporal adverbials present in Vietnamese or a situational verb in Vietnamese

(6) 'Look at that coat. Some coat. That's a dog that'**ll never bother** you with catching cold.' (TGG, p.31)

Quý ngài nhìn long nó đây này. Long thế mới là lôngchứ! Giống chó này không bao giờ bị cảm lạnh để làm quý ngài phải vất vả vì nó (ACHH, p. 18)

(7) And I don't understand why you **won't come out frankly** and tell me what you want. Why has it all got to come through Miss Baker?' (TGG, p.77)

Và tôi không hiểu tại sao anh lại **không nói thẳng** với tôi. Sao cứ phải đi vòng qua cô Baker mới được? (ACHH, p. 43)

Conclusion and recommendations

Though tense and aspect are not always considered to be a grammatical category in Vietnamese, translators can convey tempo-aspectual information from English – a tensed language into Vietnamese – a non-tensed one using a variety of lexical resources in Vietnamese. Basing on the result analysis, the first conclusion can be

made is that perfect aspectual markers in Vietnamese are used the most frequently in conveying tense and aspect information from English. The secondly conclusion is the past tenses are translated into not only Vietnamese using temporal referring to the past but also aspectual markers implying perfective or even progressive. The next conclusion is the present tenses in English can be rendered into Vietnamese equivalents expressed by progressive or perfective markers. The final conclusion is that almost tense and aspect information in English can be found in the Vietnamese translation under the presence of situational types of verbs. These findings would be of practical use for translators in flexibly selecting appropriate equivalents in translating from English into Vietnamese and vice versa with regard to tense and aspect. Besides, teachers or learners of English could also use these as a good reference for their English teaching and studying respectively. Due to the limitation of the scope of the study, however, the data collected might not be various enough though they seem to be consistent as they are taken from one reliable source. Furthermore, the investigation into the methods to translate narrative clauses is not taken into account in this study. Also, the examination into how to transform tempo-aspectual items from Vietnamese into English would be a very applicable research that is worth calling for further studies by linguists and researchers.

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THEMATIC PROGRESSION PROBLEMS IN STUDENT ARGUMENTATIVE RESEARCH WRITING

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ABSTRACT

Research has shown that thematic progression can be a device for analyzing coherence of a written text. This study aims to find problems of thematic progression in students' argumentative research essays. The study analyzed 111 argumentative research essays written by 111 second-year university students enrolling in three different classes of academic writing instructed by three different teachers. The tools used for analysis were Halliday's theme-rheme model and Danes' thematic progression patterns. Five problems of thematic progression that interfered with writing coherence were found, including reversed order of theme-rheme, unidentified thematic progression, overuse of theme iteration, interrupted thematic progression, and inadequately developed thematic progression. On grounds of these results, the study drew practical implications for the teaching and learning of coherence in writing.

Keywords: *academic writing, coherence, theme, rheme, thematic progression*

INTRODUCTION

In teaching writing and more specifically, academic writing, teachers of English often receive student essays that contain sentences not being well connected to form a coherent text (Alonso & McCabe, 2003). One explanation is that coherence in writing has not received sufficient attention both in teachers' instruction in the classroom and in textbooks on academic writing. Teachers tend to concentrate their feedback on student writing in terms of grammar errors (Wang, 2007). Many textbooks instruct students in learning and using cohesive ties

(such as reference, substitution, conjunctions, or discourse connectors) with little mention of the logical flow of information throughout the whole text (Alonso & McCabe, 2003). In other words, teachers and textbooks focus more on teaching cohesion and most often ignore coherence, whereas cohesion and coherence are inseparable factors in building a communicative piece of writing.

The reason why coherence is usually neglected may be because, compared with cohesive devices being noticeable signposts in a text, it is rather an underlying aspect. However, research has shown that thematic progression can be a device for analyzing coherence of a written text (e.g. Ho, 2009; Shi, 2013; To, Lê, & Lê, 2015). Once coherence can be analyzed and common problems can be found, teachers and material/ textbook writers will be offered with useful guidelines to raise students' awareness of coherence effectively. Thus, this study attempts to find problems of thematic progression that affect coherence in students' argumentative research writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theme and Rheme

Theme is defined by Halliday (2014) as "the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context" (p. 89). Thus, in English, a clause usually starts with a theme. Halliday classifies Theme into three types: topical, interpersonal, and textual.

The topical theme, in theme-rheme analysis of an independent declarative clause, usually corresponds to the complete grammatical subject of the clause, with the exception of marked cases in which writers do not use grammatical subjects, but other elements of the clause (such as an adverbial group, a prepositional phrase functioning as an adverbial, or a complement) as topical themes (Halliday, 2014; Van Kopple, 1991). Hawes (2015) expands on this by including the grammatical subject in cases where the theme fails to express what the message of the clause will be about. For example, in the case where the theme of the clause is just a simple adjunct (an adverb or an adverb phrase) as in "very carefully she put him back on his feet," the theme will be extended to the subject "she" in addition to the adjunct "very

carefully.”

Besides the topical theme, an entire theme of a clause can also include other elements that are the interpersonal theme (including vocative, modal/ comment adjunct, and finite verbal operator) and the textual theme (including continuative, conjunction, and conjunctive adjunct) provided that they precede the topical theme (Halliday, 2014).

Hence, the typical order of an unmarked theme structure in a declarative clause is the textual theme followed by the interpersonal theme, and finally the topical theme. Any element occurring after the topical theme belongs to the Rheme, which, as Halliday (2014) defines, is “the remainder of the message, the part in which the Theme is developed” (p. 89). The following sentence gives an example of the theme types outlined above:

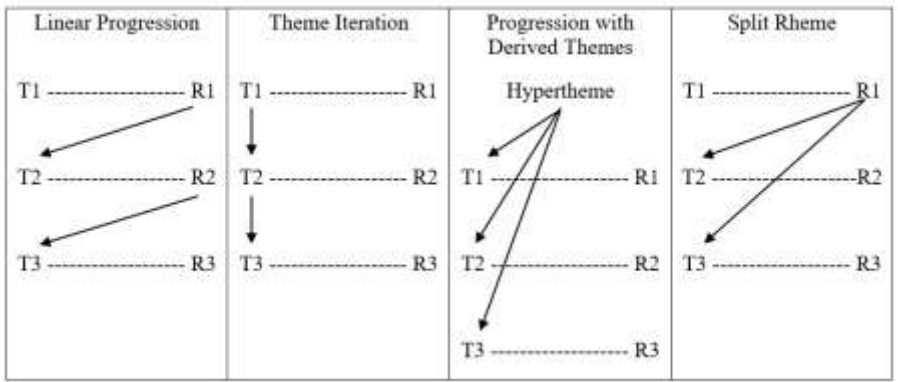
Example 1: Theme types and rheme

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Therefore, | in my opinion, | schools | should teach more life skills. |
| textual theme | interpersonal theme | topical theme | rheme |
| (a conjunctive adjunct) | (a modal/ comment adjunct) | (the subject of the clause) | |

Thematic Progression

Thematic Progression involves the ways ideas are developed in a text; more specifically, it involves the relations among themes and rhemes of the text (Fries, 1995). Danes (as cited in Fries, 1995) presents three patterns of thematic progression, namely Linear Thematic Progression, Theme Iteration, and Progression with Derived Themes. Linear Progression is formed when the theme of each succeeding (simple) sentence derives from the rheme of its previous sentence. Theme Iteration is built when the same theme is used with different rhemes. In Progression with Derived Themes, subsequent themes are derived from a superordinate idea which can be a theme or rheme presented in the first (independent) clause of the text, the title of the text, or the implied overall topic of the text. Danes (as cited in McCabe, 1999) also proposes Split Rheme pattern where the two ideas of a rheme are successively developed into themes in subsequent clauses. The

following figures illustrate these patterns in diagrams followed by an example for each pattern. Each example is in turn diagrammed with the clause numbers, slashes, and italics added for clearer illustration.



Example 2: Linear Progression

(1) Several researchers have explored the connections between parts of clauses and the communicative roles they play. (2) In doing so, they have introduced [...] sets of terms such as *topic* and *comment*, *psychological subject* and *psychological predicate*, *presupposition* and *focus*, *given information* and *new information*, *theme* and *focus*, *theme* and *enunciation*, and *theme*, *transition*, and *rheme*. (3) As this long list may suggest, this body of research can be confusing and difficult to use, [...]

(1) Several researchers / *have explored the connections between parts of clauses and the communicative roles they play.*

(2) *In doing so,* / they have introduced [...] sets of terms such as [...]

(3) *As this long list may suggest,* / this body of research can be confusing and difficult to use, [...]

Example 3: Theme Iteration

(1) In summary, Halliday’s system of theme-rheme analysis is complex and will have to be refined in the future. (2) But his system provides a clear and consistent means by which researchers can analyze clauses into parts that play communicative roles in discourse and discuss the nature of those roles. (3) Moreover, Halliday’s system may well have

some interesting implications for writing researchers in their own specific areas of investigation. (Van Kopple, 1991, p. 343)

(1) *In summary, Halliday's system of theme-rheme analysis/* is complex and will have to be refined in the future.

(2) *But his system/* provides a clear and consistent means by which researchers can analyze clauses into parts that play communicative roles in discourse and discuss the nature of those roles.

(3) *Moreover, Halliday's system/* may well have some interesting implications for writing researchers in their own specific areas of investigation.

Example 4: Progression with Derived Themes

(1) New Jersey is flat along the coast and southern portion; (2) the northwestern region is mountainous. (3) The coastal climate is mild, (4) but there is considerable cold in the mountain areas during the winter months. (5) Summers are fairly hot. (6) The leading industrial production includes chemicals, processed food, coal, petroleum, metals and electrical equipment. (Danes, as cited in McCabe, 1999, p. 173)

(1) *New Jersey* [Hypertheme] / is flat along the coast and southern portion;

(2) *the northwestern region* / is mountainous.

(3) *The coastal climate* / is mild,

(5) *Summers* / are fairly hot.

(6) *The leading industrial production/* includes chemicals, processed food, coal,...

Example 5: Split Rheme

(1) Classroom management involves both decisions and actions. (2) The actions are what is done in the classroom, eg rearranging the chairs. (3) The decisions are about whether to do these actions [...] (Scrivener, 2011, p. 55)

(1) *Classroom management / involves both decisions and actions.*

(2) *The actions/* are what is done in the classroom, eg rearranging the chairs.

(3) *The decisions* / are about whether to do these actions [...]

In a paragraph or a text, the patterns presented above can be found coexisting and intertwining, and can have variations. This is shown in the following paragraph from Shi (2013, p. 1642).

Example 6: Coexisting and intertwining thematic progression patterns

(1) *Last week I* / went to the theatre. (2) *I* / had a very good seat. (3) *The play* / was very interesting. (4) *I* / did not enjoy it. (5) *A young man and a young woman* / were sitting behind me. (6) *They* / were talking loudly. (7) *I* / got very angry. (8) *I* / could not hear the actors. (9) *I* / turned round. (10) *I* / looked at the man and the woman angrily. (11) *They* / did not pay any attention. (12) *In the end, I* / could not bear it. (13) *I* / turned round again. 'I can't hear a word!' *I* said angrily. (14) 'It's none of your business,' *the young man* said rudely. 'This is a private conversation!'

Here it could be identified that clauses 1 and 2 made a continuous theme iteration with the same theme "I." Clauses 1, 2, and 4 formed a theme iteration with clause 3 standing in between. This is an extended theme iteration pattern (Shi, 2013). Clause 3 in its turn formed a converse linear progression with clause 4, because the theme "the play" became the rheme "it" (Shi, 2013). Clauses 5 and 6 built a continuous theme iteration. Another continuous theme iteration could be found among clauses 7, 8, 9, and 10. Clauses 10 and 11 constituted a linear progression by connecting the rheme "the man and the woman" and the theme "they." Clauses 12, 13, and 14 again made a theme iteration pattern. Clause 15 could be seen to make an extended linear with clause 10 or an extended theme iteration with clause 11.

Thus, only within a paragraph, there are many progression patterns coexisting and intertwining with adjacent clauses connecting to one another or with clauses connecting to one another over a distance of many intervening clauses. All of these connections bring coherence to a text.

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 111 second-year university

students enrolling in three academic writing classes instructed by three teachers. They had Vietnamese as their native language with an intermediate English proficiency level including academic writing skills.

There were 37 students in Class A, 39 students in Class B, and 35 students in Class C. The course was Academic Writing 3, using *Academic Writing Skills 3 Student's Book* (written by Chin, Reid, Wray, and Yamazaki, and published by Cambridge University Press) as the core textbook.

Prior to attending this course, the students had completed two previous academic writing courses, namely Academic Writing 1 and Academic Writing 2. Each of the three writing courses lasted 10 weeks with 3 hours of meeting per week. These courses aimed to prepare students for their future major studies of English Teaching Methodology, Translation and Interpretation, and English for Business Studies. However, it should be noted that theme, rheme, and thematic progression were not covered in any of the three courses.

Procedure

The three classes underwent a similar procedure of teaching and learning. The students first formed groups of their choosing. Then together they researched their writing topic by using library and Internet-based resources, and finally created an outline for the body paragraphs. Each stage in this process was checked by the teacher of the class.

On grounds of the group outline, each student was asked to write a complete research essay at home on an individual basis. The essay must comprise five paragraphs, with an introductory paragraph followed by three body paragraphs and ended with a concluding paragraph. Although the group outline formed the basis of the essay, the students were encouraged to express ideas in their own way. Their individual essays were collected for analysis.

There were a few differences in the number of group members and the writing topics among the three classes. In Class A, all the groups consisted of either four or five students. They were asked to choose either of the topics taken from Evans (1998, p. 72, see App. A). In Class

B, most groups included five students, one group had two members, and one had three members. The topics can be seen in App. B. In Class C, the students were asked to form groups of maximum four members. Two groups had two members, and one group had three members. Each group was assigned a different topic (see App. C).

On the whole, the essay corpus had 111 essays and consisted of roughly 125,661 words.

Data analysis

The essays were analyzed in the following steps:

First, numbering was applied to the essays as well as every independent clause (or simple sentence) in each essay.

Second, the theme and rheme in each numbered clause were identified, using Halliday's theme-rheme model with Hawes' expansion. Some points which were not covered in the literature review need to be noted here:

- In complex sentences, if the dependent clause stood at the beginning of the sentence, it was identified as the theme of the sentence. If it stood at the end, it was identified as belonging to the rheme (Van Kopple, 1991).
- Citation phrases were classified as interpersonal themes (Lautamatti, 1978; Mauranen, 1996).
- In sentences with dummy subjects, the real subjects were identified as the topical themes (Lautamatti, 1978).

Third, from the themes and rhemes identified in an essay, the different thematic progression patterns developed through these themes and rhemes were traced. Here whenever a thematic progression pattern could not be established, the reasons why there were not any connections were examined.

Finally, qualitative content analysis was applied to determine any common patterns established in the data.

Results

Five problems of thematic progression that interfered with writing coherence were found, namely reversed order of theme-rheme, unidentified thematic progression, overuse of theme iteration, interrupted thematic progression, and inadequately developed thematic progression. The table below displays the number of problems found in each class as well as their frequencies compared with one another:

| | Class A | Class B | Class C | Total of each problem |
|---|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------|
| Number of essays | 37 | 39 | 35 | |
| Total number of words | 25,853 | 36,808 | 63,000 | |
| Total problems in each class | 35 | 25 | 47 | |
| Reversed order of theme-rheme | 13 | 1 | 6 | 20 |
| Unidentified thematic progression | 7 | 9 | 9 | 25 |
| Overuse of theme iteration | 2 | 4 | 8 | 14 |
| Interrupted thematic progression | 7 | 9 | 21 | 37 |
| Inadequately developed thematic progression | 6 | 2 | 3 | 11 |

As can be seen from the table, the problem of interrupted thematic progression showed the highest number of instances (37), but more than half (21 out of 37) was found in Class C. There were 20 instances of reversed order of theme-rheme, but up to 13 came from Class A, while Class B had only one case. Class C revealed twice as many instances of theme iteration overuse (8/14) as Class B (4/14) and more than twice as Class A (2/14). The problem of inadequately developed thematic progression had more instances from Class A (6) but less than half and only half of those from Class B and Class C respectively.

Reversed order of theme-rheme

One problem found was reversal of placement order in what should have been placed in the theme and in the rheme in a clause. It was seen that ideas that had never been mentioned before were placed in the theme instead of the rheme. Though this problem did not cause great interference to coherence, it made coherence somewhat weaker. As in this extract,

(4) First, it can be clearly seen that traditional values / are the basis for the development of modern society. (5) Rockwell emphasized that the thing passed on from one era to the next, generate a livelihood, energetic stream of beat and predictability / is tradition. (Essay 26, Class A)

In clause 5, the definition of traditional values, which was a new idea, was put in the theme, whereas the aforementioned idea “tradition” was instead put in the rheme. Obviously it can be argued that clauses 4 and 5 still formed a converse linear progression. However, as the theme of clause 5 carried too much new information, it made reading difficult to process, and thus reversing the theme and rheme of this clause would have improved coherence.

Unidentified thematic progression

Another problem identified was the absence of links between the themes and between the themes and rhemes of the clauses. This influenced coherence seriously. In the following extract from a body paragraph, no clear connections could be established among the clauses:

(9) First, if you can't decide your own birthday, / you should not decide your death day. (10) Nobody / has right to decide someone's life. (11) When people catch a disease, / they are needed care of it till be able to be on the road to recovery, excepting some those situations have no last chances. (12) Deliberately ending the human life / is wrong, because life is sacred and endurance of suffering confers its own dignity. (Essay 36, Class B)

Sometimes even though cohesive devices were used, the writing still

made little sense, since there were no chains among the themes and rhemes of the clauses. In the extract below, though “for example” was used, clause 31 was not a related example of clause 30:

(30) Moreover, Bakshi showed that a strain of genetically modified soybean / produced lower levels of phytoestrogen compounds, believed to protect against heart disease and cancer, than traditional soybeans (Bakshi, 2003). (31) For example, the milk from cows injected with gamma bovine growth hormone (rBGH) / contains higher levels of fat and bacteria, and can therefore go sour faster. (Essay 34, Class C)

Overuse of theme iteration

There was the problem that the progression of theme iteration was unconsciously overused when the same themes were applied over consecutive clauses, but the ideas expressed in the rhemes were not developed in any way. In the following excerpt, there was a progression of the same theme “computers” (or “they” and “it” [sic] to mean the same subject). However, the ideas in the rhemes were separated like a list of different ideas without any developing the others:

(8) Nowadays, *Computers* / are increasingly improved and gigantically developed all over the world, (9) *they* / are great invention of human history. (10) *It [sic]* / have changed human’s lives including habits, lifestyles. (11) *It [sic]* / is the best all human’s demand and serve many area of study. (Essay 20, Class B)

Interrupted thematic progression

In the case of interrupted thematic progression, the writing first focused on one subject, then moved on to another subject, and then went back to the first subject. In other words, there were other ideas standing in between a progression.

(31) It [that people living in big cities worry about accommodation] / is not because there is no *place to live* but because the price is just too high for them to afford. (32) Moving to big cities / means people have to get used to travel by bus or

car because places they want to go might be very far. (33) And that / will cost them a lot of money. (34) Australians / spend pretty much money on their transport, (35) but they / might be surprised to know just how much. (36) The average household / will spend fourteen thousand dollars a year on transport in Hobart, but up to twenty-two thousand dollars a year if they live in Western Sydney (Johnston, R. 2016). (37) They / not only have to worry about the money for the gasoline but also the vehicle preservation fee, (38) everything / costs double in the cities and so is preservation fee. (39) Furthermore, *renting an apartment or a house to live* in the cities / is also very expensive. (40) Zillow (2015) indicates that saving an amount of money, suitable for a mortgage and looking for a cheap place to buy / still remain challenging problems for many people. (Essay 29, Class C)

As could be seen in the above extract, clause 31 introduced the idea of accommodation in a big city which was expressed by the phrase “place to live” in the rheme. However, clauses 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38 only discussed the problem of transport in a big city. Then accommodation issue was brought back in clause 39 through the phrase “renting an apartment or a house to live.”

In this problem, analysis of the essay data revealed a progression could be interrupted by one clause up to nine clauses, and even different subjects could interfere one another within one paragraph.

Inadequately developed thematic progression

The problem of inadequately developed thematic progression emerged when, although certain progression patterns could be identified, the progressions were incomplete. To put it another way, the ideas were not developed fully.

(13) Being under unclean atmosphere, people / are not only facing air pollution, but also they have to cope with unreliable supply of *food and water*. (14) All the *food*, which are being sold in the city, / come from the farm, the country; (15) therefore, they / have to being transfer in long distance to come in hand of the buyers (16) and because of wanting to keep the food looking

fresh and delicious after moving such far distance, / sellers may have put chemical in them. (17) According to Roux (2011), the chemicals used in these foods / are known to cause cancer, birth defects, nervous system and brain damage, and developmental problems in children. (18) The unreliable food we consumed / is one of the most common causes of serious diseases humans in urban areas are facing today. In conclusion, [...] (Essay 28, Class C)

In the above extract, the writer put forward the idea of “food and water” in clause 13 as difficulties of living in a big city. However, only the problem of “food” was analyzed from clauses 14 to 18, while the problem of “water” was never mentioned anywhere.

In the following excerpt from a body paragraph of an essay on the importance of traditional values, after mentioning the United States and its example of traditional value, the student used “the royal families of United Kingdom” (clause 9) as another example to illustrate her main point that traditional values reflect characteristics of each country. Here, the clauses looked connected on the surface because there was a derived theme progression between clauses 9 and 10 (“Queen Elizabeth II” could be seen as a subordinate idea of the superordinate idea “the royal families of United Kingdom”), and a theme iteration from clauses 10 to 12 (“Queen Elizabeth II” – “she” – “she”). However, in the context of what was being written, the derived theme progression was not developed fully, as the theme “the royal families” implied many members, but only the Queen was stated. In addition, the rheme “actively charities globally” was indicated in clause 9 but not developed further in any subsequent clause:

(5) First, traditional values / show specific characters of each people and each country. (6) They / are the symbol of countries, making them become famous all over the world. (7) Example, the United States is the greatest country on the earth, and a free country having various cultures, (8) however, their generally traditional faith is the trust in God in the Protestant religion. (9) The royal families of United Kingdom / are renowned for their actively charities globally. (10) Queen Elizabeth II, aged 86, / is the head of British Royal Family and has reigned for more than

60 years. (11) She / has become the oldest supremacy, British monarch by outliving her great-great-grandmother. (12) She / is also the second longest reigning monarch. (Essay 11, Class A)

DISCUSSION

The fact that there were more instances of a problem in one class than in the other classes could be explained that these problems have equal importance. Any of them may appear in a learner's writing text, but probably with different frequencies depending on the specific writer and the writing topic.

Of the results revealed in the study, those of reversed order of theme-rheme, unidentified thematic progression, overuse of theme iteration, and interrupted thematic progression were in line with previous studies. Thomas (1999) indicated a similar problem to the problem of reversed order of theme-rheme but explained it in the realms of given-new information. The result of unidentified thematic progression is in accordance with Jalilifar's (2010) and Wang's (2007) studies in which they termed the same problem respectively as "miscellaneous thematic progression patterns" (p. 39) and "disconnected ideas" (p. 170). The problem of overuse of theme iteration is similar to that of "overuse of constant progression" in Alonso and McCabe (1998, p. 22), Jalilifar (2010, p. 43), and Wang (2007, p. 171). Meanwhile, the problem of interrupted thematic progression was quite similarly found and categorised "intervening material between mention in Rheme and subsequent thematization" in Alonso and McCabe (1998, p. 23). The relation of these results to previous research demonstrates that these problems are very likely to be universal, which means learners of writing, despite their different first languages, proficiency levels, and types of writing learned, tend to experience similar challenges in constructing coherence.

The result of inadequately developed thematic progression was particularly found in this study. It is possible that learners, in their writing, may put forward an idea but may be unable to develop it to the full. However, this problem showed the fewest cases among others, so they could simply be typical of the students in this study.

From the results, it can be seen that learners are usually aware of

building a typical English paragraph with its components, namely the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence. However, they seem unaware of connecting these components, possibly due to a lack of instruction from teachers and textbooks which usually explain the paragraph structure in depth but hardly note that the ideas conveyed in these components need to be linked clearly and logically to one another. For this reason, there can emerge the problems of inadequately developed thematic progression where the rheme of a topic sentence is not developed fully, and overuse of theme iteration and interrupted thematic progression within supporting sentences.

Even though some studies have recognized that instruction of thematic progression may be difficult for students (e.g. Ho, 2009; Wei, 2017), awareness can be raised unconsciously. When giving feedback on student writing products, teachers can explain the problems by using simplified and common language based on the theory of thematic progression, instead of specialised language of thematic progression itself, and then give practical suggestions for revision.

Many writing textbooks do not have tasks to raise awareness in coherence, possibly for fear of the complicated nature of this issue. However, exercises built on the basis of thematic progression, such as those suggested in Brown and Yule (1983, p.130), can be designed. Students can be asked to choose, from a set of sentences, one sentence that is the most coherent continuation of a given sentence. For instance, a sentence such as *The Prime Minister stepped off the plane* is given and students are asked to choose a continuation between *Journalists immediately surrounded her* and *She was immediately surrounded by journalists*, or between *All the journalists were immediately smiled at by her* and *She immediately smiled at all the journalists*. In both cases, the second choices will be better, whether the sentence structure is active or passive, as they will make it easier for readers to process and comprehend the information conveyed when the same subject is maintained or a theme iteration progression is formed here. With these exercises, even lower level students could get a feel of developing ideas coherently in writing.

At higher levels, students can be asked to read different texts and

decide and discuss which one is more coherent and why, with incoherent texts being built from the problems of thematic progression found in the body of research. Another task can be asking students to unscramble sentences to form a coherent text, in which, for example, there are many points in the text so that they learn to finish developing one point before moving to another without interrupting one by another. A more challenging task can be rewriting texts to make them more coherent when they have to rearrange texts with ideas interrupting one another, extend ideas in the rhemes of a text overusing theme iteration, rewrite sentences with themes and rhemes being reversed, or develop rhemes to the full.

To students at advanced level of language proficiency and writing skills and/ or with purposes of learning academic writing intensively to pursue higher education, it may be necessary to explicitly teach and practice several common progression patterns such as Linear, Theme Iteration, Split Rheme. Simple diagrams and examples may be presented, then students do the tasks recommended above, and finally try to apply what they learn to their own writing. Doing so may prepare students with the ability to write more sensibly and less intuitively.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to find thematic progression problems in students' argumentative research writing. Its results can contribute to providing useful guidelines for teachers to give feedback on student writing coherence and material/ textbook writers to design exercises and tasks for raising students' awareness of coherence.

Whilst the study generated much useful data, its limitations are acknowledged, most especially the small research sample. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be conducted on student problems of thematic progression, and research should utilise various writing genres and include learners from diverse backgrounds, in order to support the preparation of relevant teaching-learning guidelines that make positive contributions to improving student writing skills.

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Appendix A: Writing topics used in Class A

Topic 1: “Traditional values are irrelevant to modern society.” Do you agree?

Topic 2: “It is important to follow fashion.” Do you agree?

Appendix B: Writing topics used in Class B

Topic 1: Are people today too dependent on computers?

Topic 2: Is there too much pressure on teenagers to go to college?

Topic 3: Should cigarettes and other tobacco products be outlawed?

Topic 4: Should parents spank their children?

Topic 5: Should prostitution be legalized?

Topic 6: Do patients have the right to die via physician-assisted suicide?

Appendix C: Writing topics used in Class C

Topic 1: Nowadays animal experiments are widely used to develop new medicines and to test the safety of other products. Some people argue that these experiments should be banned because it is morally wrong to cause animals to suffer, while others are in favour of them because of their benefits to humanity. What is your opinion?

Topic 2: Nowadays, anime has become very popular. Overtime it has been imported into Vietnam. This creates many arguments amongst the people about whether anime is worth watching since Vietnamese animation contains valuable characteristics. What is your opinion about this statement?

Topic 3: Human euthanasia is a global controversial issue. Many people consider that it is completely wrong. Others support it because of mercy killing. What is your opinion?

Topic 4: It is effective for English learners to learn English skills through drama. What is your opinion?

Topic 5: Is vegetarianism good or bad?

Topic 6: Should the retirement age be increased?

Topic 7: Some people believe that students should be given one long vacation each year. Others believe that students should have several

short vacations throughout the year. Which viewpoint do you agree with?

Topic 8: Some people prefer living in a big city because of its advantages; however, others are against this idea. What is your opinion?

Topic 9: Should students in high school spend more time to learn social subjects such as literature, history and geography like natural subjects?

Topic 10: Should we eat genetically modified food?

Appendix D: Extracts from student writing samples

Essay 26, Class A, Topic 1 (traditional values)

Tradition and modernity are the fundamental elements presenting in the development of any societies. Some people believe that society will gradually become obsolete if it follows traditional values and the development of a country is due to the acquisition of new things. However, in reality, traditional values are relevant to modern society because they are the basis to the development of modernity and provide a framework for people.

First, it can be clearly seen that traditional values are the basis for the development of modern society. Rockwell emphasized that the thing passed on from one era to the next, generate a livelihood, energetic stream of beat and predictability is tradition. As a result, strong and good traditional values will make a country develop. Traditional values – selected and handed down through generations – form good people, good societies, and above all, good countries. Moreover, national identity is made by traditional values. According to McDowall (2014), each country and culture around the globe owns its traditions, which have their roots in history and have been preserved now. Inheriting the good traditional values do not only make people recognize the strengths of their nation but also help them to develop their own society. Traditional values, therefore, are the foundation for the development of an advanced society.

Another advantage of good traditions is providing a framework, especially being the personality measurement for people. The perspectives' standards are formed by traditional values. Following the beneficial traditions help people to realize what is acceptable and is

unacceptable; accordingly, they improve their own personality and contribute to their society's advancement. Many traditions are still preserved because they build good relationships among people. Humanity, teacher veneration, solidarity,... are the cases in point. Moreover, traditional values are the basic to the development of social rules. To construct social rules in a proper way, people need to choose the proper traditions. The selective process of traditional values is necessary to make themselves more suitable for modern society. Petkovic (2007) insists that positive cultural legacy's conservation, of several predominantly acknowledged traditional components which build country's cultural distinctness, is not debated (p.24). Not only do appropriate traditions participate in the social rules' creation but they also engage in the law's formation. People not following the ethical standards will only be criticized, whereas in non-compliance with social rules and law, they will be fined, arrested – or even sentenced capital punishment. Thus, good traditional values bring people into a framework and construct a modern society as well. [...]

Essay 36, Class B, Topic 6 (physician-assisted suicide)

[...] First, if you can't decide your own birthday, you should not decide your death day. Nobody has right to decide someone's life. When people catch a disease, they are needed care of it till be able to be on the road to recovery, excepting some those situations have no last chances. Deliberately ending the human life is wrong, because life is sacred and endurance of suffering confers its own dignity. Moreover, physician-assisted suicide ruins some cultures and religions. For instance, the Vietnamese people said that: "While there is life, there is hope". People believe that there is even a tiny piece of hoping, they must to be belong with it until the end. No one knows what will come in tomorrow. It is all of a sudden. According to Listland (2015) murder is considered as intentionally killing one person. In Catholics, physician-assisted suicide is wrong. Because God teach human being "Thou shall not kill". Therefore any form of killing is not permissible. In short, physician-assisted suicide is not a option.

Second, physician-assisted suicide or right-to-die should not be legal because it is considered as a form of homicide. Anyway, killing people is unacceptable. Doctors use this method to help patients close to dying, help them not have to endure pain any more, this job maybe

good in some aspects. But in other ones, it ruins the responsibility of a doctor that is supposed to be. Doctors whom people always need when they catch an illness, weakness. People believe and need doctors' guidance and advice for their health. People consider doctors as someone who can treat and heal their lives. In short, the main purpose of doctors is saving and not killing people. (Listland, 2015). Moreover, family, relatives and social should encourage patients try to through the pain instead of persuading they die. Persuading someone to die which is considered conscienceless. Family, relatives should encourage patients to help them have more motivation to overcome illness. No one of us can know what will happen in future, so what we can do is waiting and believing in fate. Who knows what miracles will appear. Therefore, physician-assisted suicide is unacceptable. [...]

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A SHORT CRITICAL COMPARISON BETWEEN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE FROM TWO ASPECTS: PHONOLOGY AND SYNTAX

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ABSTRACT

There are many discrepancies related to syntax in Vietnamese that are strikingly different from that is in English. Accordingly, both language learners from English and from Vietnam make grammar mistakes when using English unintentionally more or less because of the influence of their first language, or their habit of using language. Therefore, this paper assays to issue some critical description as well as parse the disparities in terms of some basic phonology and syntax between English and Vietnamese so that language teachers and learners can compass in detail those differences consciously and avoid the bad influences of first language on using and learning foreign language.

Keywords: *contrastive linguistics, English, Vietnamese, syntax, phonology.*

INTRODUCTION

When we can happen to meet a Chinese or any English speakers from the Expanding Circle, it is easy to recognize from their English what nationality they are. For example, if you hear a Vietnamese learning English in Vietnam speaks English, you can find some English words having Vietnamese sounds or some final sounds are dropped. For this issue, skilled teachers should know and understand clearly the native language and also the language they are teaching. Consequently, they will know what difficulties that their students might encounter and help students to surmount these difficulties as well as help students reduce at least their own accent in speaking English, which causes some unnatural sounds in speaking. What's more, syntax is also one of

the key factors in language studies that captures the interest of language teachers and learners. There are many discrepancies related to syntax in Vietnamese that are strikingly different from those are in English. Accordingly, language learners from both Britain and Vietnam make or some grammar mistakes when using English unintentionally because of the habit of using language or the influence of the first language, respectively. Therefore, this paper attempts to issue some critical descriptions as well as address some key disparities in terms of phonology and syntax between English and Vietnamese so that language teachers and learners can compass in detail those differences consciously and avoid the bad influences of the first language on using and learning a foreign language.

CRITICAL COMPARISON

Phonology

Tone and Intonation

Vietnamese is a tonal language (Crystal, 2003, p. 174) while English has “intonation”. In Vietnamese, tone is a significant structure of syllable structure. Regarding tones, Vietnamese has 6 different tones: mid-level (ngang), lowering falling (huyền), high raising broken (ngã), low falling raising (hỏi), high raising (sắc), and low falling broken (nặng). Vietnamese tones are different in different dialects. In the Northern, there are six distinctly different tones while Southern and the Centre of Vietnam have five tones because the high raising broken and the low falling raising are used the same as the low falling raising (Emenau, 1951 and Duong, 1971). Furthermore, it is the ability to change meaning when changing tones in Vietnamese that is the most significant feature of tonal language – Vietnamese. For example, in Vietnamese, the word: “ma”, which means “ghost” in English, can immediately change the meaning when it is spoken as “má” – which means “mother, or the way a son, a daughter calls their mommy”. This feature can be explained because Vietnamese is a monosyllabic language while English is a polysyllabic language. That means the whole word in Vietnamese changes lexically and grammatically if the tone of the word is changed. In English, the “tone” in each syllable - intonation changed will lead to the change of the meaning in that sentence. If the phonemic tone is typical in tonal language such as

Vietnamese, intonation is used in English to express attitude, expression, emotion and functions as a signal to express if that sentence is an affirmative, request or questions. Intonation in English, according to Roach (2010), has four considerable functions: (1) to express an attitude of the speakers, (2) to stress important information, (3) to differentiate the grammatical work, (4) to indicate the occurrence of the speech. Firstly, in English, as well as in Vietnamese sometimes, listeners can guess the attitude of the speakers by their intonation that is used to express speakers' surprise, anger, interest etc. Furthermore, Kumasi's paper (2003) strongly proves that without being in the context, intonation in English is also a way for the listeners to guess the attitude of the speakers. Take these two examples in both languages to prove this function is almost the same in two languages:

In English:



This exercise is so difficult. (Falling – Express neutral emotion)



This exercise is so difficult. (Raising – Express strong emotion)

In Vietnamese:



Bài tập này khó quá. (Falling – Neutral)



Bài tập này khó quá. (Raising - Strong emotion)

Secondly, intonation in English helps to highlight important information. This function is related to prominence syllable (Roach, 1998, p. 163). In addition, Celce – Murcia et al (2002, p.176) contended that prominence in English focuses on three main situations: to stress new information, to emphasize important information and to show the contrast. This function is more or less related to one of the most important features of prosody. That is a stressed syllable. For example, the meanings of these two sentences are different if they are spoken in the following ways (the capitalized syllables are the

stressed syllables).

(1) I want to buy a LAdy's socks.

(2) I want to buy a lady's SOCKS.

This function is radically different from Vietnamese because Vietnamese mostly uses tones on the whole sentence to express ideas. Thirdly, intonation in English helps listeners to differentiate the grammatical words. In comparison to Vietnamese, it is a unique characteristic of English. Halliday (1967) stated by intonation, listeners can the grammatical state of the speakers and the “modality” state, i.e., a question, a request, guessing. While in Vietnamese, there is a syntactic marker that signalize if that is a question or a request. Lastly, about informational functions, Ranalli (2002) asserts intonation and context have a close relationship. By intonation, it is possible to guess what is going on in the conversation. For example, speaker can recognize a question from the speaker if there is raising intonation at the end of the sentence.

Consonants and Vowels

English has 24 consonants (Fromkin V. et al, 2009) categorized by three factors: place of articulation, voice and manner: /p/, /b/, /m/, /w/, /f/, /v/, /θ/ , /ð/, /t/, /d/, /n/, /s/, /z/, /l/, /r/ , /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /j/, /k/, /g/, /ŋ/ , /h/ , /w/ while it is quoted in Dao's paper (2007) that there are 21 initial consonants in the North and 22 ones in the South and also 8 ending consonants for both dialects in Vietnam (Doan Thien Thuat, 2006). Generally, consonants in English and Vietnamese are different in the amount. Therefore, there are some consonants available in English but not in Vietnamese. English shares some similar with Vietnamese such as /m/ /n/ /t/ /d/ /l/ /k/ /j/ /p/ /b/ /s/ /z/ /f/ /v/ and there are similar ending - consonants in English and Vietnamese: /p/, /t/, /k/, /m/, /n/ and “ng” - /ŋ/. It is hard for language learners to know where the place of consonants in a word – initial consonants or ending consonants or place of articulation is, which seems similar but different in each language. For example, /p/ in Vietnamese does not aspirate, as /p/ in English or in Vietnamese /g/ in “gà” (chicken) will not pronounce as a fricatives /g/ in English. However, this paper will focus mainly on the significant difference

between English consonants and Vietnamese consonants. It is consonant clusters such as /tʃ/ /ʃ/ /dʒ/ /ʒ/. There are no such consonants clusters in Vietnamese. There are Vietnamese learners tend to pronounce /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ in the same way and as /gi/ in initial consonant and as /ch/ in ending consonant. /tʃ/ and /ʃ/ are spoken as /s/ in North of Vietnam. Another significantly different consonants in English confuses Vietnamese learners are /θ/ and /ð/. Mostly, Vietnamese learners pronounce these consonants as /th/, which is indicated as /th/ in Vietnamese. Besides some similarities in consonants, there are some share vowels in English and Vietnamese. Two languages have the same singular vowels: /i/ /æ/ /ε/ /ɔ/ /ɒ/ and /u/ in “blue” (Tang, 2007). Vietnamese has five more typical vowels that find nowhere in any languages. Dinh and Nguyen (1998) named as /e/ - *bê* “baby caft,” /u/ as in *thư* “letter,” /ɤ/ as in *thơ* “poem,” /ɤ/ as in *sấm* “lightning” and /a/ as in *nằm* “lie”; and three true diphthongs /ie/ as in *tiền* - “money”, /uo/ as in *muốn* “want” and /uɤ/ as in *cướp* “rob”. With these diphthongs, English owns some significant ones: /ou/ /au/ /ai/ /ɔi/ /ei/. Vietnamese vowels are possible to combine in some ways: /ui/ (tuy - “however”), /oe/ (Huế - “Hue”), /oɤ/ (thủ - “when), /oɤ/ (thuật - “report”), /iew/ (nhiều - “a lot”), /uɤw/ (hươu - “stag”), /ɔaj/ (khoái - “enjoy”). English, whereas, has triphthongs, which Vietnamese is not exclusive, i.e.: /eiə/ /aiə/ /ɔiə/ /əuə/ /auə/.

Syntax

Passive voice

Passive Voice (PV) is one of the most typical features in English syntax and inflectional languages. However, the question if there is a passive voice in Vietnamese is still under discussion. First, English has transitive verbs and intransitive verbs, which is the root where PV comes from as well as the reason why English has two forms of sentence: Active Voice and Passive Voice. Vietnamese has no verbs like that therefore passive voice is used for some other specific functions. Generally, functions of PV in English and Vietnamese have some similarities. It is used to focus on the action not the doer. If in English there are many ways to express PV (using Be + Past Participle/ become, get/ have something done/ It is said that ...), Vietnamese uses mostly two main words: “bị” and “được”. Some viewers about the basic

structure of passive voice in English and Vietnamese:

English:

S (doer) + V + O (receiver) ...

S (receiver) + be + V (Past Participle) + (by + doer)

Vietnamese:

S (doer) + V + O (receiver)

S (receiver) + bị/ được + (O - doer) + V ...

In particular, regarding “syntactic similarities”, in the two structures above, the functions of subject and object in two languages are grammatically the same. Furthermore, doer in both languages is ignored. About the differences in syntax, first, in English there are many structures to express PV while Vietnamese has a maximum of about three expressions for PV. Second, Nguyen (2006) carefully analyzed the “obligatory and compulsory” parts of PV in two languages. English must have at least these functional words in a PV sentence: Be + Past Participle or Become/ get + Past Participle while Vietnamese must present: bị/ được + Verb. It can be inferred from the structure that the optional part in English is the doer whereas in Vietnamese it becomes an “essential” part.

For example: in English: (Active Voice) They killed Peter. → Peter was killed. (Passive Voice) while in Vietnamese: (Active Voice) Họ giết Peter. → Peter bị họ giết. (Passive Voice). It will be unnatural if, in Vietnamese, the cause, the agents are ignored. In terms of semantics, Vietnamese and English PV both are used to emphasize the goal, the influence of the action on the receiver. Semantically, it is obviously different to compare Vietnamese and English PV when considering the meaning of “bị” and “được” – one is objective and the other is subjective. For instance, “Tôi bị mời đến bữa tiệc” (I was invited to the party – and I don’t love to come.) and “Tôi được mời đến bữa tiệc” (I was invited to the party and I really wish to come.) English expresses the same meaning without implying a negative or positive attitude by the structure of PV. Lastly, about pragmatics, Asher (1994),

Negative Sentences

English and Vietnamese negative sentences also have some very

distinct features. First, about the similarities of negative sentences in English and Vietnamese, the negative sentence conveys negative meaning, refusing, with some common lexical words: “NOT” “NO” “KHÔNG” “CHẴNG”. Particularly, in Vietnamese, negative sentence includes one of these words (phrases): “không, không bao giờ, chẳng, chả, chưa, ừ, hiếm khi, mấy khi. English negative sentence presents some expressions: negative words with “no” “not” “never” “no one” “nobody”, negative adverbs “rarely” “barely” or other negative words (phrases). However, there are a lot of differences between English and Vietnamese negative sentences. English has a structure for a negative sentence as in this sentence: I have no money (S + V + no + N) while in Vietnamese, this structure is used as “Tôi không có tiền” (S + không + V + N). Syntactically, a negative sentence in English has the influence of tense and use the right auxiliary for example: “I didn’t sleep last night” not “I won’t sleep last night” while for any tenses, in Vietnamese, it is essential to add a negative word such as “không” “chẳng” to make a negative sentence. Another difference is a double negative. It is unnatural to use a double negative in English whereas double negative is used frequently in Vietnamese and to be able to express both positive and negative meaning, for example: “Cấm không được hút thuốc”. From this point, it is sure that one more similarity of the negative sentence in English and Vietnamese it is sure that it has a double negative.

CONCLUSION

As analyzing above, it is undeniable that although English and Vietnamese have their own linguistic features, regarding phonology and syntax. However, both languages share some common features. With these similarities, language learners can consider some linguistic equivalence so that it is easier to learn a new language. For some differences, teachers and learners can have a “contrast” viewpoint to understand clearly the special features of each language. Also, understanding the similarities and differences of two languages helps learners and teachers find out the solutions for some hard phonological or syntactical points.

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TEACHING CHINESE – JAPANESE SYMPOSIUM (IN VIETNAMESE)

USING ADJECTIVES AS ADVERBIALS IN CHINESE: TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES

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ABSTRACT

In Chinese, adjectives are used as adverbials to describe or express actions. Some errors often occur in the process of translation, including the omission of non-translating adjectives as adverbials. The reason for these errors is usually that many adjectives modify verbs at the same time, or that they cannot confirm the semantic orientation. Another reason is that they mistake adjectives as adverbials and adjectives as complements. Therefore, we will discuss the use of Chinese adjectives as adverbials from the perspectives of semantic orientation and translation theory, and put forward some translation techniques in the process of translating Chinese adjectives into Vietnamese, and vice versa.

Keywords: *adjectives, translation.*

MỘT VÀI GỢI Ý TRONG CÁCH PHIÊN DỊCH TRƯỜNG HỢP TÍNH TỪ LÀM TRẠNG NGỮ TRONG TIẾNG TRUNG QUỐC

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TÓM TẮT

Thành phần tính từ làm trạng ngữ trong tiếng Trung mang ý nghĩa miêu tả hoặc nêu rõ phương thức cho hành động. Trong quá trình phiên dịch thường bị người phiên dịch bỏ qua vì nhiều lý do, trong đó do có nhiều tính từ làm trạng ngữ cùng lúc xuất hiện nên bị bỏ sót khi phiên dịch, do câu quá dài và không xác định được định hướng ngữ nghĩa (语义指向-semantic orientation), một lý do khác nữa đó là sự nhầm lẫn chức năng của tính từ làm trạng ngữ với chức năng của tính từ làm bổ ngữ. Do đó trong bài viết này chúng tôi sẽ xét tính từ làm trạng ngữ trong tiếng Trung từ góc độ định hướng ngữ nghĩa đến lý thuyết phiên dịch và nêu lên một vài kỹ xảo trong quá trình phiên dịch trường hợp tính từ làm trạng ngữ trong tiếng Trung từ tiếng Trung Quốc ra tiếng Việt Nam và ngược lại.

Từ khóa: *Trạng ngữ, tính từ, phiên dịch.*

Trong quá trình giảng dạy tiếng Trung Quốc cho đối tượng là sinh viên chuyên ngành Ngôn ngữ Trung Quốc (NNTQ), chúng tôi phát hiện rằng có rất nhiều lỗi sai trong quá trình phiên dịch tính từ làm trạng ngữ từ tiếng Trung sang tiếng Việt và ngược lại. Những lỗi sai này thường được xuất phát từ kết cấu cấu trúc câu, từ vựng ... Do đó trong bài viết này chúng tôi sẽ từ góc độ nhỏ là kỹ xảo phiên dịch trong phương pháp phiên dịch để nêu ra một vài kỹ xảo phiên dịch, chủ yếu là việc chuyển đổi trong quá trình phiên dịch tính từ làm trạng ngữ giữa tiếng Trung và tiếng Việt.

1. Dịch bảo lưu cấu trúc câu, trật tự từ (Dịch trực tiếp)

Trong tiếng Trung, vị trí của tính từ làm trạng ngữ ở phía trái của vị ngữ động từ, trong trường hợp này chúng ta có thể dựa vào ý nghĩa của tính từ để dịch trực tiếp cho tính từ, trật tự của vị trí tính từ làm trạng ngữ không thay đổi, vẫn giữ nguyên vị trí trước vị ngữ động từ. Ví dụ:

(1) 她 **毫不犹豫地** 跨进 整容所。《桥梁》- 汉语教程)

Cô ấy **không chút do dự** bước vào Thẩm mỹ viện.

(2) 男士 见到 女儿, **高兴地** 伸手去 摸 上衣口袋。(《桥梁》- 汉语教程)

Người đàn ông nhìn thấy con gái, **vui mừng** đưa tay sờ túi áo.

(3) Họ **ngấm ngầm** ghen với hắn. (Truyện ngắn - Nam Cao)

他们 **暗暗(地)** 妒忌 (对) 他。(他们对他暗暗地妒忌。)

(4) Trũi hay nhìn **trộm** tôi. (Để mèn phiêu lưu ký - Tô Hoài)

土蟋蟀 常 看 **偷** 我。(土蟋蟀常常偷看我。)

Trong một số trường hợp, để giúp cho nghĩa gốc của nguyên văn được bảo lưu và phiên dịch với mục đích biểu đạt nghĩa gốc một cách đầy đủ và hoàn chỉnh chúng ta có thể áp dụng kỹ xảo dịch trực tiếp (hay nói cách khác là dịch thẳng). Đối với kỹ xảo phiên dịch chúng ta không cần thiết phải hoán đổi vị trí của tính từ hoặc cụm tính từ làm trạng ngữ, vẫn giữ nguyên vị trí của nguyên văn.

2. Dịch điều chỉnh cấu trúc câu, trật tự từ

Do trong tiếng Việt tính từ làm trạng ngữ có vị trí tương đối linh hoạt, có thể đứng ở đầu câu, có thể đứng ở cuối câu. Nên khi phiên dịch chủ yếu cần xác định đâu là trạng ngữ, để khi phiên dịch sang tiếng Trung Quốc không bị dịch sai vị trí cũng như hiểu nhầm sang bổ ngữ. Ví dụ:

(5) **Vội vàng**, Bác Lê đẩy con ra vợ lấy bó lúa. (Truyện ngắn -

Nam Cao)

急忙, 黎婆 推出孩子 楼住 稻谷捆

(Dịch thành tiếng Trung: 黎婆**急急忙忙地**推出孩子并楼住稻谷捆)

Trong ví dụ (5) có thể thấy tính từ “vội vàng” đứng đầu câu, khi phân tích chúng ta có thể xác định là “vội vàng” làm trạng ngữ, có nghĩa định hướng dành cho chủ ngữ “Bác Lê”, chúng ta có thể xếp tính từ này làm trạng ngữ đứng sau chủ ngữ.

(6) **Một cách cảm tức**, bà nhìn xuống bọn đánh quần. (Số Đỏ - Vũ Trọng Phụng)

地 生气, 她 望下 打网球的那帮人。

(Dịch thành tiếng Trung : 她**生气地**往下望着打网球的那帮人。)

(7) Cả làng kiến kéo ra chào hỏi **niềm nở, lễ phép**. (Để mèn phiêu lưu ký - Tô Hoài)

蚂蚁村 出来 打招呼 热情 · 礼貌

(Dịch thành tiếng Trung: 蚂蚁村出来**热情而礼貌地**打招呼。)

2.1. Cách phiên dịch từ tiếng Trung sang tiếng Việt

Trong tiếng Trung, tính từ làm trạng ngữ đa số có sự xuất hiện của từ ký hiệu “地”, trong quá trình phiên dịch từ ký hiệu này thường được dịch sang tiếng Việt với từ ký hiệu tương ứng là “một cách”, và vị trí của cụm tính từ có mang từ hiệu này thường được đặt ở cuối câu trong tiếng Việt. Ngoài ra từ ký hiệu “地” còn có thể kết hợp với động từ, cụm động từ, số lượng từ ... làm trạng ngữ trong câu.

Trong một câu đơn ngoài chủ ngữ và vị ngữ động từ ra, nếu cùng lúc xuất hiện thành phần là trạng ngữ, tân ngữ và bổ ngữ, chúng ta có thể thông qua từ ký hiệu “地” để nhận biết thành phần trạng ngữ và đồng thời phiên dịch cụm “tính từ + từ ký hiệu 地” thành trạng ngữ trong tiếng Việt là “từ ký hiệu ‘một cách’ + tính từ”, vị trí đứng cuối câu. Ví dụ:

(8) 她 向父母 **耐心地** 解释了 当时书屋的状况..... (《桥梁

》- 汉语教程)

主语 状语^① 状语^② 谓语中心 宾语

Dịch thành tiếng Việt :

Cô ấy giải thích cho bố mẹ về tình hình thư phòng lúc bấy giờ một cách nhẫn nại.

主语 谓词 状语^① 宾语 状语^②

(9) 首长 把话筒 默默地 递给 科马洛夫的老母亲。(《桥梁》- 汉语教程)

主语 状语^① 状语^② 谓词 补语 宾语

Dịch thành tiếng Việt :

Thủ trưởng mang micro đưa cho mẹ của Komarov một cách lặng lẽ.

主语 状语^① 谓词 补语 宾语 状语^②

Đa số tính từ làm trạng ngữ thường có nghĩa định hướng là miêu tả phương thức dành cho chủ ngữ, do đó khi phiên dịch từ tiếng Trung sang tiếng Việt, cần chú ý từ ký hiệu “地” và cụm từ đi cùng nó, và chuyển đổi thành từ ký hiệu trong tiếng Việt là “một cách”, vị trí của cụm này đứng cuối câu, và tránh việc bị bỏ sót thành phần trạng ngữ này. Với cách ghi nhớ từ ký hiệu và vị trí trật tự trong câu sẽ giúp cho quá trình phiên dịch toàn vẹn trong cách biểu đạt, ý nghĩa mạch lạc, rõ ràng, không bị lẫn ách bởi những thành phần khác của câu.

2.2. Cách phiên dịch từ tiếng Việt sang tiếng Trung

Trong quá trình phiên dịch từ tiếng Việt sang tiếng Trung với trường hợp tính từ làm trạng ngữ, thường tồn tại những lỗi như sau: một là không có từ ký hiệu “một cách”, người dịch lại hiểu sai thành thành phần bổ ngữ trong câu; hai là có từ ký hiệu “một cách” nhưng không hiểu là gì và tự chuyển đổi thành thành phần bổ ngữ trong câu; ba là vị ngữ là do tính từ đảm nhận với công thức là “vị ngữ tính từ +

một cách + tính từ”, trong trường hợp này tiếng Trung không có cách diễn đạt tương ứng mà phải tìm nghĩa tương đương để chuyển đổi; bốn là vị trí tính từ đứng đầu câu và người phiên dịch không biết cách xử lý chuyển đổi thành phần này ra sao.

Trong trường hợp thứ nhất, nguyên văn tiếng Việt không có từ ký hiệu “một cách” và người dịch hiểu sai thành thành phần bổ ngữ trong câu, chúng ta cần xử lý theo hướng xác định nghĩa định hướng của tính từ, tự đặt câu hỏi xem nó sẽ miêu tả, bổ sung nghĩa cho chủ ngữ hay là miêu tả, bổ sung cách thức cho vị ngữ động từ. Ví dụ:

(10) Nó lặn vào lòng mẹ, vừa oằn oại vừa hụ hị kêu: “Đói, bu ơi đói” (Truyện ngắn Thạch Lam)

vừa oằn oại vừa hụ hị kêu

边 卷曲 边 呻吟 叫

(Dịch thành tiếng Trung : 他边卷曲边呻吟地叫...)

Trong trường hợp thứ hai, nguyên văn tiếng Việt có từ ký hiệu là “một cách” nhưng người dịch lại không chuyển dịch thành trạng ngữ mà lại chuyển dịch thành bổ ngữ trong câu, trong trường hợp này người dịch cũng nên hiểu và xử lý theo cách xác định nghĩa định hướng của tính từ và xử lý như trong trường hợp thứ nhất. Ví dụ:

(11) Đôi môi chàng tự nhiên nhếch lên một cách khinh bỉ.
(Truyện ngắn Thạch Lam)

Đôi môi chàng tự nhiên nhếch lên một cách khinh bỉ.

主语 状语① 谓词 补语 状语②

他的双唇 自然 翘 起 瞧不起地

(Dịch thành tiếng Trung : 他的双唇很自然地、瞧不起地翘了起来。)

Trong trường hợp thứ ba là trường hợp trong tiếng Việt vị từ là tính từ, trong công thức “tính từ + từ ký hiệu ‘một cách’ + tính từ”, trường hợp này trong tiếng Trung không có cách diễn đạt theo trật tự như công thức trên, nên khi phiên dịch cần tìm hình ảnh hoặc cách biểu đạt tương ứng với ý nghĩa của nguyên văn. Ví dụ:

(12) Vì chàng rõ những lời giả dối của vợ chàng, giả dối một cách khôn khéo, tự nhiên như thật vậy. (Truyện ngắn Thạch Lam)

giả dối **một cách** **khôn khéo**, **tự nhiên như thật vậy**

谓词 标记 形容词充任状语

虚假 地 巧妙 自然如真

Dịch thành tiếng Trung : 以那种巧妙及自然如真的虚假.....)

(13) Sự đó nhắc tôi nhớ rằng người ta có thể tàn ác một cách dễ dàng.

người ta có thể tàn ác một cách dễ dàng

主语 状语 谓词 标记 形容词充任状语

人家 可以 残忍 地 容易

(Dịch thành tiếng Trung : 人家可以残忍得那么容易)

Trong ví dụ trên có thể thấy rằng không thể dịch theo đúng trật tự của vị từ và từ ký hiệu kết hợp với tính từ, mà chỉ có thể uyển chuyển sử dụng nghĩa tương đương với nguyên văn chuyển đổi ý nghĩa một cách chính xác và hoàn chỉnh.

Trường hợp thứ tư là vị trí tính từ đứng ở đầu câu, khi phiên dịch cần chú ý về nghĩa định hướng của tính từ mới có thể xác định tính từ làm trạng ngữ trong câu, sau khi đã xác định đúng về tính từ làm trạng ngữ trong câu thì mới có thể phiên dịch lại theo đúng trật tự các thành phần trong câu của tiếng Trung là “trạng trái, bổ phải” (tức là: trạng ngữ ở bên trái của vị từ và bổ ngữ ở bên phải của vị từ). Ví dụ:

(14) **Hóm hỉnh**, bướm hỏi ngây: “.....” (Quê Người - Tô Hoài)

状语 主语 谓词 状语

调皮地 蝴蝶 问 马上

(译成汉语为：蝴蝶调皮地马上问：.....)

Như vậy, với những trường hợp như nêu trên, người phiên dịch cần nhận biết tính từ ở vị trí nào có nghĩa định hướng dành cho đối

tượng nào, sau đó khi phiên dịch nên chuyển tải theo đúng vị trí trạng ngữ đứng trước động từ như trật tự trong câu đơn của tiếng Trung.

3. Cách dịch những tính từ có kết cấu phức tạp

Chúng ta sẽ đối chiếu trường hợp tính từ trùng điệp khi làm trạng ngữ giữa hai ngôn ngữ và nêu ra một số cách xử lý đối với những tính từ có kết cấu phức tạp.

3.1. Trường hợp dịch từ tiếng Trung sang tiếng Việt

- Đối với tính từ đơn âm tiết khi đảm nhiệm vai trò là trạng ngữ trong câu, có những từ tương ứng có thể dịch sang tiếng Việt (xem ví dụ số 15), nhưng có những tính từ không có tính từ tương ứng thì chúng ta nên dịch sang tính từ song âm tiết dạng AB.

(15) 慢慢地 → một cách chậm chạp

- Khi tính từ trùng điệp dạng AABB làm trạng ngữ trong câu tiếng Trung, có hai cách dịch ra tiếng Việt, một là có thể dịch theo dạng trùng điệp AABB giống nguyên văn tiếng Trung; hai là do cách biểu đạt tính từ theo dạng AABB trong tiếng Việt có những tính từ không thể trùng điệp theo dạng trên, nên chúng ta chỉ có thể dịch theo thể AB có kèm từ ký hiệu “một cách”, ví dụ:

(16) 高高兴兴地 → một cách vui vui mừng mừng (tiếng Việt không có cách biểu đạt này)

→ một cách vui mừng

- Tương tự như trên khi tính từ trùng điệp dạng ABAB hoặc dạng ABB làm trạng ngữ trong câu, khi dịch sang tiếng Việt chúng ta cũng chỉ có thể dịch theo thể AB có kèm theo từ ký hiệu “một cách”, ví dụ:

(17) 冰凉冰凉地 → một cách lạnh lẽo

(18) 热乎乎地 → một cách nóng hổi

3.2. Trường hợp dịch từ tiếng Việt sang tiếng Trung

- Dạng tính từ trùng điệp của tiếng Việt như BBA hoặc ABB đôi khi có khó khăn trong việc phiên dịch, những dạng trùng điệp này đôi khi không tìm được tính từ tương ứng trong tiếng Trung để chuyển tải ý nghĩa, trong những trường hợp này có thể cố gắng tìm từ tương

đương nghĩa để dịch hoặc chỉ có thể dịch theo nghĩa của nguyên văn. Ví dụ:

- (19) **Lấp lấp** sáng → dịch thành tiếng Trung là : 闪闪亮

Tính từ vị từ

闪闪 亮

- (20) **Đăm đăm** nhìn → dịch thành tiếng Trung là : 眼睁睁看着

睁睁 看

- (21) **Hu hu** khóc → dịch thành tiếng Trung là : 哭啼啼

啼啼 哭

- (22) Bay **là là** → dịch thành tiếng Trung là : 离地不高地飞

飞 低低

- (23) nắng **chang chang** → dịch thành tiếng Trung là : 晒得很厉

害 晒 **形容太阳很大**

Những ví dụ trên cho thấy dạng tính từ ABB hoặc BBA trong tiếng Việt có thể dịch sang tiếng Trung theo dạng tương ứng như ABB (ví dụ 19, 20, 21), nhưng trong ví dụ (22) và (23) thì không có ý nghĩa tương ứng theo dạng ABB hoặc BBA trong tiếng Trung, do đó, ở dạng này chúng ta chỉ có thể sử dụng cách biểu đạt theo bổ ngữ tình thái trong tiếng Trung, như vậy mới có thể biểu đạt ý nghĩa của nguyên văn một cách đầy đủ và từ góc độ chức năng ngữ pháp cũng là cách biểu đạt hợp lý, bởi vì trạng ngữ và bổ ngữ đều có chức năng tu sức cho vị từ.

Giữa hai ngôn ngữ tiếng Việt và tiếng Trung tuy có những điểm tương đồng về từ ngữ và ngữ pháp, nhưng cũng có cách biểu đạt khác nhau, do đó để có thể làm tốt công tác phiên dịch chúng ta nên không ngừng đọc sách báo, so sánh cách chuyển tải giữa hai ngôn ngữ để làm tăng thêm vốn từ vựng, cấu trúc câu và cách dịch linh hoạt, lưu loát.

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A METHOD TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH READING COMPREHENSION FOR STUDENTS MAJORING IN CHINESE LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

One of the primary objectives of teaching and learning a foreign language is to stimulate learners to improve the four basic language skills for communication. The four skills of language are a set of four capabilities including Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking that a learner of foreign language needs to master. The fact is that these skills are integrated and non-separable. Indeed, for empowering the effective learning, the training of these skills is supposed to be conducted synchronously and implausibly in teaching. The ability to communicate in a different language is a basic skill and plays an integral part in the language acquisition in general or Chinese acquisition in particular. This is also one of the most crucial measures so as to assess learners' language competencies. For this reason, foreign language students in general with students have a specialisation in Chinese should be provided supports to enhance and master this skill. In addition, not only oral lessons have been designed in a special syllabus, but also Chinese-as-a-Foreign-Language learners foster the improvement in their oral communication skills through reading comprehension. This paper aims to investigate the effectiveness of the application of reading comprehension in improving speaking skill in order to improve learners' reading comprehension skill as well as sharpen their verbal expression. Henceforth, this can create a comfortable, confident, meaningful learning environment for students.

Keywords: *Reading comprehension, speaking skill, students majoring in Chinese language.*

MỘT GIẢI PHÁP RÈN LUYỆN KỸ NĂNG NÓI THÔNG QUA MÔN ĐỌC HIỂU CHO SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG TRUNG

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TÓM TẮT

Một trong những mục tiêu giảng dạy ngoại ngữ mà giáo viên cần hướng đến đó chính là bồi dưỡng được cho người học khả năng vận dụng các kỹ năng cơ bản của ngoại ngữ để tiến hành giao tiếp. Kỹ năng cơ bản của ngoại ngữ bao gồm 4 kỹ năng chính nghe- nói- đọc- viết, các kỹ năng này có mối quan hệ chặt chẽ và không thể tách rời nhau. Vì thế việc bồi dưỡng những kỹ năng này phải được tiến hành một cách đồng bộ, hợp lý trong quá trình giảng dạy ngoại ngữ. Riêng kỹ năng nói là một kỹ năng cơ bản và rất quan trọng trong việc học ngoại ngữ nói chung hay học tiếng Trung nói riêng và đây cũng là một trong những thước đo quan trọng để đánh giá năng lực ngoại ngữ của người học. Chính vì vậy mà sinh viên ngoại ngữ nói chung và chuyên ngành tiếng Trung nói riêng cần được tạo mọi điều kiện để rèn luyện và phát triển kỹ năng này. Ngoài môn nói được thiết kế chuyên biệt, sinh viên ngành tiếng Trung còn có thể thông qua môn đọc hiểu để rèn luyện và phát triển thêm kỹ năng nói. Với bài tham luận này, tôi muốn đưa ra một vài quan điểm về việc rèn luyện và phát triển kỹ năng nói trong môn đọc hiểu nhằm mục đích song song với việc rèn luyện kỹ năng đọc hiểu cho sinh viên còn giúp các em cải thiện và nâng cao khả năng diễn đạt tiếng Trung bằng lời nói của mình, từ đó tạo nên một không khí học tập thoải mái, tự tin và có ý nghĩa cho sinh viên.

Từ khóa: Môn đọc hiểu, rèn luyện kỹ năng nói, sinh viên ngành tiếng Trung.

I. Cơ sở lý luận

Nhà ngôn ngữ học người Mỹ Chomsky cũng đã đề cập đến khái niệm về “năng lực ngôn ngữ” trong đó phân biệt rạch ròi giữa “chức năng của ngôn ngữ” và “biểu hiện của ngôn ngữ”. Nhà ngôn ngữ học D.H.Hymes trong thập niên 60 lần đầu tiên đã nhận định về “năng lực giao tiếp” (communicative competence) chính là năng lực vận dụng ngôn ngữ để tiến hành những giao tiếp xã hội bao gồm truyền đạt thông tin, giao lưu tư tưởng và biểu đạt tình cảm. Việc biểu đạt năng lực giao tiếp này có thể thông qua hình thức văn bản hoặc bằng hình thức lời nói. Tiếp đó cũng có rất nhiều học giả dựa trên những lý luận về “năng lực giao tiếp” của Hymes phát triển thêm, đề ra nhiều mô hình về các loại năng lực giao tiếp trong ngôn ngữ trong đó có M.Canale. M.Canale năm 1983 cũng đã đề ra mô hình về năng lực giao tiếp bao gồm năng lực về ngữ pháp (bao gồm ngữ âm, từ vựng, kết cấu câu...), năng lực ngôn ngữ xã hội (bao gồm năng lực về ngữ dụng, hiểu ngữ cảnh sử dụng ngôn ngữ...), năng lực nói (năng lực biểu đạt bằng vận dụng lời nói), năng lực chiến lược (năng lực sử dụng ngôn ngữ trong các tình huống giao tiếp cụ thể).

Trong học ngoại ngữ, quá trình đọc là quá trình người học thu nhận xử lý một hay nhiều thông tin hoặc nội dung nào đó dựa trên nền tảng kiến thức về ngôn ngữ nhất định, môn đọc hiểu chú trọng rèn luyện kỹ năng đọc hiểu bằng ngoại ngữ cho người học. Còn quá trình nói là quá trình người học thể hiện những suy nghĩ, quan điểm nhận thức của mình đối với thông tin được tiếp nhận thông qua hình thức nói và môn nói bồi dưỡng kỹ năng diễn đạt ngoại ngữ bằng lời nói. Về mối liên hệ tương quan giữa “đọc” và “nói” trong học ngoại ngữ, trên thế giới đã có rất nhiều tác giả đưa ra những quan điểm nhận định riêng của mình: Dubin và Olshtain (1977) đã nhấn mạnh về lợi ích của người học trong quá trình đọc có thể tích lũy nhiều từ vựng, từ đó có ảnh hưởng đến các kỹ năng như nói và viết. Krashen & Terrel (1983) cũng nhìn nhận rằng trong học ngoại ngữ thứ hai, đọc hiểu có đóng góp quan trọng trong việc phát triển cả 4 kỹ năng. Hedge (1985) cho rằng thông qua việc đoán từ và cụm từ trong đọc hiểu giúp cho việc phát triển vốn từ vựng là một yếu tố cần thiết để nâng cao kỹ năng nói. Tác giả Zhang Yun (2009) đã nhận định việc tích hợp 2 kỹ năng đọc và nói sẽ giúp người học hiểu sâu hơn về tài liệu mình đọc, qua đó có thể áp

dụng những thông tin đó vào thực tiễn nói như là cách để luyện tập kỹ năng nói cho chính mình. Tác giả Chen XiaoYan (陈晓燕) trong bài báo

《口语表达与阅读课教学》(Giảng dạy kỹ năng đọc hiểu cùng biểu đạt bằng lời nói) năm 1996 khẳng định năng lực ngôn ngữ là một năng lực tổng hợp, do đó nên sử dụng phương pháp giảng dạy đa dạng linh hoạt, cùng lúc rèn luyện cho người học nhiều kỹ năng. Trong đó tác giả nhấn mạnh phải thông qua cách để người học biểu đạt bằng lời nói để nâng cao giảng dạy môn đọc hiểu. Từ những nhận định trên, ta có thể thấy rằng hai quá trình đọc và nói có mối liên hệ chặt chẽ bổ trợ với nhau, nếu năng lực đọc tốt nhưng năng lực nói không tốt hay ngược lại cũng khó có thể xem là hoàn thành mục tiêu giao tiếp. Khi giảng dạy môn đọc hiểu ở các cấp độ trong tiếng Trung, nếu như người giáo viên có thể xử lý tốt mối liên hệ giữa hai quá trình đọc và nói này thì sẽ thu lượm được những hiệu quả nhất định trong giảng dạy. Việc tăng cường rèn luyện kỹ năng nói vừa củng cố khả năng xử lý thông tin vừa có thể nâng cao khả năng diễn đạt bằng lời nói cho sinh viên, nâng cao tính chủ động và tích cực trong học tập của sinh viên đồng thời cũng khiến cho không khí lớp học trở nên sinh động vui vẻ hơn.

II. Hiện trạng

Về phía người học, môn đọc hiểu cũng yêu cầu người học phải hoạt động độc lập cao, người học chủ yếu thông qua thị giác tiếp xúc với hán tự, từ, câu, đoạn văn để thu nhận và xử lý thông tin, ngữ liệu chủ yếu là từ ngữ được dùng trong văn viết hay ngôn ngữ văn phong báo chí. Chính vì những đặc trưng vốn có của nó, người học khi tiếp cận sẽ cảm thấy đây là một môn học khô khan. Về phía giáo viên, nếu áp dụng phương pháp giảng dạy truyền thống trong đó coi giáo viên là trung tâm truyền đạt kiến thức, khai triển theo các giai đoạn từ Hán tự, đến từ vựng rồi đến câu, đoạn...người học tiếp thu kiến thức một cách bị động dưới sự hướng dẫn của giáo viên, điều này thật sự không có lợi cho người học phát huy tính tích cực và chủ động trong học tập. Nếu quá trình này duy trì trong một thời gian dài sẽ dần dần khiến cho người học mất đi tính tư duy độc lập, từ đó dẫn đến mất đi hứng thú với môn học.

Để khắc phục hiện trạng này trong môn đọc hiểu, giáo viên dạy môn đọc hiểu nên tăng tính chủ động cho sinh viên bằng cách tùy vào

trình độ, khuyến khích sinh viên dùng lời nói tham gia trong quá trình học nhiều hơn, biến thể bị động thành thể chủ động. Như vậy vừa có thể kích thích tính chủ động tích cực của sinh viên, khiến không khí học sinh động hơn thoải mái, vừa qua đó củng cố cách dùng từ dùng câu, cải thiện kỹ năng nói cho sinh viên.

III. Phương pháp rèn luyện kỹ năng nói ở môn đọc

1. Quá trình chuẩn bị

Quá trình chuẩn bị là quá trình rất quan trọng trong giảng dạy môn đọc, nó quyết định đến sự thành bại của tiết học. Giáo viên cần nắm được nội dung giảng dạy và xác định rõ mục tiêu cần đạt để thiết kế bài giảng, lựa chọn phương pháp giảng dạy phù hợp với trình độ ngoại ngữ của sinh viên (sơ cấp, trung cấp hay cao cấp). Một trong những mục tiêu quan trọng mà giáo viên cần lưu ý là ngoài việc rèn luyện những kỹ năng đọc hiểu, còn thông qua các hoạt động nói giao tiếp trên lớp, thông qua sự tương tác giữa giáo viên với sinh viên và giữa sinh viên với nhau để sinh viên hiểu rõ nội dung mà bài đọc truyền tải, phát triển vốn từ vựng ngữ pháp cùng với việc phát triển kỹ năng nói.

Như vậy giáo viên cần có một số bước chuẩn bị để có thể có được tiết học đọc hiệu quả, quá trình chuẩn bị bao gồm:

- + Lựa chọn nội dung bài đọc (Nội dung bài đọc này phù hợp trình độ của sinh viên). Từ đó xác định mục tiêu và phương pháp giảng dạy phù hợp trong đó chú trọng tích hợp cả 2 kỹ năng đọc và nói cho sinh viên.

- + Lên 1 “kịch bản” rõ ràng cho tiết học trong đó người giáo viên có thể xây dựng hệ thống các câu hỏi tương tác giữa giáo viên và sinh viên và giữa sinh viên với nhau xung quanh nội dung bài đọc. Việc thiết kế hệ thống các câu hỏi tương tác cho sinh viên cũng là 1 phương pháp giảng dạy hữu hiệu trong môn đọc hiểu, nó giúp khơi gợi tư duy của sinh viên, rèn luyện kỹ năng nói, gia tăng sự tập trung, tính tích cực và sự chủ động của sinh viên trong học môn đọc hiểu, từ đó có thể nâng cao hiệu quả giảng dạy.

- + Có thể thiết lập thêm các hoạt động trên lớp (thông qua hoạt động nói) nhằm gia tăng sự tương tác giữa giáo viên và sinh viên hoặc

giữa sinh viên với nhau (như chơi trò chơi đoán từ đoán chữ; thảo luận nhóm...)

2. Quá trình trên lớp

Trong quá trình giảng dạy môn đọc hiểu, giáo viên có thể tính đến rèn luyện kỹ năng nói cho sinh viên chủ yếu ở 2 hoạt động chính: hoạt động trước khi đọc và hoạt động sau khi đọc.

2.1. Hoạt động trước khi đọc

a. Giới thiệu bài đọc và nội dung đọc

Đây là một hoạt động quan trọng và cần thiết nhằm đưa thông tin nội dung bài đọc đến sinh viên. Việc dẫn nhập và giới thiệu nội dung bài đọc sẽ gây được hứng thú cho người học hơn. Tùy vào năng lực và trình độ của sinh viên mà giáo viên có thể dẫn nhập vào bài đọc khác nhau. Giáo viên có thể thông qua một hệ thống câu hỏi liên quan đến bài đọc hay tiêu đề giới thiệu nội dung bài đọc. Ở cấp độ sơ cấp, khi vốn từ vựng và ngữ pháp của sinh viên còn hạn hẹp thì giáo viên có thể gợi mở, khuyến khích các em sử dụng các mẫu câu ngắn gọn cấu trúc ngữ pháp đơn giản để trả lời, còn ở cấp độ cao hơn (trung cao cấp) khi mà sinh viên đã tích lũy được một nền tảng kiến thức tiếng Trung nhất định rồi thì giáo viên có thể đưa ra những câu hỏi mang tính tổng quát và phức tạp hơn, yêu cầu sinh viên tư duy nhiều hơn khi trả lời và khi trả lời thì sử dụng những câu nói có cấu trúc ngữ pháp phức tạp hơn.

Ví dụ:

- (1) Ở cấp độ sơ cấp khi học bài đọc 《北京四季》(Bốn mùa Bắc Kinh) giáo viên có thể đưa ra một số câu hỏi đơn giản liên quan đến thời tiết về Bắc Kinh giới thiệu bài đọc như: “*你去过北京吗*”(Bạn đã đi qua Bắc kinh chưa?); “*北京有几个季节?*”(Bắc Kinh có mấy mùa?); “*你最喜欢哪个季节*”(Bạn thích mùa nào ở Bắc Kinh nhất?) rồi mời sinh viên trả lời.
- (2) Ở cấp độ trung-cao cấp khi học 《地球之肺-森林》(Lá phổi của trái đất-rừng xanh) giáo viên có thể đưa những câu hỏi mang tính nâng cao hơn, yêu cầu sinh viên nói nhiều hơn theo quan điểm của chính mình “*为什么说森林是地球的肺*

"(Vì sao có thể nói rừng xanh là lá phổi của trái đất ?); “森林对人类有什么作用”(Rừng xanh có những tác dụng gì đối với con người ?)

b. Giải thích từ mới

Việc giải thích một vài từ mới quan trọng trước khi đọc bài đọc cũng là 1 phương pháp để mà giáo viên có thể tính tới. Giải thích từ mới cũng là một bước giúp cho sinh viên có thể tiếp cận bài đọc thuận lợi hơn gây được hứng thú đọc bài. Tùy vào mỗi nội dung bài đọc, tùy vào các trình độ sinh viên mà giáo viên có thể tiến hành bước này hay không, nếu có thì nên cân nhắc áp dụng mức độ nhiều ít một cách hợp lý. Thông thường việc giải thích từ mới bằng tiếng Trung nên được áp dụng cho sinh viên ở trình độ từ trung cấp trở lên. Giáo viên có thể yêu cầu sinh viên dùng tiếng Trung giải thích từ mới. Lưu ý, quá trình giải thích giáo viên có thể cân nhắc tiến hành ở quá trình sau khi đọc bài đọc.

Ví dụ:

- (1) Khi học bài đọc 《公园早晨》(Sáng sớm ở Bắc Kinh) có thể giải thích các từ như “溜鸟” “敏捷” “英语角” “笑容” ...
- (2) Khi đọc bài học 《小议食文化》(Bàn về văn hóa ẩm thực) có thể giải thích “食文化” “地道” “荤菜” “蔬菜” ...

2.2. Hoạt động sau khi đọc

Đây là giai đoạn mà sinh viên có cơ hội rèn luyện kỹ năng nói nhiều nhất. Sau khi sinh viên đọc bài đọc, giáo viên có thể kiểm tra mức độ nắm bài của sinh viên thông qua hệ thống các câu hỏi xung quanh nội dung bài đọc hoặc cho sinh viên tự tóm tắt khái quát nội dung bài đọc. Trong giai đoạn này, việc biểu đạt lời nói sẽ giúp sinh viên tăng cường khả năng hiểu và vận dụng từ từ vựng sang câu, từ câu sang đến đoạn. Khi hỏi, giáo viên đưa ra những gợi ý, sau đó hướng dẫn sinh viên phân tích 1 số câu từ quan trọng trong đoạn văn, tập cách liên kết chúng lại 1 cách logic rồi biểu đạt ra thành đoạn nhiều câu theo suy nghĩ của mình. Việc đưa ra gợi ý sẽ khiến sinh viên hứng thú trả lời câu hỏi hơn.

Một vài hình thức gợi mở vấn đáp mà giáo viên có thể cân nhắc áp dụng:

+ Giáo viên đặt câu hỏi liên quan đến nội dung bài đọc trước để sinh viên suy nghĩ, sau đó với mỗi câu hỏi mời từng người trả lời.

+ Có thể để sinh viên tự đặt câu hỏi lẫn nhau rồi trả lời dưới sự hướng dẫn của giáo viên.

+ Giáo viên có thể phân lớp ra thành các nhóm, các nhóm thảo luận câu hỏi và câu trả lời và cử đại diện trả lời.

Tùy nội dung và thiết kế mỗi bài đọc khác nhau, mà giáo viên đưa ra câu hỏi bám sát nội dung từng đoạn trong bài đọc hoặc đưa ra những câu hỏi khái quát cho cả bài đọc.

Ví dụ: Khi học bài đọc 《鲁迅》(Lỗ Tấn), giáo viên có thể đặt câu hỏi theo đi theo các giai đoạn của cuộc đời Lỗ Tấn như sau :

1. “鲁迅家乡在哪？(Lỗ Tấn quê ở đâu?)
2. “他什么时候他去留学，在哪留学？”(Khi nào thì ông ấy đi du học, du học ở đâu?)
3. “回国以后，他做什么工作？”(Sau khi về nước ông làm công việc gì?)
4. “他著名的作品有哪些？”(Những tác phẩm nổi tiếng của ông là gì?)
5. “他对中国文学有什么贡献？”(Ông ấy có những đóng góp gì cho nền văn học Trung Quốc?)

Hoặc có thể đặt câu hỏi mang tính bao quát của cho cả bài như : “请简单介绍一下鲁迅。”(Hãy giới thiệu những nét cơ bản về Lỗ Tấn)“鲁迅年轻的时候去过哪个国家？·做过什么工作？”(Ông ấy khi trẻ đã đi qua quốc gia nào? Làm qua những công việc gì?)“为什么说他是中国一个伟大的文学家？”(Vì sao có thể gọi ông ấy là nhà văn vĩ đại của Trung Quốc)

IV. Vài lưu ý khi sử dụng phương pháp gọi mở vấn đáp

Qua những phân tích như trên, ta có thể thấy rằng, phương pháp gọi mở vấn đáp là phương pháp được áp dụng chủ yếu nhằm nâng cao khả năng nói cho sinh viên. Ở phương pháp gọi mở vấn đáp, người giáo viên không đưa ra thông tin kiến thức đã hoàn chỉnh mà sử dụng các câu hỏi để hướng dẫn người học suy nghĩ, trả lời từng câu hỏi qua đó sẽ tự tích lũy kiến thức hay thông tin cần có. Phương pháp này tạo điều kiện cho người học tích chủ động độc tập tư duy, gây được không khí học sôi nổi đồng thời rèn cho người học cách suy nghĩ biểu đạt ngoại ngữ bằng lời nói. Khi tiến hành sử dụng phương pháp này giáo viên cần chú ý những điểm sau:

1. Đối với câu hỏi

- Câu hỏi phải vừa sức, không quá dễ hay quá khó, phù hợp với trình độ các đối tượng sinh viên. Nếu như câu hỏi quá khó, cho dù giáo viên có khơi gợi trả lời như thế nào, sinh viên cũng khó có thể trả lời được, từ đó ảnh hưởng đến sự tự tin của sinh viên, mất đi hứng thú nói cũng như hứng thú học tập.

- Câu hỏi phải rõ ràng, ngắn gọn, không gây hiểu lầm. Nội dung câu hỏi chính xác, bám sát nội dung và yêu cầu bài học, câu hỏi không mang tính tùy hứng.

- Trong cùng một nội dung có thể diễn đạt câu hỏi bằng nhiều hình thức khác nhau giúp sinh viên linh hoạt trong cách suy nghĩ từ đó khiến sinh viên có mong muốn trả lời.

- Nên đưa ra những câu hỏi buộc sinh viên phải suy nghĩ, kích thích tư duy của sinh viên, hạn chế đưa ra những câu hỏi mà sinh viên có thể trả lời “đúng” hoặc “sai”, “có” hoặc “không”

2. Về phía giáo viên

- Giáo viên đưa ra câu hỏi trước rồi yêu cầu sinh viên suy nghĩ trả lời, tránh việc chỉ định sinh viên trả lời trước rồi đưa ra câu hỏi. Câu hỏi nhắm đến đối tượng là toàn bộ tập thể chứ không nhắm đến cá thể ai đó.

- Giáo viên diễn đạt câu hỏi ngắn gọn rõ ràng, tuyệt đối tránh việc sinh viên trả lời đồng thanh, nói leo hoặc “vuốt đuôi”.

- Khi đưa ra câu hỏi, giáo viên cần cho sinh viên thời gian nhất định để suy nghĩ trả lời, không yêu cầu trả lời ngay. Khi sinh viên trả lời không được nên gợi ý động viên trả lời, tránh tình trạng sinh viên A không trả lời được lập tức gọi sinh viên B.

- Giáo viên cần dự đoán trước câu trả lời sai hay không như mong muốn của mình để dự phòng các câu hỏi phụ, từ đó dẫn dắt sinh viên trả lời chính xác.

- Khi sinh viên trả lời giáo viên cần chăm chú lắng nghe. Khi câu trả lời không như mong muốn cần bình tĩnh đưa ra gợi ý, bổ sung, sửa sai cho sinh viên. Không nên thay sinh viên trả lời.

- Khi sinh viên trả lời không đúng ý hay sai giáo viên không nên trách móc, trì triết phê bình hay mỉa mai, điều này sẽ gây ảnh hưởng tiêu cực đến sinh viên.

V. Kết luận

Mục đích cuối cùng của việc học ngoại ngữ nói chung hay học tiếng Trung nói riêng là vẫn là bồi dưỡng cho người học có năng lực giao tiếp tốt và tự tin trong mọi tình huống cụ thể trong đó việc tích hợp và rèn luyện đồng bộ bốn kỹ năng cần được chú trọng nhiều hơn trong quá trình giảng dạy của giáo viên. Trên đây là những ý kiến của tôi về việc rèn luyện kỹ năng nói thông qua môn đọc hiểu cho sinh viên ngành tiếng Trung để qua đó, song song với việc rèn luyện kỹ năng đọc hiểu cho sinh viên, các em vẫn có cơ hội cải thiện kỹ năng nói của mình, qua đó giúp các em tích cực chủ động hơn trong học tập, tạo nên một không khí học tập thoải mái hơn, nâng cao hiệu quả giảng dạy môn đọc hơn.

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TEACHING GENERAL CHINESE AS NON SPECIALIZED FOREIGN LANGUAGE TOWARD COMMUNICATION: THE CASE OF USING THE STANDARD COURSE HSK

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ABSTRACT

General Chinese teaching at the Faculty of Foreign Languages - Ho Chi Minh City Open University has undergone a change of textbooks to gradually improve the quality of learning for learners. Changing the curriculum will lead to adjusting the teaching method so as to be effective, on the one hand to ensure the amount of knowledge according to the output standards, on the other hand bring the learning inspiration to the learners without feeling overworked. To measure foreign language competencies, especially non-specialized foreign languages, besides literacy skills, speaking skills can reflect the language ability of the most learners. In the context of innovating foreign language teaching methods, taking students - centric, the article has initially explored the characteristics of non-specialized foreign language learners, such as characteristics, motivation, and research on the current distribution and teaching methods, from which to propose teaching. In the direction of communication, the standard HSK curriculum is still not really focused, in order to bring real efficiency to teachers and learners when using this standard course.

Keywords: *foreign language, non-specialized Chinese, communication methods, Standard course HSK.*

GIẢNG DẠY NGOẠI NGỮ TIẾNG TRUNG KHÔNG CHUYÊN THEO HƯỚNG GIAO TIẾP – TRƯỜNG HỢP SỬ DỤNG GIÁO TRÌNH CHUẨN HSK TẠI KHOA NGOẠI NGỮ ĐẠI HỌC MỞ TP. HỒ CHÍ MINH

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TÓM TẮT

Ngoại ngữ tiếng Trung không chuyên đang giảng dạy tại khoa Ngoại ngữ - ĐH Mở TP.HCM đã trải qua đợt thay đổi giáo trình nhằm từng bước nâng cao chất lượng học tập cho người học. Việc thay đổi giáo trình sẽ dẫn đến điều chỉnh phương pháp giảng dạy sao cho hiệu quả, một mặt nhằm đảm bảo về khối lượng kiến thức theo chuẩn đầu ra, mặt khác mang lại nguồn cảm hứng học tập để người học không có cảm giác bị quá tải. Để đo lường năng lực ngoại ngữ, nhất là ngoại ngữ không chuyên, bên cạnh kỹ năng đọc viết, kỹ năng nói có thể phản ánh được năng lực ngôn ngữ của người học nhất. Trong bối cảnh đổi mới phương pháp giảng dạy ngoại ngữ, lấy người học làm trung tâm, bài viết đã bước đầu tìm hiểu các đặc trưng của đối tượng người học ngoại ngữ không chuyên như đặc điểm, động cơ học tập, khảo sát về chương trình phân bổ và phương pháp giảng dạy hiện có, để từ đó đề xuất giảng dạy theo hướng giao tiếp mà giáo trình chuẩn HSK vẫn chưa thực sự chú trọng, nhằm đem lại hiệu quả thực tế cho người dạy lẫn người học khi sử dụng bộ giáo trình này.

Từ khóa: *Ngoại ngữ; tiếng Trung không chuyên; phương pháp giao tiếp; giáo trình chuẩn HSK.*

1. Đặt vấn đề

Kể từ năm 1990 khi khoa Ngoại ngữ được thành lập, bên cạnh các môn ngoại ngữ hai (ngoại ngữ phụ) như tiếng Pháp, tiếng Tây Ban

Nha, tiếng Nhật, tiếng Hàn được đưa vào giảng dạy cho sinh viên chuyên ngành Ngôn ngữ Anh và ngành Đông Nam Á, tiếng Hoa cũng là một ngoại ngữ luôn được sinh viên yêu thích và lựa chọn. Ngoài yếu tố chọn môn học đến từ sở thích do tác động bởi văn hóa nghe nhìn và sức hấp dẫn lịch sử văn hóa lâu đời của Trung Quốc, còn phải kể đến yếu tố biết thêm một ngoại ngữ thứ hai ở mức độ giao tiếp và đọc hiểu cơ bản, sẽ là một lợi thế trong quá trình làm việc tại các doanh nghiệp trong thời buổi hội nhập quốc tế như hiện nay. Trải qua quá trình hơn 20 năm đào tạo và phát triển, môn tiếng Hoa không chuyên giảng dạy cho sinh viên các ngành ngôn ngữ tại khoa Ngoại ngữ và ngành Đông Nam Á học cũng đã trải qua các thời kỳ điều chỉnh chương trình giảng dạy và thay đổi giáo trình cho phù hợp với thực tế, nhất là kể từ khi áp dụng toàn diện phương thức đào tạo theo tín chỉ. Từ năm 2005 trở về trước, chương trình ngoại ngữ tiếng Hoa không chuyên từ CB1 đến CB5 tổng cộng 20 tín chỉ (300 tiết). Tại thời điểm đó, do ở Việt Nam vẫn chưa áp dụng chuẩn đầu ra ngôn ngữ cho từng cấp độ theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu, nên mỗi trường đều đào tạo theo đặc thù và định hướng riêng của mình. Trong một khoảng thời gian khá dài, giáo trình Đàm thoại tiếng Hoa 301 câu và giáo trình Hán ngữ Trung cấp đã được đưa vào giảng dạy cho chương trình Ngoại ngữ tiếng Hoa không chuyên. Như vậy, mục tiêu của chương trình này là sau khi học xong tiếng Hoa từ CB1 đến CB5, sinh viên sẽ đạt được trình độ tiếng Hoa tương đương trung cấp.

Tuy nhiên, kể từ năm học 2008, cùng với việc sắp xếp lại các môn học trong chương trình đào tạo theo học chế tín chỉ, thời lượng đào tạo từ 20 tín chỉ giảm xuống thành 15 tín chỉ cho 5 cấp lớp từ CB1 đến CB5, tiếng Hoa không chuyên cũng chuyển từ sử dụng Giáo trình Hán ngữ của Yang Jizhou trở về lại với Giáo trình đàm thoại tiếng Hoa 301 câu, và có sử dụng một số đơn vị bài của Giáo trình Hán ngữ cho lớp CB5. Chúng ta chưa xét đến tính chất thiết thực của các giáo trình này, nhưng việc chưa đảm bảo tính thống nhất và tính liên thông về nội dung đào tạo, cũng đã phần nào mang lại sự băn khoăn và lúng túng cho giảng viên khi thực hiện các bài giảng tại lớp, từ đó cũng đã ảnh hưởng ít nhiều đến sự hứng thú của sinh viên trong quá trình chọn học môn tiếng Hoa như một ngoại ngữ tự chọn. Trên cơ sở đó, bắt đầu từ học kỳ 1 năm học 2016 – 2017, Bộ môn Ngoại ngữ không chuyên đã mạnh dạn thay mới giáo trình, điều chỉnh lại nội dung chương trình

đào tạo cho từng cấp lớp theo hướng tinh gọn để kết hợp học và thi theo chuẩn đầu ra HSK (Kỳ thi trình độ tiếng Trung Quốc). Theo mục tiêu của chương trình tiếng Hoa không chuyên, sau khi học xong 5 cấp lớp, sinh viên sẽ đủ kiến thức và năng lực để thi và đạt trình độ ngoại ngữ B1 theo khung tham chiếu Châu Âu. Giáo trình được đưa vào sử dụng cho các lớp từ tiếng Hoa 1 đến tiếng Hoa 5 là Giáo trình chuẩn HSK quyển 1, quyển 2 và quyển 3 do nhà xuất bản Ngôn ngữ Bắc Kinh ấn hành, có kết hợp sử dụng quyển bài tập để củng cố kiến thức và luyện tập kỹ năng Nghe hiểu.

Sau khi điều chỉnh nội dung đào tạo và thay mới giáo trình, trong một khảo sát ở phạm vi lớp học được thực hiện vào học kỳ 2 năm 2019, chúng tôi nhận được phản hồi của khóa 2015 sinh viên chuyên ngành Đông Nam Á về mức độ cảm thấy giáo trình thiết thực và mang tính thực tiễn là 95,2%; trong khi con số này ở sinh viên khóa 2015 chuyên ngành tiếng Anh là 97,1%. Đây là khóa sinh viên đầu tiên đã học xong năm cấp lớp kể từ khi thay đổi giáo trình. Ngoài ra, chương trình tiếng Hoa không chuyên cũng được giảng dạy cho các lớp hệ văn bằng 2 và hệ liên thông tiếng Anh, do bài viết không nhằm tìm hiểu đối tượng này, chúng tôi xin không đề cập nội dung này ở đây. Nhìn chung, các lớp sinh viên chính quy khá hào hứng khi sử dụng giáo trình mới và tiếp nhận các nội dung kiến thức tương đối thiết thực và khoa học so với Giáo trình đàm thoại tiếng Hoa 301 câu, vốn nặng về tính chất đàm thoại và chỉ phục vụ các chủ đề cuộc sống du học tại Trung Quốc. Tuy nhiên cũng trong cuộc khảo sát ở trên về sự hài lòng về phương pháp giảng dạy khi sử dụng giáo trình này, phần lớn sinh viên vẫn chưa thực sự hài lòng về phương pháp triển khai các bài giảng khi sử dụng giáo trình này, vốn chỉ thiên về kỹ năng đọc và viết là chính. Chúng tôi đem theo sự trăn trở đó để tìm hiểu một số vấn đề khi sử dụng Giáo trình chuẩn HSK sao cho vừa thiết thực vừa đem lại hiệu quả dạy và học cho giảng viên và sinh viên.

Trong khuôn khổ bài viết này, chúng tôi sẽ trình bày một số chiến lược trong giảng dạy nhằm khơi gợi tính tích cực và hứng thú cho người học, từ đó nhằm đề xuất một số phương pháp giảng dạy để sử dụng hiệu quả bộ giáo trình này.

2. Chiến lược dạy học theo nhiệm vụ trong dạy ngoại ngữ không chuyên theo hướng giao tiếp

Trong một hai năm gần đây, càng ngày có nhiều nghiên cứu về vấn đề giảng dạy kỹ năng nói cho đối tượng sinh viên Việt Nam, điều đó cho thấy bên cạnh các kỹ năng Nghe, Đọc và Viết, kỹ năng Nói – kỹ năng giao tiếp trong việc học ngoại ngữ ngày càng được chú trọng và là một thành tố quan trọng trong việc hình thành kỹ năng ngôn ngữ tổng hợp, nhất là ở những lớp sơ cấp và nâng cao. Trong hội thảo khoa học quốc tế về nghiên cứu và giảng dạy tiếng Trung tổ chức vào năm 2017 tại ĐH Sư Phạm TP.HCM, Từ Chí Thành trong bài viết “Một số vấn đề về dạy học khẩu ngữ tiếng Hán cho người Việt Nam” đã phân tích một số hiện tượng kiến cho người học ngại nói và đưa ra một số giải pháp để khắc phục những khó khăn trong việc học nói. Ngoài ra, nhóm tác giả Huỳnh Cảnh Quân và Hà Ngọc Phước trong bài viết “Vai trò và vận dụng điều kiện phản xạ của Pavlov trong giảng dạy khẩu ngữ Hán ngữ”, nhóm đã áp dụng lý thuyết và áp dụng điều kiện phản xạ trong tình huống dạy học kỹ năng nói.¹ Từ các nghiên cứu cho thấy, việc tích cực tìm ra các giải pháp để nâng cao việc dạy nói cho có hiệu quả đang là điều hết sức cấp thiết trong dạy học ngoại ngữ nói chung và tiếng Trung nói riêng, vì nếu thực hiện có hiệu quả, chắc chắn sẽ đem lại kết quả đáng phấn khởi trong quá trình giảng dạy, qua đó cũng sẽ giúp người học cảm thấy tự tin và có hứng thú hơn trong việc học.

Để giúp cho người học cảm thấy hứng thú hơn, một số giáo trình tiếng Trung đã được biên soạn theo hướng dạy học theo nhiệm vụ (The Task-based Approach), đây là phương pháp tương đối tiên tiến áp dụng trong giảng dạy theo hướng giao tiếp trong những năm đây. Dạy học theo nhiệm vụ được phát triển trên nền tảng dạy học theo hướng giao tiếp, phương pháp này chuyển hóa các quan điểm cơ bản ứng dụng trong ngôn ngữ học thành các phương pháp giảng dạy mang ý nghĩa thực tiễn, trực tiếp trong giờ học, nhiệm vụ ở đây tức là các hoạt động ngôn ngữ sẽ do giáo viên yêu cầu người học hoàn thành bài tập trong giờ học. Lý thuyết này đầu tiên bắt nguồn từ “giả thuyết đầu vào” của Krashen, ông cho rằng chỉ khi người học tiếp xúc được đầu vào ngôn

¹ Kỷ yếu Hội thảo Khoa học Quốc tế Nghiên cứu và Giảng dạy tiếng Trung, NXB ĐH Sư phạm TP.HCM, năm 2017

ngữ có thể hiểu biết được, tức cao hơn trình độ hiện có đầu vào ngôn ngữ của người học, thì mới thúc đẩy được quá trình thụ đắc.² Các nhà ngôn ngữ học đều cho rằng con đường quan trọng nhất để giúp cho người học có thể nắm bắt, hiểu biết được ngôn ngữ đầu vào đó là không ngừng điều chỉnh, bổ sung thông tin trong quá trình đàm thoại, khi người học hoàn thành nhiệm vụ quá trình giao tiếp cũng là đã thúc đẩy được quá trình thụ đắc ngôn ngữ. Phương pháp giảng dạy giao tiếp cho rằng mục đích của việc học ngôn ngữ là sử dụng ngôn ngữ, cho nên việc giảng dạy ngôn ngữ cần phải bồi dưỡng khả năng giao tiếp của người học, nâng cao tính lưu loát khi sử dụng ngôn ngữ. Nói theo cách khác, khi sinh viên muốn giao tiếp được thì phải nắm vững kiến thức về ngôn ngữ như cách sử dụng từ vựng, áp dụng các mẫu câu vào trong các tình huống đàm thoại.

Hiệu quả của việc học tập còn không thể tách rời khỏi các chiến lược học tập (Learning Strategies) của sinh viên, ngoài các khảo sát về nội dung, phương pháp giảng dạy đã được nghiên cứu rất nhiều trong giới giảng dạy ngoại ngữ. Trong những năm gần đây, chiến lược học tập ngày càng được chú trọng như một thành tố có liên quan trực tiếp quá trình tự thân vận động của người học, khi các nhà nghiên cứu đánh giá hiệu quả học tập có thành công hay không, thì thành tố này là một trong những tiêu chí có ảnh hưởng trực tiếp đến hoạt động học tập hiệu quả. Trong đó, các nhà nghiên cứu Oxford đã chú ý đến tác dụng của chiến lược học tập trong quá trình học ngoại ngữ³. Theo Oxford, chiến lược học tập bao gồm các yếu tố như chiến lược siêu nhận thức (Metacognition), chiến lược tri nhận, chiến lược giao tiếp, chiến lược bổ sung, chiến lược tri nhớ, chiến lược tình cảm v.v... Trong đó, chiến lược siêu nhận thức được đánh giá là một chiến lược mang tính quyết định đến hiệu quả học tập của người học. Theo O'Mally và Chamot, chiến lược siêu nhận thức được dùng để đánh giá, quản lý, kiểm soát các hoạt động trong chiến lược tri nhận, điều này đúng với thực tế là khi mới tiếp xúc với một ngôn ngữ mới như ngôn ngữ Trung Quốc, người học cần phải khắc phục các khó khăn khi học chữ Hán, các nét viết và bộ thủ

² Dẫn lại của Li Xiaoqi, Nghiên cứu về giảng dạy kỹ năng Đọc hiểu và kỹ năng viết tiếng Trung, 239, NXB Thương vụ, 2009

³ Oxford, R.L, Language Learning Strategies: what Every Teacher Should Know, N.Y: Newbury House/ Harper & Row, 1990

rườm rà phức tạp luôn khiến cho sinh viên Việt Nam dễ dàng nản lòng khi từ lớp một đến lớp mười hai đều tiếp xúc với chữ viết là chữ Latinh; cộng thêm một số âm tố không có trong tiếng Việt sẽ gây khó khăn rất nhiều cho người mới học tiếng Trung, nếu như người học không quản lý và kiểm soát tốt cảm xúc (emotion), sẽ dễ dàng cảm thấy chán nản và bỏ cuộc. Đối với chiến lược giao tiếp, nó chỉ phát huy tác dụng với những sinh viên đã có một nền tảng kiến thức ngôn ngữ nhất định, trong quá trình giao tiếp, có thể sinh viên chưa biết sử dụng từ ngữ đó một cách sát nghĩa, nhưng thông qua các chiến lược giao tiếp, họ dễ dàng diễn đạt được suy nghĩ của mình qua các vốn từ sẵn có lẫn ngôn ngữ hình thể, do cuộc sống thực tế bắt buộc họ phải diễn đạt, nói ra được suy nghĩ của mình, nên môi trường ngôn ngữ phải nói là đóng một vai trò rất quan trọng trong học tập. Nhưng môi trường học tập ngôn ngữ tại Việt Nam lại ngược lại, sinh viên Việt Nam bị chi phối quá nhiều bởi tiếng mẹ đẻ là tiếng Việt. Ngay cả trong lớp học, một số giáo viên cũng thường xuyên dùng cách đọc – dịch để giảng dạy, nên tư duy của người học luôn bị lệ thuộc vào tiếng mẹ đẻ, điều này sẽ có những mặt hạn chế kiềm hãm sự phát triển các kỹ năng ngôn ngữ của người học. Chính vì vậy, giảng viên phải sử dụng các phương pháp tích cực để khích lệ người học vận dụng tốt chiến lược siêu nhận thức của mình để có kế hoạch, mục tiêu và tự kiểm soát điều tiết được bản thân mình trong quá trình học tập, từ đó hoàn thành mục tiêu học tập.

3. Một số phương pháp nhằm kích thích tính tích cực của người học

Do Giáo trình chuẩn HSK tương đối chú trọng đến phần Đọc, Viết và Nghe, vì Kỳ thi kiểm tra năng lực khẩu ngữ (giao tiếp) - HSKK được tách thành một kỳ thi riêng, nên khi sử dụng bộ sách này, phần lớn người dạy và người học chỉ chú tâm vào phần từ vựng, ngữ pháp và kỹ năng nghe hiểu, mà ít nhiều xao nhãng Kỹ năng Nói, vốn là một yếu tố quan trọng trong việc học ngoại ngữ. Thêm một yếu tố khách quan là thời lượng dành cho ngoại ngữ không chuyên khá ít, cộng thêm yếu tố sĩ số lớp đông, nên để chạy kịp chương trình, nhiều giảng viên đã không thể triển khai phần thực hành nói ngay tại lớp. Hậu quả là sinh viên cảm thấy nặng nề do phải học và nhớ từ mới ngay tại lớp, công bằng mà nói, so với Giáo trình đàm thoại tiếng Hoa 301 câu, phần từ vựng của Giáo trình chuẩn HSK có lượng từ vựng tương đối ít, nhưng phần lớn

sinh viên không thể nhớ từ vựng đã học do thiếu thực hành vào các chủ đề giao tiếp. Người biên soạn nên bộ Giáo trình chuẩn HSK là dựa theo Khung đề cương từ vựng cấp độ HSK do Hanban ban hành, nên một số chủ đề giao tiếp sẽ không có tính liên tục do phải uốn nắn theo từng cấp độ, mà đòi hỏi giảng viên phải uyển chuyển kết hợp những kiến thức đã học và vận dụng một số kiến thức mới để triển khai hoạt động giao tiếp ngay tại lớp.

Để giúp cho sinh viên Việt Nam có thể chủ động hơn trong quá trình sử dụng bộ Giáo trình chuẩn HSK, chúng tôi xin đề xuất một số phương pháp hoàn toàn mang tính khả thi khi áp dụng tại lớp học ở Việt Nam

3.1. Giai đoạn trước khi lên lớp:

Giảng viên cần phải giới thiệu tính quan trọng và ý nghĩa của chủ đề thực hành trong bài học, kích thích người học tham gia với tất cả sự nhiệt tình; tiếp theo là cung cấp các dữ liệu ngôn ngữ có liên quan trong bài học, bằng cách gửi trước bảng hướng dẫn sử dụng từ vựng có kèm câu minh họa; giải thích sơ các cấu trúc ngôn ngữ trong bài học.

3.2. Giai đoạn thực thi nhiệm vụ tại lớp học:

Trong thời gian thực thi nhiệm vụ, giảng viên có thể yêu cầu người tái hiện lại các hình thức ngôn ngữ (từ vựng, ngữ pháp...); sau đó giảng viên sẽ phân tích các tình huống khi sử dụng cấu trúc câu trong bài học, các trường hợp đồng nghĩa – cận nghĩa – đa nghĩa đều có thể giới thiệu đến người học. Sau khi đã hoàn tất phần giới thiệu về kiến thức ngôn ngữ, giảng viên có thể đưa ra nhiều tình huống để yêu cầu sinh viên tham gia như đóng vai thành các nhân vật, diễn tiểu phẩm ngắn có sử dụng các cấu trúc câu trong bài học; người học có thể căn cứ vào các yêu cầu chủ đề giao tiếp mà giảng viên đưa ra mà làm việc theo cặp hay theo nhóm, để từ đó có sự tương tác với nhau, bầu không khí học tập trong lớp chắc chắn sẽ sôi động.

Trong quá trình thực hành các hoạt động giao tiếp, giảng viên cũng nên chú ý một số sinh viên còn rụt rè, thiếu tự tin, dùng các phương pháp khuyến khích các em chủ động tham gia hoạt động của tập thể như có quà (bánh kẹo, quà nhỏ...) hoặc các “hình phạt” nếu cố tình làm sai như hát hoặc “phạt” bằng các trò chơi vui nhộn khác.

3.3. Giai đoạn củng cố và tổng kết:

Trong quá trình lớp tham gia hoạt động giao tiếp, giảng viên có thể âm thầm ghi nhận lại các lỗi sai về diễn đạt của sinh viên. Khi hoạt động lớp đã kết thúc, giảng viên có thể dựa vào các lỗi sai diễn đạt điển hình của người học mà tiến hành sửa lỗi cho cả lớp. Thậm chí từ những dữ liệu đó, giảng viên còn có thể thiết kế thành một chuyên đề dạy học để giúp người học củng cố kiến thức ngôn ngữ.

Có thể nói Phương pháp dạy học theo nhiệm vụ, cụ thể ở đây là dựa vào các bài giảng trong giáo trình chuẩn HSK mà triển khai các hoạt động giao tiếp ngay tại lớp, sẽ phần nào bổ khuyết cho giáo trình này vốn dĩ nặng về tính mục đích và chức năng ngôn ngữ, để góp phần phát triển bốn kỹ năng nghe nói đọc viết một cách toàn diện nhất.

4. Kết luận

Từ những vấn đề đã phân tích ở trên, có thể nói việc sử dụng Giáo trình chuẩn HSK để giảng dạy cho đối tượng sinh viên chọn học tiếng Hoa như một ngoại ngữ không chuyên là tương đối phù hợp bên cạnh những giáo trình quá thiên về các kỹ thuật kỹ năng ngôn ngữ. Nếu xác lập được mục tiêu học tập, sinh viên hoàn toàn có thể đạt tới cấp độ mà mình mong muốn trong thời gian ngắn nhất do giáo trình có tính định hướng rõ ràng; qua đó giúp cho sinh viên có động lực bồi bổ thêm một ngôn ngữ thứ hai mang tính ứng dụng cao và phổ biến hiện nay. Thông qua các hoạt động giao tiếp tại lớp, giúp sinh viên chủ động hơn nữa trong quá trình tự học, chuẩn bị bài đến trình bày các kỹ năng ngôn ngữ tại lớp, biến quá trình thụ động tiếp thu kiến thức một chiều từ giảng viên sang tích cực chủ động tham gia các hoạt động tại lớp, để mỗi buổi học trong lớp luôn đầy ắp tiếng cười và tràn đầy niềm vui. Để làm được những điều này, ngoài yếu tố giáo trình và chương trình giảng dạy, giảng viên hoàn toàn có thể thay đổi bắt đầu từ phương pháp giảng dạy của mình.

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INVESTIGATING NAMES OF GOVERNMENT BODIES IN CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE

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ABSTRACT

With the property of having some similarities in lexicon, names of government bodies in Chinese and Vietnamese have some notable similarities and differences. From the point of cognitive linguistics, the research is designed to help Vietnamese learners on enhancing Chinese reading and interpreting skills, especially in journalism genre.

Keywords: *Sino-Vietnamese word, proper noun, cognitive linguistics, semantic fields.*

TÌM HIỂU TỪ CHỈ TÊN CƠ QUAN NHÀ NƯỚC TRONG TIẾNG TRUNG VÀ TIẾNG VIỆT

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Tóm Tắt

Với đặc điểm là hai ngôn ngữ có nhiều điểm tương đồng về từ vựng, từ ngữ định danh cơ quan nhà nước trong tiếng Trung và tiếng Việt có nhiều điểm tương đồng, đồng thời cũng tồn tại một số khác biệt đáng lưu ý, từ góc độ tri nhận khái niệm ngôn ngữ, tác giả mong muốn giúp người học nắm vững nhóm từ này giúp cho người Việt học tiếng Trung nâng cao khả năng đọc hiểu và phiên dịch, nhất là đối với thể loại văn bản báo chí.

Từ khoá: Từ Hán Việt, từ-ngữ định danh, tri nhận (*Cognitive Linguistics*), trường nghĩa (*Semantic fields*).

1. Đặt vấn đề

1.1. Tính bức thiết của vấn đề

Trong quá trình học tiếng Trung, ở giai đoạn vận dụng bậc cao giai đoạn cuối Trung cấp đến cao cấp (tương đương B2 đến C1, C2 trong khung năng lực ngoại ngữ 6 bậc được sử dụng tại Việt Nam hiện nay), người học vào giai đoạn học, tiếp xúc và đảm nhận công việc liên quan đến đọc hiểu, dịch văn bản tiếng Trung có độ khó cao, một trong các nguyên nhân tạo ra độ khó của một văn bản tiếng nước ngoài là nhóm từ vựng thuộc trường nghĩa trên một lĩnh vực nhất định. Trong đó, từ định danh (tên gọi) là một nhóm từ xuất hiện với tần suất khá cao trên công văn, giấy tờ pháp lý, các bài báo... gây nhiều trở ngại cho người học vận dụng tiếng Trung đọc hiểu phiên dịch văn bản, nhất là đối với từ được diễn đạt bằng hình thức rút gọn trong tiếng Trung do vậy, việc phân tích, tìm hiểu và hệ thống kiến thức nhóm từ nêu trên trong tiếng Trung và tiếng Việt giúp người học thuận lợi trong việc đối

chiếu, đối dịch, đọc hiểu văn bản báo chí đã trở thành vấn đề bức thiết trong nghiên cứu giảng dạy, học tập và dịch thuật tiếng Trung tại Việt Nam.

1.2. Cơ sở lý luận

- **Trường nghĩa** (语义场) : Nhà ngôn ngữ học người Đức J.Trier đã nêu ra lý luận về trường nghĩa (The Theory of Semantic fields) vô cùng nổi tiếng. Trong đó, ông định nghĩa: Trường nghĩa hay còn gọi là trường từ vựng, là một hệ thống, trường nghĩa tập hợp từ vựng, cụm từ có ý nghĩa tương liên với nhau, thể hiện rõ mối quan hệ lẫn nhau. Đối chiếu trường nghĩa là Đối chiếu trường liên tưởng là đối chiếu các nhóm từ có chung một nét nghĩa nào đó. Các trường từ vựng thường được chọn để nghiên cứu đối chiếu là: Từ chỉ một loại hoạt động (ví dụ: các động từ chuyển động, hoạt động nói năng), Từ chỉ phương tiện hoạt động (ví dụ: công cụ sản xuất), Từ chỉ quan hệ giữa người với người (ví dụ: quan hệ thân tộc), Từ chỉ màu sắc, Từ chỉ các bộ phận cơ thể (người và động vật), Từ chỉ động vật (ví dụ: động vật nuôi), Từ chỉ cây cối, Từ chỉ cảm xúc, Từ chỉ các món ăn...

- Từ mượn (Borrowed Words)

Theo tác giả Nguyễn Văn Khang, thế giới khách quan là vô hạn và ký hiệu ngôn ngữ là có hạn, do vậy, bên cạnh việc tạo ra các từ mới từ phương thức cấu tạo từ của từng ngôn ngữ, thì một trong những nguồn bổ sung từ vựng không kém phần quan trọng là vay mượn từ vựng từ những ngôn ngữ khác. Theo tác giả Nguyễn Thiện Giáp, trong quá trình tiếp xúc giữa hai ngôn ngữ, tiếng Việt tiếp nhận một khối lượng từ ngữ rất lớn của tiếng Hán làm giàu thêm cho từ vựng của mình, trong đó các từ ngữ mượn Hán đọc theo âm Hán-Việt là một bộ phận trong các từ mượn của tiếng Việt.

- Hoạt động tri nhận (cognitive activity)

Đó là một quá trình thiết định giá trị (nghĩa) của biểu thức ngôn ngữ, nghĩa là tính thông tin của nó. Nói rộng ra, hoạt động tri nhận tạo cho con người khả năng đi đến một quyết định và/hoặc một sự hiểu biết nhất định, tóm lại, đó là hoạt động tư duy dẫn đến chỗ thông hiểu (thuyết giải) một cái gì đó. Kết quả của hoạt động tri nhận là sự tạo ra một hệ thống những ý niệm giúp con người hiểu biết, giả định, suy nghĩ

và/hoặc tưởng tượng về các đối tượng của thế giới hiện thực và các thế giới khả dĩ. Điều đó thuộc về hệ thống ý niệm của con người. (Trần Văn Cơ)

2. Vài đặc điểm tri nhận Từ-Ngữ thuộc trường nghĩa định danh cơ quan chính phủ tổ chức chính trị xã hội tại Trung Quốc

Theo tác giả Trần văn cơ, “Tri nhận là tất cả những quá trình trong đó những dữ liệu cảm tính được cải biến khi truyền vào trong não dưới dạng những biểu tượng tinh thần (hình ảnh, mệnh đề, khung, cảnh v.v.) để có thể lưu lại trong trí nhớ con người.”, việc định danh một tổ chức, từ nhiều góc độ tiếp cận khác nhau, đã hình thành nhiều kết quả định danh khác nhau, từ ngữ định danh cơ quan chính phủ Trung Quốc, từ góc độ hoạt động tri nhận, có thể chia thành:

2.1. Định danh theo chức năng hoạt động: 外交部 Bộ Ngoại giao, 公安部 Bộ Công An, 国家安全生产监督管理总局 Cục quản lý và kiểm tra an toàn sản xuất, 国家动植物检疫局 Cục kiểm định động thực vật Quốc gia, 国家环境保护总局 Tổng cục Bảo vệ môi trường、总参谋部 bộ tổng tham mưu、总后勤部 Bộ tổng hậu cần、广播电视部 Bộ phát thanh truyền hình、国防部 Bộ Quốc phòng、国家标准总局 Tổng cục tiêu chuẩn quốc gia、国家出版局 Cục xuất bản quốc gia、国家核安全局 cục An toàn hạt nhân Quốc gia、国务院安全生产委员会 Ủy ban An toàn sản xuất Quốc Hội、国家保密局 Cục bảo mật quốc gia、监察部 Bộ thanh tra Thanh tra chính phủ

2.2. Định danh theo phạm vi quản lý: 国家行政学院 Học viện Chính trị Quốc gia、水产部 Bộ thủy sản、中国道教协会 Hiệp hội Đạo giáo Trung Quốc、国家煤炭工业局 Cục công nghiệp than quốc gia、国家能源局 Cục năng lượng Quốc gia、国家税务总局 Cục thuế quốc gia、国家烟草专卖局 Cục kinh doanh thuốc lá quốc gia、国家医药管理总局 Tổng cục quản lý Y dược quốc gia、国家粮食局 Cục lương thực

Quốc gia、国家预防腐败局 Cục chống hủ bại Quốc gia、教育、科学、文化委员会 Ủy ban Giáo Dục, khoa học, văn hóa、教育部 Bộ giáo dục、燃料工业部 Bộ Công nghiệp nhiên liệu、燃料化学工业部 Bộ Công nghiệp hóa học Nhiên liệu、商标局 Cục thương hiệu、商务部 Cục thương vụ、商业部 Bộ thương nghiệp、铁道部 Bộ đường sắt、中国佛教协会 Hiệp hội Phật giáo Trung Quốc、兵器工业部 Bộ Công nghiệp vũ khí、第一商业部 Bộ thương nghiệp thứ nhất、电力工业部 Bộ công nghiệp điện lực、电子工业部 Bộ công nghiệp điện tử、地区政策局 Cục chính sách địa phương Vụ kinh tế địa phương và lãnh thổ (Bộ kế hoạch và đầu tư)、国家地震局 Cục địa chấn quốc gia、交通运输部 Bộ giao thông vận tải、化学工业部 Bộ Công nghiệp hóa học、粮食部 林垦部 Bộ đất rừng、林业部 lâm nghiệp、水利部 Bộ thủy lợi 、水产部 Bộ Thủy sản、文化部 Bộ văn hóa、新闻司 Cục thông tin

2.3. Định danh theo đối tượng phục vụ: 环境保护部 Bộ bảo vệ môi trường、城市服务部 Bộ phục vụ đô thị、国务院妇女儿童工作委员会 Ủy ban công tác phụ nữ thiếu niên nhi đồng Quốc hội、国务院防治艾滋病工作委员会 Ủy ban công tác phòng chống bệnh Aids quốc hội、国务院港澳事务办公室 Văn phòng công tác Hồng Kong-Ma cau Quốc hội、华侨委员会 Ủy ban Hoa kiều、全国老龄工作委员会 Ủy ban công tác người già toàn quốc、水产部 Bộ thủy sản、国务院残疾人工作委员会 Ủy ban công tác người tàn tật Quốc hội、

3. Một vài tương đồng và khác biệt về định danh tên cơ quan tổ chức Nhà nước trong tiếng Trung và tiếng Việt

Với đặc điểm ngôn ngữ Trung Việt “Đại đồng tiểu dị”, với đặc điểm gần 80% từ ghép tiếng Việt là từ Hán Việt, từ ngữ chỉ tên cơ quan Nhà nước trong tiếng Việt có tỷ lệ rất cao là từ Hán-Việt, như 外交部

định danh Hán Việt tương ứng là Bộ Ngoại giao , 公安部 định danh Hán Việt tương ứng là Bộ Công An, 总参谋部 định danh Hán Việt tương ứng là Bộ tổng tham mưu; 水产部 định danh Hán Việt tương ứng là Bộ Thủy sản、文化部 định danh Hán Việt tương ứng là Bộ văn hóa, 国家出版局 định danh Hán Việt tương ứng là Cục xuất bản quốc gia...

Những đặc điểm hoàn toàn trong đối chiếu từ cùng khái niệm giữa hai ngôn ngữ Trung Việt như trên mang đến thuận lợi cho người học tiếng Trung trong việc ghi nhớ, đối dịch Trung Việt

Bên cạnh đó, với diện tích lãnh thổ rộng lớn, dân số đông hơn gấp 10 lần Việt Nam, điều này đặt ra một sự tất yếu, trong mọi lĩnh vực đời sống XH, TQ phải phân chia phạm vi quản lý nhỏ hơn, đi vào chiều sâu hơn, từ đó sẽ xuất hiện hiện những từ thuộc trường nghĩa con của các cơ quan tổ chức mang tính phân hóa sâu mà VN chưa có, như: Trong tiếng Trung có những trường nghĩa con (子场), trong tiếng Việt không có. Như tổng hợp phạm vi quản lý của 粮食部 Bộ lương thực 、林业部 Bộ đất rừng、林业部 bộ lâm nghiệp、水利部 Bộ thủy lợi 、水产部 Bộ Thủy sản, 国家粮食局 Cục lương thực Quốc gia tại Trung Quốc hiện nay tương ứng với Bộ Nông nghiệp và phát triển Nông thôn tại Việt Nam, 地质部 Bộ địa chất Trung Quốc là một Bộ độc lập trực thuộc chính phủ so với tại Việt Nam là tổng cục *Tổng cục Địa chất và Khoáng sản Việt Nam thuộc Bộ tài nguyên và môi trường*, 铁道部 Bộ đường sắt tại Việt Nam tương ứng chức năng cục đường sắt thuộc Bộ giao thông vận tải, 文化部 Bộ văn hóa 新闻司 cục thông tin của Trung Quốc nằm trong một chức năng nhiệm vụ với Bộ Văn hóa và thông tin (文化与新闻部)

4. Kết luận

Từ việc quy loại từ chỉ cơ quan nhà nước trong tiếng Trung và bước đầu so sánh với tiếng Việt, chúng ta có thể thấy, về đặc điểm tri nhận để định danh tên cơ quan, do sự tương đồng lớn giữa hai ngôn ngữ thông qua từ Hán Việt, từ định danh cơ quan trong tiếng Việt có

nhiều điểm tương đồng về tên gọi, điều này tạo ra nhiều nhân tố có lợi cho việc học tập, ghi nhớ. Bên cạnh đó, như đã phân tích trên, về nội hàm của một số khái niệm trong tiếng Trung có sự chênh lệch với Tiếng Việt điều này đòi hỏi người học phải ghi nhớ kỹ thông qua quá trình lặp lại (强化) trong học tập để đọc hiểu hoặc chuyển dịch chính xác những khái niệm có nội hàm không đồng nhất từ tiếng Trung sang tiếng Việt và ngược lại.

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USING GAMES IN HANZI TEACHING FOR NON-CHINESE MAJORS

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ABSTRACT

Hanzi is an integral part of teaching and learning Chinese. The majority of non-Chinese majors said that "Hanzi is difficult to learn, difficult to recognize, difficult to write and difficult to remember." This has a direct impact on students' interest in Chinese. Based on the characteristics of Hanzi, this paper analyzes the advantages of using games, offers some Hanzi games, at the same time make recommendations when using the game in teaching Hanzi for non-Chinese majors.

Keywords: *game, Hanzi, Chinese, non-professional students.*

SỬ DỤNG TRÒ CHƠI TRONG GIẢNG DẠY CHỮ HÁN TIẾNG TRUNG QUỐC CHO SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN

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TÓM TẮT

Chữ Hán là một phần không thể thiếu trong việc dạy và học tiếng Trung Quốc. Đại đa số sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên đều cho rằng “chữ Hán khó học, khó nhận biết, khó viết và khó nhớ”. Điều này có ảnh hưởng trực tiếp đến hứng thú học tiếng Trung Quốc của sinh viên. Trên cơ sở các đặc điểm của chữ Hán, bài viết phân tích ưu điểm của việc sử dụng trò chơi, đưa ra một số trò chơi chữ Hán, đồng thời nêu lên những lưu ý khi sử dụng trò chơi trong giảng dạy chữ Hán tiếng Trung Quốc cho sinh viên không chuyên.

Từ khoá: trò chơi, chữ Hán, tiếng Trung Quốc, sinh viên không chuyên.

1. Đặt vấn đề

Tiếng Trung Quốc là ngôn ngữ có số người sử dụng nhiều nhất thế giới, là một trong 6 ngôn ngữ chính thức của Liên Hiệp Quốc. Theo thống kê của chúng tôi, Việt Nam hiện có 4 trường đại học đào tạo ngành Sư phạm tiếng Trung Quốc, 38 trường đại học đào tạo ngành Ngôn ngữ Trung Quốc. Đây là ngoại ngữ có số trường đào tạo nhiều thứ hai tại Việt Nam (chỉ sau tiếng Anh), và cũng là ngoại ngữ có số người học không chuyên nhiều thứ hai tại Việt Nam (chỉ sau tiếng Anh).

Chữ Hán là hệ thống kí hiệu dùng để ghi lại tiếng Trung Quốc. Chữ Hán là loại chữ ghi ý, vì vậy muốn viết chính xác được chữ Hán người học phải xây dựng được mối liên hệ giữa âm, hình và nghĩa của chữ. Còn chữ Quốc ngữ của tiếng Việt là loại chữ ghi âm, chỉ cần biết cách phát âm đúng của từ, thì có thể viết được chính xác từ đó, vì giữa

cách đọc và cách viết có mối liên hệ trực tiếp [1]. Do đó, hầu hết sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên đều cho rằng “chữ Hán khó học, khó nhận biết, khó viết và khó nhớ”. Song, việc dạy và học tiếng Trung Quốc nói chung, tiếng Trung Quốc cho sinh viên không chuyên nói riêng, không thể không dạy và học chữ Hán. Làm thế nào để chữ Hán không còn là “rào cản” đối với sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc đã trở thành vấn đề trăn trở của không ít giảng viên tiếng Trung Quốc.

Theo Lee (1979), sử dụng trò chơi trong giảng dạy ngoại ngữ có thể xua tan sự buồn tẻ của giờ học, tạo ra môi trường học tập vui vẻ, thoải mái, làm tăng sự hứng thú của sinh viên đối với việc học, khiến sinh viên luôn sẵn sàng tham gia giờ học. [2]

Để sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên học chữ Hán dễ dàng hơn, chúng tôi cho rằng giảng viên có thể sử dụng các trò chơi liên quan đến chữ Hán vào hoạt động giảng dạy. Trong bài viết này, trên cơ sở các đặc điểm của chữ Hán, chúng tôi tập trung phân tích các ưu điểm của việc sử dụng trò chơi trong giảng dạy chữ Hán tiếng Trung Quốc, đưa ra một số trò chơi chữ Hán, đồng thời nêu lên những lưu ý khi sử dụng trò chơi liên quan đến chữ Hán.

2. Đặc điểm của chữ Hán

Chữ Hán là loại văn tự có lịch sử lâu đời, là sự kết hợp của 3 yếu tố hình – âm – ý, có khả năng tạo sinh mạnh và khả năng cấu tạo từ cao, có tính xuyên không gian và thời gian.

Châu A Phí và Lưu Hón Vũ (2017) trong giáo trình “Ngữ âm – Văn tự – Từ vựng tiếng Trung Quốc” đã tổng kết các quy tắc tạo chữ Hán, các đặc điểm kết cấu chữ Hán như sau:

- *Về phương pháp tạo chữ Hán.* Chữ Hán được tạo ra theo 4 cách: tượng hình (象形), chỉ sự (指事), hội ý (会意) và hình thanh (形声). Trong đó, hình thanh là phương pháp tạo chữ phổ biến nhất, đại đa số chữ Hán được tạo ra theo phương pháp này.

- *Về đơn vị cấu tạo chữ Hán.* Chữ Hán được tạo nên bởi các nét (笔画) và các bộ kiện (部件). Có 6 loại nét đơn là ngang (横), dọc (竖), phẩy (撇), chấm (点), móc (捺) và hất (提); có 26 loại nét ghép được tạo ra từ các nét đơn. Các bộ kiện được tạo thành từ các nét đơn và nét

ghép.

- Về quan hệ kết cấu chữ Hán. Căn cứ vào kết cấu chữ Hán, có thể chia chữ Hán làm 2 loại là chữ độc thể (独体字) và chữ hợp thể (合体字). Với chữ hợp thể, giữa các bộ kiện có 3 loại quan hệ phương vị sau: quan hệ trái – phải, quan hệ trên – dưới và quan hệ trong – ngoài. [3]

3. Ưu điểm của việc sử dụng trò chơi trong giảng dạy chữ Hán cho sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên

Việc sử dụng trò chơi trong giảng dạy chữ Hán cho sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên có các ưu điểm sau:

3.1. Phù hợp với đặc điểm tính cách của sinh viên

Trong giảng dạy, giảng viên cần lấy sinh viên làm trung tâm. Song, đặc điểm tính cách của các sinh viên không giống nhau. Căn cứ vào khuynh hướng hoạt động cá nhân, các nhà tâm lý học đã chia tính cách của sinh viên ra làm 2 loại: tính cách hướng nội và tính cách hướng ngoại. [4]

Sinh viên có tính cách hướng nội không thích nói nhiều, không giỏi giao tiếp, không giỏi biểu đạt suy nghĩ của mình, thích học trong môi trường học tập vui vẻ, thoải mái. Việc sử dụng trò chơi trong giảng dạy sẽ mang lại sự thoải mái, vui vẻ và tăng cường thêm sự tự tin cho sinh viên có tính cách hướng nội.

Sinh viên có tính cách hướng ngoại thích giao tiếp, tự tin, nói nhiều, thích sự cạnh tranh, song lại thường nhanh chóng nhàm chán với các nội dung học tập trên lớp. Trò chơi là một trong những hoạt động có tính cạnh tranh. Việc sử dụng trò chơi trong giảng dạy tạo được tính cạnh tranh, từ đó tăng thêm sự thích thú của sinh viên có tính cách hướng ngoại với các nội dung giảng dạy trên lớp.

3.2. Tạo sự hứng thú cho sinh viên

Đầu thế kỷ 19, nhà giáo dục học người Đức Herbart cho rằng, hứng thú là động lực học tập, là mục tiêu quan trọng và là kết quả của giáo dục [5]. Muốn sinh viên học tốt chữ Hán, điều đầu tiên là phải tạo được sự hứng thú cho sinh viên. Trò chơi về chữ Hán sẽ hữu ích cho việc mang lại hứng thú học chữ Hán cho sinh viên. Các trò chơi về chữ Hán cần lấy sinh viên làm trung tâm, gần gũi với sở thích của sinh viên.

Như thế, sinh viên sẽ có được niềm vui trong học tập chữ Hán, thông qua các trò chơi sinh viên sẽ hiểu và nhớ rõ chữ Hán hơn.

3.3. Xây dựng cầu nối giữa thầy và trò

Trò chơi có thể rút ngắn khoảng cách giữa thầy và trò. Qua trò chơi, giảng viên không còn là “cấp trên” của sinh viên nữa, mà trở thành người tổ chức trò chơi, người đồng đội của sinh viên, làm cho sinh viên ngày càng gần gũi và tin tưởng vào giảng viên hơn. Qua đó, giảm bớt tâm lí lo sợ trong học tập của sinh viên. Thông qua các trò chơi chữ Hán, giúp sinh viên vận dụng các kiến thức đã học vào hoạt động giao tiếp bằng tiếng Trung Quốc, giúp giảng viên nhanh chóng hoàn thành các mục tiêu giảng dạy.

3.4. Tạo bầu không khí sôi nổi cho lớp học

Phương pháp giảng dạy truyền thống chủ yếu lấy kiến thức làm trung tâm, sinh viên vô hình trung đã trở thành “những vật chứa đựng kiến thức”. Tuy mục tiêu cuối cùng của việc học là hiểu và vận dụng kiến thức đã học, song nếu chỉ xem trọng kết quả, mà không xem trọng quá trình, chỉ quan tâm đến lượng kiến thức giảng dạy mà không quan tâm đến phương pháp giảng dạy, chắc chắn sẽ làm cho việc dạy và học trở nên đơn điệu và vô vị. Việc sử dụng các trò chơi chữ Hán vào giảng dạy không chỉ hữu ích cho việc làm giảm tâm lí mệt mỏi trong học tập của sinh viên, quan trọng hơn là nó rất hữu ích cho việc tăng cường và kích thích động cơ học tập của sinh viên.

4. Một số trò chơi dùng trong giảng dạy chữ Hán cho sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên

Trên cơ sở đặc điểm của chữ Hán và ưu điểm của việc sử dụng trò chơi trong giảng dạy chữ Hán cho sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên, chúng tôi xin đưa ra một số trò chơi sau:

4.1. Nhìn động tác đoán nét

Nội dung: Các nét chữ Hán.

Mục đích: Sinh viên nhớ được các nét của chữ Hán.

Cách thực hiện: Căn cứ vào số lượng sinh viên, giảng viên có thể chia sinh viên ra làm nhiều đội. Mỗi đội cử sinh viên đại diện, giảng viên cho sinh viên đại diện xem 1 nét chữ Hán, yêu cầu sinh viên đại

diện sử dụng các động tác cơ thể để biểu diễn lại nét chữ đó cho các đội đoán. Đội nào đoán đúng được 1 điểm. Tùy tình hình lớp học, giảng viên có thể tiến hành nhiều lượt nhìn động tác đoán nét.

4.2. Nhìn hình đoán chữ

Nội dung: Các chữ tượng hình đã học.

Mục đích: Sinh viên hiểu được cấu tạo của các chữ độc thể thường dùng.

Cách thực hiện: Căn cứ vào số lượng sinh viên, giảng viên có thể chia sinh viên ra làm nhiều đội. Giảng viên cho các đội xem hình và đoán chữ. Đội nào đoán đúng được 1 điểm. Tùy tình hình lớp học, giảng viên có thể tiến hành nhiều lượt nhìn hình đoán chữ.

4.3. Nhìn chữ đoán kết cấu

Nội dung: Các chữ hội ý, chữ chỉ sự và chữ hình thanh đã học.

Mục đích: Sinh viên hiểu được cấu tạo của các chữ hợp thể thường dùng.

Cách thực hiện: Căn cứ vào số lượng sinh viên, giảng viên có thể chia sinh viên ra làm nhiều đội. Giảng viên cho các đội xem chữ và đoán kết cấu chữ Hán. Đội nào đoán đúng được 1 điểm. Tùy tình hình lớp học, giảng viên có thể tiến hành nhiều lượt nhìn hình đoán kết cấu.

4.4. Ghép bộ kiện thành chữ

Nội dung: Các chữ hội ý, chữ chỉ sự và chữ hình thanh đã học.

Mục đích: Sinh viên nhận biết được các bộ kiện cấu thành chữ Hán.

Cách thực hiện: Căn cứ vào số lượng sinh viên, giảng viên có thể chia sinh viên ra làm nhiều đội. Giảng viên cho các đội các bộ kiện. Trong thời gian quy định, các đội ghép các bộ kiện cho sẵn thành các chữ Hán. Đội thắng là đội ghép được nhiều chữ Hán nhất.

4.5. Nối chữ với phiên âm

Nội dung: Tất cả các chữ Hán đã học.

Mục đích: Sinh viên liên kết được chữ Hán với âm đọc của nó.

Cách thực hiện: Căn cứ vào số lượng sinh viên, giảng viên có thể

chia sinh viên ra làm nhiều đội. Giảng viên cho các đội một số chữ Hán và một số phiên âm. Trong thời gian quy định, các đội nối chính xác chữ Hán với phiên âm của nó. Đội thắng là đội nối được nhiều nhất.

4.6. Ca rô chữ Hán

Nội dung: Tất cả các chữ Hán đã học.

Mục đích: Sinh viên luyện viết chữ Hán.

Cách thực hiện: Giống như cách chơi cờ ca rô thông thường. Song, sinh viên không đánh các kí hiệu “x” hoặc “o”, mà thay bằng các chữ Hán. Sinh viên nào viết được 5 chữ Hán liên tục thành hàng (dọc, ngang hoặc chéo) trước, và không có chữ sai, sinh viên đó thắng.

4.7. Tìm chữ Hán

Nội dung: Tất cả các chữ Hán đã học.

Mục đích: Sinh viên nắm được các chữ Hán đã học.

Cách thực hiện: Căn cứ vào số lượng sinh viên, giảng viên có thể chia sinh viên ra làm nhiều đội. Giảng viên cho các đội một số chữ Hán đã học. Giảng viên đọc 1 chữ Hán, yêu cầu các đội tìm chữ Hán đó và dán lên bảng, đội nào nhanh nhất được 1 điểm. Đội thắng là đội đạt được nhiều điểm nhất.

4.8. Luyện nhãn lực

Nội dung: Tất cả các chữ Hán đã học.

Mục đích: Giúp sinh viên ôn lại các chữ Hán đã học.

Cách thực hiện: Giảng viên tạo các thẻ chữ Hán, mỗi thẻ một chữ Hán. Chia sinh viên trong lớp ra làm hai đội. Giảng viên cho sinh viên xem mặt không có chữ của thẻ chữ Hán, đặt hai ngón trỏ vào hai góc đối xứng của thẻ chữ Hán, xoay nhanh thẻ chữ Hán, yêu cầu sinh viên đoán chữ Hán trên thẻ. Đội nào đoán đúng và nhanh nhất được 1 điểm. Đội thắng là đội đạt được nhiều điểm nhất.

5. Những lưu ý khi sử dụng trò chơi trong giảng dạy chữ Hán cho sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên

Theo chúng tôi, khi sử dụng các trò chơi vào trong giảng dạy chữ Hán cho sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên, giảng viên cần

lưu ý những điểm sau:

5.1. Những lưu ý về trò chơi chữ Hán

Giảng viên nên lựa chọn trò chơi phù hợp với trình độ sinh viên, không nên chỉ sử dụng một vài trò chơi chữ Hán trong suốt tất cả các học phần. Nếu không, sinh viên nhàm chán, không còn hứng thú tham gia. Vì vậy, giảng viên cần sưu tầm và tích lũy nhiều trò chơi chữ Hán, đặc biệt là những trò chơi có thể sử dụng được ở tất cả các giai đoạn của tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên.

Ngoài ra, các trò chơi chữ Hán phải có mục đích cụ thể, cho sinh viên biết thông qua trò chơi này mình có thể học được những nội dung nào, luyện tập những chữ Hán nào.

5.2. Những lưu ý khi tiến hành trò chơi

Khi phân nhóm, giảng viên cần chú ý đến tính đồng đều giữa các nhóm. Giảng viên nên bố trí các sinh viên năng động, tính cực, năng lực tiếng Trung Quốc tốt vào các nhóm khác nhau. Như thế sẽ giúp các sinh viên năng lực tiếng Trung Quốc yếu, thụ động, thiếu tự tin có cơ hội học hỏi từ các bạn khác trong nhóm.

Khi phổ biến luật chơi, giảng viên cần giải thích rõ ràng, đảm bảo tất cả sinh viên đều nghe và hiểu rõ luật chơi. Nếu cần thiết, giảng viên có thể yêu cầu sinh viên lặp lại luật chơi.

Trong quá trình chơi, giảng viên phải điều khiển, bao quát toàn bộ lớp học, đảm bảo tính công bằng, giải quyết các xung đột giữa các cá nhân, các đội một cách hoà nhã.

6. Kết luận

Các trò chơi về chữ Hán không những lấp thời gian nhàn rỗi, thay đổi không khí lớp học, tạo tính đoàn kết trong sinh viên, mà còn giúp nâng cao khả năng nhận biết và ghi nhớ chữ Hán của sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên. Thông qua các trò chơi chữ Hán, sinh viên tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên sẽ cảm thấy chữ Hán “dễ học, dễ nhận biết, dễ viết và dễ nhớ”. Từ đó, sinh viên học tiếng Trung Quốc không chuyên sẽ xoá bỏ được rào cản tâm lý “chữ Hán khó học”, duy trì hứng thú và động cơ học tập tiếng Trung Quốc tích cực.

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JAPANESE MAJOR STUDENTS' ERRORS IN USING IMPERATIVE SENTENCES TO WRITE JAPANESE BUSINESS EMAILS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION

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ABSTRACT

Writing is one of the most important subjects in the progress of training language skills for students. With the nature of the subject, learners will face many difficulties and might make many mistakes. I suppose Japanese language major students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh City Open University are no exceptions. Mistakes can occur during learning process and can be caused by teaching resources, teaching methods and differences in cultures and languages. This paper analyzes common mistakes of using imperative sentences in business letters made by Japanese language learners, and on that basis, I will suggest some teaching methods to help learners correct mistakes and improve their writing skills.

Keywords: *writing skills, teaching methods, business letter.*

NHỮNG LỖI SAI CỦA SINH VIÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG NHẬT Ở CẤP ĐỘ TRUNG CẤP KHI SỬ DỤNG CÂU MỆNH LỆNH ĐỂ VIẾT THƯ THƯƠNG MẠI TIẾNG NHẬT VÀ MỘT VÀI ĐỀ XUẤT CHO VIỆC GIẢNG DẠY

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TÓM TẮT

Môn học Kỹ năng viết là một trong những môn học giữ vai trò quan trọng trong quá trình đào tạo kỹ năng ngôn ngữ cho sinh viên khi học ngoại ngữ. Với tính đặc thù của môn học, người học chắc chắn sẽ có nhiều khó khăn và không ít lỗi sai khi tiếp xúc với môn học. Tôi cho rằng sinh viên ngành ngôn ngữ Nhật tại Khoa Ngoại ngữ-Đại học Mở TP.HCM cũng không nằm ngoài hiện tượng trên. Những vấn đề về lỗi sai có thể đến bởi nhiều yếu tố như giáo trình giảng dạy, phương pháp giảng dạy hay lỗi do quá trình học tập của người học hoặc do sự khác nhau về văn hóa-ngôn ngữ... Với tinh thần cầu thị, bài viết phân tích lỗi sai về sử dụng câu cầu khiến thường gặp trong thư thương mại của người học, khảo sát các bức thư thương mại ở thể loại thư thuyết phục do người Nhật viết, trên cơ sở đó sẽ đề ra một số phương pháp giảng dạy giúp người học khắc phục lỗi sai, nâng cao năng lực viết của bản thân.

Từ khóa: *Kỹ năng viết; phương pháp giảng dạy; thư thương mại.*

1. Đặt vấn đề

Hiện nay, tiếng Nhật được giảng dạy rộng rãi tại Việt Nam ở các trung tâm Nhật ngữ, từ bậc trung học, cao đẳng đến đại học; các tài liệu học tập tiếng Nhật như một ngoại ngữ do người Việt biên soạn cũng khá nhiều nhưng theo chúng tôi, nguồn ngữ liệu đó vẫn chưa đủ so với nhu cầu sử dụng của người dùng tiếng Nhật. Lý do là vì chỉ mới cung cấp cho người học những mẫu câu và những bài học đơn giản, chưa chuyên sâu vào cách diễn đạt từ ngữ, cú pháp để người học hiểu và vận

dụng trong công việc soạn thảo thư tín thương mại bằng tiếng Nhật có hiệu quả hơn.

Theo góp ý từ các công ty Nhật Bản tại Việt Nam, nơi sinh viên trường Đại học Mở TP. HCM đã thực tập và cũng là nơi đang công tác của người viết; các doanh nghiệp cho rằng sinh viên ra trường thực sự có khả năng viết và hiểu về phong cách thư từ giao dịch bằng tiếng Nhật rất hạn chế.

Phía sinh viên đã tốt nghiệp cũng cho rằng, khó khăn lớn nhất khi làm việc trong thực tế không phải là biên, phiên dịch Nhật - Việt mà là soạn thảo thư thương mại tiếng Nhật, chọn lựa các phương tiện ngôn ngữ sao cho có sức thuyết phục khi đưa ra những đề nghị, xin lỗi.

Với những lý do vừa nêu, chúng tôi sẽ tập trung phân tích những lỗi sai của người học trong cách chọn và sử dụng các phương tiện ngôn ngữ đặc biệt là sử dụng kiểu câu cầu khiến, khảo sát các bức thư thương mại ở thể loại thư thuyết phục do người Nhật viết, thông qua kết quả đó đưa ra một số giải pháp phù hợp để nâng cao chất lượng giảng dạy cho môn học.

2. Cơ sở lý luận

2.1. Thư thương mại

2.1.1. Khái niệm thư thương mại

Thư thương mại là những thư được viết để sử dụng trong công việc giao dịch thương mại. Đó không chỉ là những thư được viết tay, đã được in ra (thư dạng giấy) bao gồm cả thư thư điện tử chẳng hạn như: email, file dưới dạng trình bày kỹ thuật số...⁴

Theo Vương Thị Kim Thanh (2009), "*thư thương mại (business letter) là một phương tiện thông tin liên lạc mà tổ chức kinh tế sử dụng*

⁴ ビジネス文書とは、ビジネスのために仕事の中で作成される様々な文書のことをいう。手書きや印刷された書類（紙の文書）だけでなく、電子メールやデジタル・プレゼンテーションのファイルなどの電子文書も含まれる (theo website “商用作文: hướng dẫn viết thư thương mại”, <http://web.ydu.edu.tw/> truy cập ngày 18/11/2016)

để gửi cho đối tác và khách hàng của mình”⁵.

2.1.2. Đặc điểm của thư tín thương mại

Thông tin được truyền tải một cách xác thực. Ngoài ra, thông tin có thể lưu trữ lại, xem như đó là những thông tin đúng, được ghi chép đúng qui cách.

Ngôn ngữ trong thư thương mại là ngôn ngữ giao dịch trong lĩnh vực hàng hóa và dịch vụ nên yêu cầu rõ ràng, chính xác là yếu tố hàng đầu, điều này thể hiện qua đặc điểm: rõ ràng, chính xác về ngữ pháp, về nội dung của văn bản. Từ ngữ đúng chính tả và có tính đơn nghĩa.

Thư thương mại phải ngắn gọn, dễ hiểu, có tính thuyết phục. Do vậy, người viết cần phải biết rõ mục đích viết: viết như thế nào, viết cho ai, viết để làm gì...từ đó mới xác định được văn phong, cách thức trình bày, lựa chọn từ ngữ, phương tiện diễn đạt cho phù hợp.

Theo “**公用文の書き方**” (Qui tắc soạn thảo văn bản) do chính phủ Nhật Bản ban hành vào năm bình thành 18, qui định như sau: các loại văn bản được chia thành hai loại chính là: “**公文書**: Kou bunsho” (công văn) và “**私文書**: Shi bunsho” (thư cá nhân).

“**公文書**: Kou bunsho” là hình thức văn bản hành chính do Nhà nước hoặc các đoàn thể chính quyền địa phương có thẩm quyền soạn thảo, ban hành, sử dụng văn bản để thực hiện các hoạt động thông tin, thực hiện nhiệm vụ và chức năng của mình.

Ngoài ra, các văn bản được các cơ quan, xí nghiệp soạn thảo nhằm thực hiện những vấn đề về giao dịch trong kinh doanh, thương mại cũng được xem là văn bản hành chính, thuộc nhóm “**公文書**: Kou bunsho”. Những văn bản thuộc nhóm này về hình thức trình bày cần theo mẫu chung của nhà nước nhưng ngôn ngữ diễn đạt không mang tính bắt buộc.

“**私文書**: Shi bunsho” (thư cá nhân) là những văn bản không thuộc những văn bản vừa nêu trên.⁶

⁵ Vương Thị Kim Thanh (2009), “Phân tích diễn ngôn thư tín thương mại tiếng Việt”, Tạp chí Khoa học xã hội (03), trang 50-55

⁶ 公用文の書き方(平成18年), (04), 日本. www.archives.go.jp, trang 2

2.1.3. Phân loại thư thương mại

Theo 阿部紘久(2015), 山崎正志 (2014), 山崎正志(2010) ⁷, dựa vào mục đích, chức năng văn bản, TTTM tiếng Nhật được phân thành hai loại: thư dùng trong công ty (社内文書: shanai bunsho) và thư dùng ngoài công ty (社外文書: shagai bunsho).

Thư dùng trong công ty sẽ có những tiểu loại như: chỉ thị, ra lệnh; thông báo; thư liên lạc hoặc điều chỉnh thông tin...

Loại thư dùng ngoài công ty gồm: thư mang tính chất xã giao, thăm hỏi và thư để giao dịch, mua bán.

Budly và các tác giả khác ⁸ đã phân chia thư tín làm bốn tiểu thể loại cụ thể như sau:

- Thể loại thuyết phục gồm: thư yêu cầu, thương lượng, chào hàng...

- Thể loại thông báo gồm: thông báo, đặt hàng, hỏi hàng ...

- Những thư với nội dung khiếu nại, phản nàn hoặc từ chối đề nghị cũng được xếp vào thể loại thông báo. Nhóm thư này còn được gọi là thể loại thông tin xấu.

- Thể loại thiện chí gồm: thư cảm ơn, xin lỗi, chúc mừng...

Trong bài viết này, chúng tôi sẽ nhóm thành 3 nhóm. Nhóm 1: thể loại thuyết phục, nhóm 2: thể loại thông báo và thể loại thông tin xấu, nhóm 3: thể loại thư thiện chí. Thư thương mại mà tác giả nghiên cứu là loại thư dùng ngoài công ty với mục đích giao dịch, mua bán.

2.2. Câu trong tiếng Nhật

2.2.1. Sơ lược về đặc điểm câu trong tiếng Nhật

Trong câu tiếng Nhật, thành phần vị tố cuối câu giữ vai trò chủ đạo. Hình thức của câu được quyết định bởi nội dung của vị tố. Cấu trúc câu cơ bản trong tiếng Nhật là S - O - V (chủ ngữ - bổ ngữ - vị ngữ).

⁷ 阿部紘久(2015)、*ビジネスの書き方*、永岡書店、山崎正志 (2014)、*ビジネス文書の書き方とマナー*、高橋書店、山崎正志(2010)、*ビジネス文書はスラスラ書ける*、アニモ出版

⁸ Budly, K.Merrier,P.Jones, Larson (2005), *Business Communication*, Thomson South-Western Publishers, Trang 224.

Ví dụ:

太郎が 重い荷物を 軽々と 運んだ。

Tarou hành lý nặng một cách nhẹ nhàng Vác

Trong ví dụ trên, động từ “運んだ” (hakonda: vác) ở vị trí cuối câu là vị ngữ. Động từ này biểu thị hành động chính, ý chính của câu “Tarou vác hành lý nặng một cách nhẹ nhàng”. Vị ngữ trong câu tiếng Nhật sẽ là danh từ, tính từ, hay động từ. Những vị ngữ này bao giờ cũng đứng ở cuối câu và là thành phần quan trọng nhất trong câu. Các bộ phận bổ nghĩa cho động từ vị ngữ thường ở vị trí giữa chủ ngữ và vị ngữ. Đây cũng là một nét khác biệt với trật tự cấu trúc câu của tiếng Việt là S - V - O.

Cũng do đặc điểm cấu trúc câu như thế nên trong tiếng Nhật nếu như chưa nghe hay chưa đọc hết phần cuối thì người nghe (người đọc) không thể hiểu được ý chính của đề tài. Câu trong tiếng Nhật cũng được sử dụng nhiều trợ từ chẳng hạn như trợ từ xác định chủ ngữ, trợ từ xác định bổ ngữ...

2.2.2. Phân loại câu trong tiếng Nhật

a. Câu được phân loại theo cấu trúc ngữ pháp

- **Câu đơn:** là câu chỉ có một vị ngữ.

田中さんは日本人です。

Anh Tanaka là người Nhật Bản.

- **Câu ghép:** câu ghép là câu có liên kết hai tiểu cú trở lên.

兄は医者で、弟は新聞記者です。

Anh trai tôi là bác sĩ, còn em trai là phóng viên.

b. Câu được phân loại theo mục đích phát ngôn

- **Câu tường thuật:** là câu có mục đích kể về hoạt động, trạng thái, tính chất của đối tượng. Đây là loại câu được dùng rộng rãi và phổ biến nhất.

彼女は家族と旅行に行きました。

Cô ta đã đi du lịch với gia đình.

- **Câu nghi vấn:** là câu nêu lên điều mình chưa biết của người nói, mong muốn và yêu cầu người được hỏi phải trả lời hay giải thích cho sự hoài nghi đó. Phương tiện hình thức thường thấy ở câu nghi vấn là trợ từ “か” ở cuối câu.

あの人はだれですか。

Người kia là ai vậy?

- **Câu mệnh lệnh:** câu mệnh lệnh hay còn gọi là câu cầu khiến. Đây là câu biểu thị ý nghĩa mệnh lệnh cấm đoán, đề nghị, mời chào để thúc đẩy người nghe thực hiện hành động theo yêu cầu của người nói. Hình thức câu mệnh lệnh được chia thành 2 kiểu: câu mệnh lệnh mang tính tường minh và câu mệnh lệnh bán tường minh⁹

+ *Câu mệnh lệnh tường minh:* là câu mang hình thức chuyên dùng của dạng câu mệnh lệnh. Chẳng hạn như để chỉ thị hành động “*hãy đến sớm*” sẽ được biểu hiện qua những dạng sau: *thể mệnh lệnh* (1.1), [*động từ thể liên dụng + なさい (nasai)*] (1.2), [*động từ thể TE + ください (kudasai)*] (1.3) hoặc *chỉ dùng thể TE* như (1.4).

(1.1) 早く来い。

(1.2) 早く来なさい。

(1.3) 早く来てください。

(1.4) 早く来て

Bốn ví dụ trên đều mang nghĩa chung là “*hãy đến sớm*”. Trong đó (1.1), (1.2), (1.4) dùng trong văn nói, (1.3) được dùng trong cả văn nói lẫn văn viết.

+ *Câu mệnh lệnh bán tường minh:* nội dung của câu vẫn mang ý mệnh lệnh nhưng câu sẽ có dạng thức [*động từ dạng nguyên thể + ように (you ni)*] hoặc [*động từ dạng nguyên thể + よう (you)/ こと (koto)*]

Ví dụ:

(1.5) 下記の学生は3時までに事務室に来ること。

⁹ 河田美恵子(2011)、*ビジネス文書と日本語表現*（改訂版）学文社、Trang 118

Những học sinh có tên bên dưới phải đến văn phòng trước 3 giờ.

(1.6) 午前中に必要書類を提出するように。

Xin (hãy) nộp những giấy tờ cần thiết nội trong buổi sáng.

- **Câu cảm thán:** là câu biểu thị trực tiếp tình cảm, trạng thái tinh thần của cá nhân người nói như mừng rỡ, sợ hãi, hối tiếc, bất mãn...đồng thời có cả hy vọng mong nhận được sự chú ý, đồng cảm của người nghe. Loại câu cảm thán này thường được biểu thị bằng các cảm thán từ cuối câu như: よ(yo), ね(ne), なあ(naa).

(1.7) ダメだよ。

Không được đâu đấy.

c. Phân loại câu căn cứ vào mối quan hệ với hiện thực

- **Câu khẳng định:** là câu xác nhận đặc trưng biểu hiện bằng trợ động từ “だ”(da), “です”(desu) khi vị ngữ là danh từ, tính từ. Vị ngữ là động từ sẽ ở dạng “ます”(masu)

Ví dụ:

地下鉄は本当に便利だ。

Tàu điện ngầm thật thuận tiện.

郵便局は6時までやっています。

Bưu điện làm việc tới 6 giờ.

- **Câu phủ định:** là câu phủ nhận những đặc trưng của đối tượng. Câu phủ định trong tiếng Nhật cũng được nhận diện qua vị ngữ. Chẳng hạn, với vị ngữ là động từ: động từ ở dạng “ない: nai”, “ません: masen” (ở thì hiện tại), “なかった: nakatta”, “ませんでした: masen deshita” (ở thì quá khứ).

この辺には花屋がありません。

Ở vùng này không có tiệm hoa.

Thư thương mại là một dạng thư được sử dụng trong tất cả các loại ngôn ngữ, mang tính chất cố định, mang ý nghĩa nhất định. Khi xem xét một bức thư nói về thương mại, chúng ta cần xét từ góc độ phong

cách của thư, đặc biệt là trong thư thương mại tiếng Nhật ngoài việc chú ý các hình thức sử dụng kính ngữ và cách xưng hô thì việc chú ý đến đặc điểm ngôn ngữ trên bình diện cú pháp cũng giữ vai trò quan trọng.

3. Một số lỗi sai thường gặp của sinh viên khi sử dụng câu mệnh lệnh trong thư thương mại tiếng Nhật.

Môn học Kỹ năng viết thư thương mại lại một phần được giảng dạy trong học phần Kỹ năng viết 4 và Nghiệp vụ văn phòng. Đối tượng là sinh viên cuối năm ba, chuyên ngành tiếng Nhật tại trường, trình độ tiếng Nhật ở mức độ trung cấp. Bài nghiên cứu được thực hiện thông qua việc khảo sát trên 50 bài viết thực tế mà sinh viên đã viết trong quá trình học tập.

Để tạo thành một bức thư thương mại tiếng nhật hoàn chỉnh mang tính thuyết phục cần phải xét ở nhiều yếu tố như: sử dụng chính xác trợ từ, mức độ phù hợp của từ ngữ sử dụng với nội dung, từ xưng hô phải phù hợp với đối tượng nhận, các kiểu câu,...Tuy nhiên, trong bài nghiên cứu này mục đích của người viết là hướng đến tính hiệu quả trong việc đưa ra những yêu cầu, nhờ vả mang tính thuyết phục nên trong bảng thống kê chúng tôi chỉ tập trung hệ thống lỗi sai trên bình diện cú pháp là sử dụng kiểu câu mệnh lệnh. Những lỗi sai được thực hiện khảo sát bao gồm:

Bảng 1: Những lỗi sai của sinh viên ngành tiếng Nhật, trường ĐH Mở khi sử dụng câu mệnh lệnh để viết thư TM tiếng Nhật

| Stt | Lỗi sai | Số lượng SV | Tỉ lệ |
|--------------------|--|-------------|-------|
| 1 | Sử dụng câu mệnh lệnh tường minh | 33 | 66% |
| 2 | Sử dụng câu mệnh lệnh bán tường minh | 11 | 22% |
| 3 | Câu mệnh lệnh kết hợp cấu trúc gián tiếp | 6 | 12% |
| Tổng số sinh viên: | | 50 | |

Từ kết quả thống kê cho thấy, khi thực hiện viết thư thương mại với thể loại thư thuyết phục: yêu cầu, nhờ vả phần lớn sinh viên có khuynh hướng chọn câu mệnh lệnh tường minh (66%); khả năng vận dụng kiểu câu mệnh lệnh bán tường minh và câu mệnh lệnh kết hợp cấu trúc gián tiếp chỉ có 34%.

Ví dụ 1: yêu cầu đối tác gửi bảng báo giá gấp với nội dung: “*Vì chúng tôi phải trình cho phía phụ trách những thông tin giá cả chi tiết nên hãy kiểm tra gấp cho chúng tôi.*”

Nội dung thư đã viết của sinh viên như sau:

(SV1) 担当者に詳しい価格情報を報告しなければなりませんので、急いでチェックしてください。

(SV2) 担当者に 細かい価格情報を報告しますので、早くチェックしてください。

Ví dụ 2: gửi thư chào hàng, nhờ đối tác đặt hàng: “*Sau khi xem xét, mong công ty sẽ đặt những sản phẩm mà chúng tôi đã chuyển sang mẫu mới.*”

Nội dung thư đã viết của sinh viên như sau:

(SV1) ご検討のうえ、新型に振り替えを注文してください。

(SV2) 検討のあと、新型に振り替えをご注文ください。

Đối chiếu với phần 2.2.2, hai ví dụ trên đều được sinh viên chọn cách thức diễn đạt là câu mệnh lệnh tường minh [*động từ thể TE + ください(kudasai)*]. Trong khi đó, tài liệu tham khảo cho phần nội dung này lại viết như sau:

Ví dụ 1: 具体的価格情報はご担当に差し上げてありますので、
至急ご検討いただきますようお願いいたします。

Ví dụ 2: 宜しくご検討のうえ、新型に振り替えご注文いただくようお願いいたします。

Chúng tôi cũng tiến hành khảo sát những khó khăn ảnh hưởng đến khả năng vận dụng hai kiểu câu mệnh lệnh bán tường minh và câu mệnh lệnh kết hợp cấu trúc gián tiếp với 50 sinh viên này. Kết quả khảo sát như sau:

Bảng 2: Những khó khăn của sinh viên ngành tiếng Nhật, trường ĐH Mở khi sử dụng câu mệnh lệnh để viết thư thương mại tiếng Nhật

| Stt | Khó khăn | Số lượng SV | Tỉ lệ |
|-----|---|-------------|-------|
| 1 | Không hiểu rõ về văn hóa giao tiếp lịch sự của người Nhật (nói giảm, nói tránh) | 3 | 6% |
| 2 | Không nhớ, không biết để chọn lựa mẫu câu | 36 | 72% |
| 3 | Đề tài giáo viên đưa ra quá khó | 7 | 14% |
| 4 | Phương pháp giảng dạy của giáo viên chưa phù hợp | 4 | 8% |
| 5 | Không có hứng thú, động lực học | 0 | 0% |

Căn cứ vào bảng thống kê trên, trở ngại lớn nhất gây ảnh hưởng đến sinh viên khi viết thư thương mại là sinh viên không nhớ, không biết để chọn lựa mẫu câu (72%). Kết quả này cho thấy rằng, sinh viên ngành tiếng Nhật ở trường đại học Mở gặp khó khăn chính là ở kiến thức ngôn ngữ thể hiện ở phương diện cú pháp, nó ảnh hưởng đến hiệu quả viết thư thương mại của sinh viên. Như vậy, với những khó khăn đã chỉ ra, người dạy cần phải nhìn lại và tìm ra phương pháp dạy học phù hợp để giúp sinh viên cải thiện năng lực học tập trong kỹ năng viết thư thương mại.

4. Một số đề xuất giảng dạy môn Kỹ năng viết thư tín thương mại

Viết một lá thư thương mại thành công, có sức thuyết phục cần rất nhiều yếu tố, trong đó có việc lựa chọn, sử dụng kiểu câu. Việc chọn lựa kiểu câu nào trong thư giao dịch là nhân tố quyết định vì khi sản phẩm này được đưa vào ứng dụng sẽ có tác động nhất định đến người nghe, người đọc.

Để đề ra giải pháp phù hợp, nâng cao năng lực viết thư thương mại cho sinh viên, chúng tôi đã tiến hành khảo sát trên 177 mẫu thư thương mại tiếng Nhật. Những văn bản này đã được soạn thảo và sử dụng tại các công ty Việt Nam, công ty Nhật Bản đang hoạt động kinh

doanh tại Việt Nam.

Kiểu câu đứng đầu trong bốn kiểu câu được sử dụng trong thư tín thương mại tiếng Nhật là câu trần thuật (chiếm từ 63% đến 81%), kế đến là kiểu câu mệnh lệnh (chiếm từ 11% đến 28%). Lý giải cho điều này có thể hiểu rằng vì mục đích sử dụng ở mỗi nhóm thư không giống nhau nên ứng với mỗi loại thư các kiểu câu sẽ có những đặc điểm, vai trò khác nhau, đem đến hiệu quả riêng cho từng loại thư.

Như phần cơ sở lý luận đã đề cập, câu mệnh lệnh (câu cầu khiến) trong tiếng Nhật được phân ra thành hai loại: câu mệnh lệnh tường minh và câu mệnh lệnh bán tường minh. Câu mệnh lệnh tường minh sẽ biểu hiện với những dạng thức gắn thêm “*ください*” (*kudasai*) hay “*なさい*” (*nasai*), mang nghĩa là “*hãy, yêu cầu, đề nghị*”. Kết quả khảo sát ghi nhận được, người Nhật vẫn sử dụng câu mệnh lệnh tường minh trong thư thương mại tiếng Nhật. Tuy nhiên, trong thực tế người Nhật lại không chọn mẫu câu [*động từ thể TE + ください (kudasai)*] như sinh viên đã viết mà sử dụng biểu thức yêu cầu ở dạng kính ngữ [*お／ご thân động từ + ください (kudasai)*] hoặc [*お／ご thân động từ + ください ませ (kudasaimase)*]. Lý do là vì đây là thư giao dịch với đối tác bên ngoài nên người viết không thể ra yêu cầu hay ra lệnh một cách trực tiếp, không đảm bảo được yếu tố lịch sự cần phải có trong thư thương mại nói chung, thư thương mại tiếng Nhật nói riêng.

Ví dụ:

- (4.1) 他社には20%の納品率でご了承いただいておりますが、
長くお取引いただいております貴社には、特別に高い納
品率を確保いたしましたことをお察してください。

Vì Quý công ty là đối tác lâu năm của chúng tôi nên chúng tôi đã nhập 20% lượng hàng từ công ty khác về, Quý công ty hãy ghi nhận việc công ty chúng tôi luôn bảo đảm được hàng giao ở mức cao.

- (4.2) また、取引契約書など別途必要書類につきましては、別
便にてご送付いたしましたので、ご確認くださいませ。

Chúng tôi có gửi kèm theo những giấy tờ cần thiết khác như hợp đồng, vì vậy hãy xác nhận cho chúng tôi biết khi nhận được.

Để thực hiện được mục đích cầu khiến của mình, câu được viết ra phải sử dụng các phương tiện diễn đạt mang tính thúc giục, tác động người tiếp nhận lời nói thực hiện. Tuy nhiên, hình thức câu mệnh lệnh chính danh, với hành động ngôn trung “khiến” được sử dụng trong các thư khảo sát không nhiều, đa phần là câu cầu khiến bán tường minh với dạng thức **[động từ dạng nguyên + よう(you)] kết hợp với vị từ お願いする(onegai suru : nhờ)**. “(Động từ お願いする(onegai suru) mang nghĩa gốc: “làm ơn (hãy)..., nhờ...” nghĩa là yêu cầu người khác làm giúp cho việc gì. (Do đây là câu dùng trong kinh doanh cần thể hiện tính lịch sự nên chúng tôi chọn từ “mong” cho phần dịch ở những câu ví dụ).

Xem xét các ví dụ sau:

- (4.3) 具体的価格情報はご担当に差し上げてありますので、至急ご検討いただきますようお願いいたします。

Vì chúng tôi phải trình cho phía phụ trách những thông tin giá cả chi tiết nên mong (công ty) / xin hãy kiểm tra gấp cho chúng tôi.

- (4.4) よろしくご検討のうえ、新型に振り替えご注文いただくようお願いいたします。

Sau khi xem xét, mong (công ty) sẽ đặt những sản phẩm mà chúng tôi đã chuyển sang mẫu mới.

Sở dĩ câu mệnh lệnh bán tường minh được ưu tiên sử dụng nhiều hơn là bởi vì vị từ ngôn hành trong câu mệnh lệnh tường minh có tính “khiến” rất cao và sử dụng kiểu câu này thường người yêu cầu sẽ là người có vị thế cao hơn bắt, ra lệnh cho người ở vị thế thấp hơn thực hiện nên câu sẽ không mang tính “cầu”. Điều này là hoàn toàn không phù hợp với thư thương mại. Vì yêu cầu hay ép buộc phải thực hiện là một trong những hành vi được xem như phương hại thể diện. Đây là một bất lợi làm cho thư không mang tính hiệu quả, không đảm bảo được tính lịch sự, không tôn trọng thể diện đối tác.

Câu mệnh lệnh còn được viết bằng cách sử dụng vị từ “...をお願いする” (động từ onegai suru mang nghĩa: nhờ).

(4.5) ご高覧の上、必要事項のご記入ならびにご返送をお願いいたします。

Mong (công ty) gửi lại cho chúng tôi cùng với những giấy tờ cần thiết đã ký nhận.

(4.6) つきましては、現況ご覧察のうえ、一律...%値下げしていただきたく、至急ご検討をお願いする次第であります。

Vì chúng tôi muốn công ty sau khi xem xét, giảm giá cho tất cả là ...% nên rất mong công ty sớm xem và giải quyết.

Tuy ví dụ (4.4), (4.5) mang nội dung nhờ vả, yêu cầu nhưng đây không được xếp vào câu mệnh lệnh của tiếng Nhật mà đó chỉ là cách dùng vị từ “...をお願いする” (*động từ onegai suru mang nghĩa: nhờ*) để thực hiện mục đích nhờ vả của người nói. Hơn nữa, so sánh giữa ví dụ (4.2), (4.3) và (4.4), (4.5) thì mức độ lịch sự trong lời nói (4.2), (4.3) cao hơn. Người viết đã dùng thêm vị từ biểu thị hành động cầu ghép sau lời cầu khiến để làm tăng tính lịch sự, thuyết phục cho thư. Chúng ta có thể hiểu sát nghĩa theo câu ví dụ (4.3) như sau: “*vì chúng tôi phải trình cho phía phụ trách những thông tin giá cả chi tiết nên xin (công ty) làm ơn hãy kiểm tra gấp cho chúng tôi*”.

Khảo sát cũng ghi nhận được trong thư thương mại tiếng Nhật có cả sự hiện diện những kiểu câu ở hình thức hỏi, bày tỏ cảm xúc vui mừng hay câu tường thuật nhưng lại mang giá trị ngôn ngữ cầu khiến.

Liên quan đến nội dung này, Từ điển mẫu câu tiếng Nhật nêu rõ “*những dạng câu dù với hình thức hỏi, tường thuật hay bày tỏ cảm xúc nhưng nếu có chứa hàm ý yêu cầu thì câu vẫn được xếp vào dạng câu cầu khiến*”¹⁰. Diệp Quang Ban (1996) cũng chỉ rõ “*những câu chứa các từ: đề nghị, yêu cầu, mong, xin, phải, cần, nên...nói lên ý muốn của người nói, hoặc của ngôi xưng thứ ba, hoặc của tình huống không phải là câu mệnh lệnh đích thực. Nhìn chung đó là những câu tường thuật với ý nghĩa từ vựng mời mọc, cầu xin, mong muốn, cần thiết, cấm đoán*

¹⁰ Nhóm Jammassy (biên soạn), *Từ điển mẫu câu tiếng Nhật*, Nxb. Giáo dục, 2008, Trang 1013,1014

v.v...Nếu trong trường hợp nào chúng được dùng với ý nghĩa mệnh lệnh thì đó là kiểu câu mệnh lệnh lâm thời”.¹¹. Thật vậy, những kiểu câu ở hình thức hỏi, bày tỏ cảm xúc vui mừng hay câu tường thuật nhưng lại mang giá trị ngôn ngữ trung cầu khiến đều được dùng trong thư thương mại tiếng Nhật.

(4.7) 勝手を申しますが、12日までにお返事いただけますでしょうか。

Không biết là chúng tôi có thể nhận được hồi âm trước ngày 12 không ?

(hàm ý: hãy hồi âm trước ngày 12 cho chúng tôi).

(4.8) できれば現見積価格の...%以上の値引きをしていただくと幸甚です。

Chúng tôi rất vui mừng nếu được giảm hơn...% trên tổng dự trừ kinh phí hiện tại.

(4.9) ご意見を待たせて頂きます。

Tôi xin đợi ý kiến (hồi âm) của Quý công ty.

Chúng tôi cũng nhận thấy hình thức lời hỏi-cầu khiến như ví dụ (4.7) không chiếm tỷ lệ cao bằng dạng câu trong ví dụ (4.8), (4.9). Với kiểu câu (4.9), người viết tự hạ thấp vị thế giao tiếp (khiêm nhường) thể hiện sự tôn kính suy nghĩ (ý chí) của tiếp thư bằng cách sử dụng kính ngữ qua biểu thức **[động từ thể shieiki kết hợp với teitadaku nghĩa là: xin cho (tôi) được]**, “xin đợi ý kiến (hồi âm)”. Cách diễn đạt này vừa không gây trở ngại đến người đọc, vừa gửi được hàm ý “hãy hồi âm cho tôi”. Hay trong ví dụ (4.8), người viết kêu gọi sự giúp đỡ, chia sẻ nhưng lại khéo léo tác động đến đối phương suy ý đồng hướng để thực hiện yêu cầu mà chủ ngôn cần “giảm giá cho chúng tôi” bằng cách sử dụng hình thức rào đón với cấu trúc điều kiện **[động từ nguyên thể + と... : nếu...]**. Với kiểu câu cầu khiến này, người viết vừa truyền tải được nguyện vọng của doanh nghiệp mình một cách tốt nhất, vừa tạo cảm

¹¹Diệp Quang Ban (1996), *Ngữ pháp tiếng Việt* (tập hai), Nxb. Giáo dục, Trang 235

giác dễ chịu cho người được yêu cầu, tạo khả năng thực hiện hay sẵn sàng thực hiện yêu cầu cao và đảm bảo được nguyên lý lịch sự theo Kaneko Hiroyuki và G.Leech. Đây chính là một trong những yếu tố quan trọng góp phần mang đến thành công trong thương thuyết.

Với những phân tích đã nêu trên, người dạy cần hướng dẫn cho sinh viên biết được các kiểu cấu trúc của câu mệnh lệnh trong tiếng Nhật, phải giúp sinh viên phân biệt được và sử dụng phù hợp cho các tình huống giao tiếp để bức thư đảm bảo được yếu tố trang trọng, có như vậy mới mang tính thuyết phục đem lại hiệu quả cho công việc. Tuy nhiên, để thực hiện thành công việc sinh viên có khả năng thụ đắc ngôn ngữ thì trước hết người dạy cần chú trọng kỹ năng sử dụng ngữ dụng của sinh viên, giúp sinh viên dần thay đổi thói quen xấu bị ảnh hưởng tiếng mẹ đẻ trong việc chuyển di ngôn ngữ, nâng cao khả năng diễn đạt ngôn ngữ đích. Vì theo Liu Sen Lin (2007)¹², kỹ năng sử dụng ngữ dụng thể hiện được năng lực viết câu của người học thông qua việc nắm vững ngữ cảnh; Việc lựa chọn và thực thi kỹ năng ngữ dụng có liên quan đến sự kiểm soát ngữ cảnh, nguyên tắc ngữ dụng và việc sử dụng các kết cấu ngôn ngữ.

Ngoài nhiệm vụ lên lớp, người dạy còn phải đảm đương cả công việc sửa bài cho sinh viên. Trong quá trình sửa bài, người dạy cần phải hỗ trợ người học nhìn ra được những lỗi sai để ghi nhớ và tự điều chỉnh lại để nâng cao năng lực học tập. Trương Vĩ Quyền (2017) đã cho rằng, hỗ trợ người học nhìn ra được lỗi sai trong kỹ năng viết cũng là một trong những kỹ năng học tập cần được chú trọng¹³.

Việc bố trí nội dung giảng dạy, lựa chọn giáo trình phù hợp cũng rất quan trọng. Người dạy cũng cần phải chú ý đến yếu tố thiết thực, phù hợp với môi trường thực tế để sinh viên có cơ hội tiếp thu và ứng dụng hiệu quả, đảm bảo được yếu tố input – output.

¹² Trương Vĩ Quyền (2017), Một số vấn đề trong dạy và học môn Kỹ năng viết ngành tiếng Trung tại Khoa Ngoại ngữ ĐH Mở Tp.HCM, Ho Chi Minh City Publishing House of Economics.

¹³ Trương Vĩ Quyền (2017), Một số vấn đề trong dạy và học môn Kỹ năng viết ngành tiếng Trung tại Khoa Ngoại ngữ ĐH Mở Tp.HCM, Ho Chi Minh City Publishing House of Economics.

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THE DIFFICULTIES OF STUDYING JAPANESE AND THE AMBIGUOUS EXPRESSION IN JAPANESE FROM JAPANESE PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

As a student of Japanese major, I experienced the difficulties of learning Japanese. There are many areas of difficulties in learning this language. However, as a student, I didn't recognize one of the direct or indirect reasons coming from the "ambiguity" of Japanese. Current students could be in the same situation as me: They are just learning and trying to overcome difficulties to learn this language well.

Now, as a Japanese teacher, I have a lot of experiences in both learning and teaching Japanese. With those experiences, I am trying to elaborate on the ambiguous expression in Japanese and how it causes difficulties to Japanese learners and teachers. Simultaneously, it will provide Japanese teachers and learners with appropriate measures to overcome these difficulties.

Keyword: *expressions, ambiguity*

NHỮNG KHÓ KHĂN KHI HỌC TIẾNG NHẬT VÀ SỰ KHÔNG RÕ RÀNG TRONG CÁCH THỂ HIỆN TIẾNG NHẬT CỦA NGƯỜI NHẬT

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Là sinh viên ngành tiếng Nhật nên tôi từng trải nghiệm những khó khăn khi học tiếng Nhật. Có rất nhiều nguyên nhân dẫn đến khó khăn khi học ngôn ngữ này. Tuy nhiên với tư cách là một sinh viên, tôi đã không nhận ra một trong những nguyên nhân trực tiếp và gián tiếp đó là sự không rõ ràng của người Nhật. Có thể các bạn sinh viên ngày nay cũng giống tôi, chỉ biết học và cố gắng vượt qua khó khăn để học tốt ngôn ngữ này.

Đến nay tôi đã là giảng viên tiếng Nhật và với những kinh nghiệm có được, tôi sẽ tìm hiểu rõ sự không rõ ràng của người Nhật dẫn đến khó khăn cho người dạy và người học tiếng Nhật như thế nào. Đồng thời từ đó sẽ đưa ra những biện pháp khắc phục cho những khó khăn đó.

I. KẾT QUẢ KHẢO SÁT SINH VIÊN

Tôi đã tiến hành khảo sát với câu hỏi: “Bạn đã gặp khó khăn gì khi học tiếng Nhật vì sự không rõ ràng trong tiếng Nhật của người Nhật?”. Kết quả tổng kết khảo sát thu được từ 92 sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Nhật của trường đại học Mở Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh (trong đó có 71 sinh viên năm 2, 18 sinh viên năm 3 và 3 sinh viên năm 4) .

Kết quả như sau:

| Vấn đề | Không rõ ràng | Khó khăn | Tổng số SV | Tỉ lệ (%) |
|----------|---|--|------------|-----------|
| Ngữ pháp | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ngữ pháp đa dạng. - Cùng một hình thức nhưng nhiều ý nghĩa. - Cùng một ý nghĩa nhưng sắc thái khác nhau, sử dụng ngữ cảnh khác nhau. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Khó nhớ, khó phân biệt. - Sử dụng sai ngữ cảnh | 40 | 36,8 |
| Từ vựng | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Từ ngữ văn viết, văn nói khác nhau. - Từ nhiều, đa dạng. - 1 từ đa nghĩa, đa sắc thái. - 1 từ đóng vai trò nhiều từ loại với những ý nghĩa khác nhau | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Khó nhớ, khó phân biệt - Sử dụng không đúng. | 46 | 42,32 |
| Diễn đạt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Câu nói nội dung ít nhưng hàm ý nhiều. - Không nói thẳng vấn đề, hay vòng vo. - Nói giảm nói tránh nên khó hiểu. - Cách nói nhiều kiểu, lúc thông thường, lúc lịch sự, lúc khiêm nhường, lúc tôn kính. - Không phân biệt được đồng ý hay từ chối - Nói lấp lửng, nói giữa chừng không hết câu - Dùng ẩn ý | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hiểu lầm ý, không hiểu ý nhau, hiểu sai ý muốn diễn đạt - Không hiểu được cách diễn đạt của giáo viên bản xứ nên không hiểu bài | 49 | 45,08 |

| Vấn đề | Không rõ ràng | Khó khăn | Tổng số SV | Tỉ lệ (%) |
|-----------|---|---|------------|-----------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nói ẩn dụ nên không hiểu được ý định của họ. - Không nói trực tiếp mà dùng câu nói liên quan để diễn đạt khiến đối phương không biết được đâu là điều họ muốn đề cập. - Nói tắt, ngắn gọn - Cách nói phủ định của phủ định - Câu nói, câu viết chủ ngữ ẩn | | | |
| Giao tiếp | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Người Nhật hay khen, nói giảm nói tránh, không nói khuyết điểm của đối phương nên không hiểu trọn vẹn ý của họ. - Khi nói chuyện mà họ không hiểu là họ cười và chuyển sang đề tài khác mà không nói thẳng với mình. - Ít tiếp xúc nhưng khi tiếp xúc thì họ kiệm lời - Xa cách, sống khép mình, cách nói xã giao, dè dặt trong giao tiếp - Không cởi mở nên trả lời người khác đại | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dè dặt, ngại khi nói chuyện với họ - Ít có cơ hội nói chuyện - Không cải thiện được kỹ năng nói - Không rõ ràng nên giao tiếp với họ lạc hướng - Bối rối khi giao tiếp với họ, hoang mang và mơ hồ. | 17 | 15,64 |

| Vấn đề | Không rõ ràng | Khó khăn | Tổng số SV | Tỉ lệ (%) |
|------------------|---|---|------------|-----------|
| | khái không nhiệt tình. - Giao tiếp ngập ngừng | | | |
| Suy nghĩ | - Suy nghĩ và cách nhìn nhận vấn đề khác với người Việt. | - Hiểu câu họ nói nhưng không hiểu được suy nghĩ của họ nên làm bài sai trong kỹ năng đọc hiểu. - Không hiểu được suy nghĩ của họ nên hiểu nhầm ý, làm ngược lại | 20 | 18,4 |
| Phát âm, nhấn âm | - Nhấn âm không có quy tắc, lúc này lúc kia - Nhấn âm khác là khác nghĩa | - Khó nhớ - Bối rối | 12 | 11,4 |

(Bảng1)

Qua kết quả khảo sát, sinh viên gặp khó khăn trong việc học tiếng Nhật hầu như vì sự không rõ ràng trong cách diễn đạt của người Nhật chiếm 45,08%, mơ hồ trong vấn đề từ vựng chiếm 42,32%, không nắm vững văn phạm chiếm 36,8 %.

Hầu như sinh viên nhận thấy trong giờ đàm thoại với giáo viên bản ngữ, sinh viên không hiểu ý giáo viên, dẫn đến tình trạng thụ động, kỹ năng nói không được cải thiện. Sinh viên cố gắng cải thiện kỹ năng nói bằng nhiều cách như tiếp xúc với người Nhật qua các cuộc giao lưu. Tuy nhiên người Nhật không gần gũi, quá thận trọng trong giao tiếp với người lạ nên cơ hội tiếp xúc rất ít. Khi có cơ hội tiếp xúc thì người Nhật giao tiếp xã giao, nói chuyện dè dặt nên sinh viên ngại nói và dần mất đi cơ hội giao tiếp.

Văn phạm và từ vựng tiếng Nhật khá đa dạng nên sinh viên không hiểu hết, không hiểu rõ, không nhớ, không vận dụng đúng ý

nghe và ngữ cảnh của mẫu ngữ pháp và từ vựng đó. Hơn nữa, suy nghĩ và cách nhìn nhận vấn đề của người Nhật và người Việt khác nhau nên cách giải quyết vấn đề cũng khác nhau làm cho đôi bên không thông hiểu lẫn nhau và dẫn đến sự hiểu lầm và hiểu sai ý, cuộc nói chuyện đi lạc hướng. Vì thế sinh viên không cải thiện được việc học tiếng Nhật của mình, đặc biệt trong kỹ năng nghe và nói.

Ngoài ra, trong kết quả khảo sát có 27 sinh viên (chiếm 1/3 trong tổng số sinh viên làm khảo sát) vẫn không nhận ra sự “không rõ ràng” của người Nhật là nguyên nhân dẫn đến khó khăn trong việc học tiếng Nhật. Tuy nhiên các bạn vẫn nhận ra những khó khăn trong việc học tiếng Nhật của mình. Chính vì thế trong bài nghiên cứu này tôi sẽ tìm hiểu những nguyên nhân dẫn đến sự không rõ ràng trong cách thể hiện tiếng Nhật của người Nhật, từ đó tìm ra biện pháp khắc phục trong việc học và dạy tiếng Nhật bằng cách liệt kê, tổng hợp và phân tích những cách nói không rõ ràng trong tiếng Nhật của người Nhật

Có thể nói mọi người trên thế giới đều nhìn thấy sự không rõ ràng trong tiếng Nhật, thế nhưng người Nhật vẫn có khả năng truyền đạt rõ ràng và thông hiểu lẫn nhau. Họ vẫn có trách nhiệm rõ ràng, hoàn thành công việc tốt, và đánh giá công việc vẫn chính xác. Phải chăng sự “không rõ ràng” đó của người Nhật xuất phát từ quan điểm của người nước ngoài. Họ nhìn thấy sự không rõ ràng của người Nhật qua việc học ngôn ngữ của người Nhật.

Trên tạp chí CiNii Articles có bài viết của tác giả người Nhật với tựa đề: 「曖昧」な日本語を再認識¹⁴ (Aimai na nihongo wo saininshiki, tạm dịch: Nhìn nhận lại tiếng Nhật “không rõ ràng”). Tác giả nhận thấy người nước ngoài học tiếng Nhật quá xem trọng yếu tố ngôn ngữ như phát âm, ngữ pháp và xem nhẹ yếu tố văn hóa Nhật Bản, tâm lý của người Nhật nên việc học tiếng Nhật của người nước ngoài trở nên khó khăn và họ nói tiếng Nhật không được tự nhiên. Từ đó người nước ngoài cho rằng tiếng Nhật không rõ ràng vì họ không hiểu văn hóa Nhật Bản và tâm lý thể hiện ngôn ngữ của người Nhật. Ông cho rằng để học được tiếng Nhật thì nên hiểu rõ văn hóa Nhật Bản, tìm hiểu tâm lý của người Nhật và ghi nhớ cách thể hiện tiếng Nhật của người Nhật và vận dụng đúng bối cảnh.

¹⁴ <https://core.ac.uk>

Qua những điều trình bày trên tôi sẽ đề cập đến đặc điểm về văn hóa Nhật Bản và tâm lý người Nhật để tìm hiểu đặc trưng ngôn ngữ của người Nhật.

II. TÌM HIỂU VỀ NHỮNG VẤN ĐỀ LIÊN QUAN ĐẾN SỰ KHÔNG RÕ RÀNG TRONG CÁCH THỂ HIỆN CỦA NGƯỜI NHẬT

2.1. Đặc điểm về văn hóa và tâm lý người Nhật

2.1.1. Tinh thần đoàn kết

Trong xã hội Nhật Bản đương đại, ứng xử giữa một cá nhân với các thành viên khác trong tập thể cũng là một cách ứng xử đặc biệt, khác với nhiều quốc gia. Nói chung trong cách ứng xử của mình, người Nhật hầu như không khoe khoang, không tỏ ra hơn người. Trong mọi hành vi ứng xử, người Nhật tỏ ra “trung tính”. Hình như người Nhật sợ người khác hiểu mình là người khác người, vì vậy, với họ cách ứng xử tốt nhất là hòa lẫn với mọi người. Có thể nói, đây là một đặc điểm của văn hóa phương Đông được người Nhật đẩy lên đến mức cao, đó là đề cao tinh thần tập thể, ít chú ý đến cá nhân. Người Nhật ngay từ nhỏ họ đã được giáo dục một thói quen: đặt lợi ích nhóm lên trên cái “tôi” riêng của bản thân. Họ được dạy dỗ theo tinh thần đừng tách mình ra khỏi gia đình, tập thể và cộng đồng.

2.1.2. Văn hóa xấu hổ

Cũng không ít các nhà nghiên cứu về đất nước Nhật Bản đã liệt kê nền văn hóa Nhật vào loại hình bị “mặc cảm liêm sĩ” chi phối, đối lập với nền văn hóa phương Tây vốn bị “mặc cảm tội lỗi” thao túng.

Người Nhật nói “sumimasen” (すみません, nghĩa là: xin lỗi) khi đến chậm nơi hẹn, hay khi lỡ đạp phải chân người khác: đó là điều tự nhiên. Ngay cả không có lý do gì đáng kể, người Nhật vẫn nói “sumimasen” trong mọi trường hợp, với vẻ mặt khiêm tốn, cúi nhẹ đầu bày tỏ sự thẹn thùng. Nhờ trình bày trước lời xin lỗi và tự nhận trách nhiệm về mình trước khi biết sự việc gì sẽ xảy ra, họ thường tránh được những lời trách móc, dù nhỏ của người khác.

Hơn nữa, nếu người ta biết nhường mình một chỗ đã có người ngồi trước, hay yêu cầu bạn thanh toán hóa đơn, ở người Nhật từ “sumimasen” bật lên không tránh khỏi. Từ ngữ này còn có thể chuyển thành một yêu cầu hay một mệnh lệnh. Trong âm điệu đó, có sắc thái

một kẻ có lỗi xin tha thứ hay chấp nhận. Bằng cách làm đó, người Nhật thường đạt được kết quả mong muốn.

Như chúng ta từng biết Nhật Bản là một đất nước có tính cộng đồng rất cao. Khi làm chuyện gì người Nhật cũng đặt tinh thần tập thể lên hàng đầu, luôn nghĩ đến cộng đồng, không muốn vì một cá nhân mà làm ảnh hưởng đến những người xung quanh. Họ rất thận trọng trong từng việc làm của mình, không để sơ xuất, không muốn người khác nhắc nhở mình và cũng không muốn khiển trách bất cứ ai. Dần dần hình thành nơi con người Nhật Bản một tâm lý xấu hổ và hình thành nên nền văn hóa xấu hổ trên đất nước này.

2.2. Tìm hiểu về đặc trưng của tiếng Nhật

Ngôn ngữ được hình thành từ nhiều khía cạnh, có thể nói đặc trưng của ngôn ngữ là dựa vào tính dân tộc, đặc tính của đất nước và cách suy nghĩ của người sử dụng ngôn ngữ đó.

Người Nhật thường quan điểm rằng: “Im lặng là vàng”, “Đặc trưng cuộc sống, ngôn ngữ của người Nhật cần phải chú ý đầu tiên đó là tinh thần không nói, không viết”.¹⁵ Điều này thể hiện qua cách nói cực kỳ gián lược của người Nhật. Ngoài ra, họ còn cho rằng cố gắng hết sức không phát ngôn vì có thể cái miệng là nguồn gốc của tai họa. Họ đề cao tinh thần không nói mà làm, nói ít làm nhiều. Tuy nhiên không hẳn là người Nhật không phát ngôn, nếu cần thiết họ mới phát ngôn và khi phát ngôn thì cố gắng dùng cách nói không rõ ràng. Tức là người Nhật có tâm lý phải nói thận trọng, dè dặt.

Như chúng ta biết Nhật Bản là dân tộc mang đặc tính nông nghiệp, họ có cách sống đoàn thể, mỗi cá nhân nằm trong một tập thể. Hơn nữa, tín ngưỡng Kotodama từ xưa ở Nhật cho rằng thánh thần ngự trị trong lời nói và đem lại phúc may cho con người. Vì thế khi phát ngôn, người Nhật rất quan tâm đến mỗi lời nói của mình và họ luôn thận trọng, dè dặt trong mỗi lời nói.

Dưới đây là một vài ví dụ thể hiện cho cách nói thận trọng, dè dặt của người Nhật.

- Không rõ ràng, dè dặt

¹⁵ <http://www.rui.jp/ruinet.htm>

Trong tiếng Nhật có những từ, ngữ, câu nói không rõ ràng như sau:

あの件については、あれでいいですね?¹⁶(Anoken ni tsuitewa, arede iidesune - về việc đó như thế được không?)

Tuy chỉ một từ 「あれで」 (Arede - với tình hình như thế đó...) mà thể hiện toàn bộ vấn đề đang đề cập đến. Người Nhật chọn cách nói không rõ ràng để giảm bớt vấn đề để cho đối phương cảm thấy thoải mái, nhẹ nhàng hơn.

ああ、そのように取り計らってくれ¹⁷ (AA, sonoyouni torihakarattekure - Hãy xử trí, giải quyết mọi việc giúp tôi theo như thế nhé!).

Trong câu nói trên có động từ 「取り計る」 (Torihakaru - xử trí mọi việc, xử trí một cách triệt để), đây là động từ người Nhật ít dùng trong cuộc sống hằng ngày, hầu như họ chỉ dùng trong môi trường thương mại. Câu nói này dùng trong trường hợp nhờ đối phương xử trí một vấn đề gì đó mà lại có nhiều việc cần xử trí trong đó. Cho nên người Nhật không dùng cách nói cụ thể mà dùng cách nói không rõ ràng nội dung nhờ vả để giảm bớt sự căng thẳng cho đối phương.

Qua ví dụ trên, chúng ta còn thấy người Nhật thường sử dụng nhiều cách nói có đại từ chỉ định こ・そ・あ・ど (Ko so a do - Đây, đó, kia, đâu).

Ngoài ra họ còn sử dụng cách nói gắn thêm đuôi vào, ví dụ: ～と思われмас (～to omowaremasu - Tôi nghĩ rằng...), ～と考えられмас (～to kangaeraremasu - Tôi suy nghĩ rằng...), ～ではないかと思います (～Dewanaika to omoimasuka - Tôi nghĩ chẳng phải...là....sao). Đó là cách nói thể hiện sự phán đoán không rõ ràng.

これだけの雨量だと、川が氾濫する危険があると思われмас。¹⁸

(Koredake no uryoudato, kawa ga hanransuru kiken ga ru to omowaremasu - Nếu lượng mưa như thế này thì tôi nghĩ sông có nguy cơ bị tràn).

¹⁶ <http://www.rui.jp/ruinet.htm>

¹⁷ <http://www.rui.jp/ruinet.htm>

¹⁸ <https://mayonez.jp/topic/7327>

彼女は解雇されたと考えられる。¹⁹

(Kanojo wa kaikosareta to kangaerareru – Tôi nghĩ là cô ấy đã bị đuổi việc)

その時、現場にいたのは彼だけだ。つまり、彼が犯人なのではないかと思います。²⁰

(Sonotoki, genba ni itanowa karedakeda. Tsumari, karega hannnnnnanodewanaika to omoimasu – Lúc đó, người ở hiện trường chỉ có anh ấy. Tôi nghĩ chẳng phải anh ấy là tôi phạm đó sao)

- Có nhiều cách nói phủ định

Họ thường hay dùng cách nói phủ định để thể hiện ý kiến của mình.

Ví dụ: 「自慢じゃないが」(Jimanjyanaiga...). Nếu dịch theo sát nghĩa đen từng câu chữ là: “không tự mãn thế nhưng...”. Tuy nhiên trong cách nói của người Nhật đây là lời khuyên mà đàn anh, đàn chị khuyên đàn em là “Đó là khuyết điểm nên sửa ngay”.

Hơn nữa khi người Nhật được khen họ thường hay đáp lại: 「いやいや、そんなことはありません」(Iya iya, sonnakoto wa arimasenn), nghĩa là: “không, không, tôi không được như thế đâu”. Có thể nói người Nhật có khuynh hướng phủ định trong cách diễn đạt của mình.

Ngoài ra tiếng Nhật còn có đặc trưng là ngôn ngữ ngược, lộn xộn. Điều này càng khẳng định sự không rõ ràng trong tiếng Nhật.

Người Nhật cho rằng họ là người biết cách quan sát mọi việc nên nếu cố tình nói với đối phương những điều họ đã biết hay những điều họ không muốn đề cập đến thì cũng giống như xem đối phương là ngu xuẩn. Vì thế họ cũng tránh nói nhiều, tránh nói cụ thể.

Qua những đặc tính của tiếng Nhật mà tôi đã tìm hiểu như trên thì có thể nói người Nhật hầu như sử dụng cách nói không rõ ràng. Chính vì điều này đã dẫn đến sự khó khăn cho người học tiếng Nhật.

¹⁹ <https://ejje.weblio.jp/>

²⁰ 遊佐英寿 (2018). 日本語能力試験N2対策. ひので日本語センタ. Tạm dịch: Tác giả Yusa Hidehisa (2018). Đối sách cho kỳ thi năng lực Nhật ngữ trình độ N2. Tài liệu học tập của trung tâm Nhật ngữ Hinode.

2.3. Tìm hiểu nguyên nhân về sự “không rõ ràng” trong cách thể hiện của người Nhật

Sự không rõ ràng trong cách thể hiện của người Nhật cũng như sự không rõ ràng trong tiếng Nhật được đề cập đến rất nhiều. Tuy nhiên nguyên nhân chủ yếu từ đâu?. Tôi sẽ đưa ra một số cách nói của người Nhật để phân tích và tìm ra nguyên nhân.

◆ どちらへ? (Dochira e? - Đi đâu vậy).

ええ、ちょっとそこまで。 (Ee, chotto sokomade - Đi đây xú.)

Câu hỏi “Đi đâu vậy?” không phải là muốn biết nơi đối phương đi. Dẫu đối phương có bị hỏi thì cũng không trả lời cụ thể mà chọn cách nói không rõ ràng là “Đi đây xú”.

Hai câu nói trên xuất phát từ suy nghĩ của người Nhật là nhìn thấy đối phương khỏe mạnh đi ra ngoài nên suy nghĩ đối phương đang vui, hoặc nhìn thấy đối phương vội vã đi thì lo lắng không biết có chuyện gì lạ với đối phương. Dù gì thì câu hỏi trên cũng thể hiện sự quan tâm đến đối phương và tình trạng của đối phương.

◆ 先日はごちそう様でした。 (Senjitsu wa gochisousamadeshita - Hôm trước cảm ơn anh đã đãi tôi ăn ngon.)

Trong câu nói này, “hôm trước” có khi cũng là 3 tháng trước. Khi người Nhật được đãi ăn thì họ thường khắc ghi trong lòng và bày tỏ lòng biết ơn đó. Tại sao họ không nói thêm câu 「ありがとうございます」 (Arigatougozaimasu – Xin cảm ơn). Vì lúc được đãi ăn họ đã nói cảm ơn đủ rồi nên họ nghĩ không cần nói lời cảm ơn thêm nữa, nhưng họ lại suy nghĩ ơn này không được quên. Vì thế sau đó gặp lại họ lại bày tỏ lòng biết ơn qua câu nói trên. Tuy nhiên vốn dĩ câu nói này không phải đề cập vấn đề là ai trả tiền, mà quan trọng hơn cả là khắc ghi sự thật là “hôm trước gặp anh/chị, tôi rất vui”. Tức là câu nói đó thể hiện ý là “tôi sẽ không quên việc chúng ta chia sẻ kinh nghiệm cùng nhau”. Sự khắc ghi có chung kinh nghiệm này rất có ích cho việc xây dựng mối quan hệ tốt đẹp giữa đôi bên.

◆ うちはもっとひどいんですよ。 (Uchi wa motto hidoindesuyo - Ở nhà tôi còn kinh khủng hơn đấy chứ.)

Người Nhật thường hay thổ lộ sự không may, không vui của

chính mình với người khác. Họ không hề đơn giản công nhận may mắn của mình. Đó là vì họ nghĩ đến tâm trạng của đối phương và họ sợ đối phương ghét mình và lạnh nhạt với mình. Họ không muốn công nhận sự bất hạnh của đối phương nên họ cũng không khen và cũng không chê ai. Than vãn, thổ lộ chuyện nhà mình thường thấy ở chị em phụ nữ. Khi nghe đối phương than vãn họ thường đáp lại: “Ở nhà tôi còn kinh khủng hơn đây chứ”. Qua cách nói chuyện qua lại này thì họ muốn nói “tôi cũng giống như bạn, cũng chung sự bất hạnh đó nhưng rồi cũng sẽ quên ngay thôi”. Có thể nói cách nói này như là một công cụ tạo nên mối quan hệ giữa mọi người với nhau.

◆ たいへん結構だと思います。でも間違いかもかもしれませんが.....。(Taihen kekkouda to omoimaseu. Demo machigaikamoshiremasennga,...- Tôi nghĩ điều đó tốt đấy, nhưng có thể bạn bị sai rồi.)

Khi người Nhật phê bình người khác thì hầu như họ thường sau khi tán thành người khác rồi mới phê bình. Phê bình mà không làm tổn thương đối phương không dễ tí nào. Trong đàm thoại lịch sự của tiếng Nhật, khi phê bình thì cần phải có thời gian quan tâm đến đối phương, đến tình trạng của đối phương. Khi được ai đó yêu cầu đánh giá phê bình thì trước hết đánh giá cao vấn đề trước rồi sau đó mới phê bình. Người Nhật không muốn làm tổn thương quan hệ với nhau nên họ luôn lưỡng lự để đưa ra lời phê bình thích hợp vừa lòng đối phương mà không tổn thương họ.

◆ おつかれさまでした。(Otsukaresamadeshita - Anh đã vất vả rồi. Xin lỗi anh)

Trong tiệm cắt tóc, sau khi cắt tóc xong, nhân viên cắt tóc nói với khách hàng câu “Anh đã vất vả quá rồi. Xin lỗi anh”. Khách chỉ có việc ngồi, không có làm gì mệt cả mà người mệt chính là thợ hớt tóc. Vậy tại sao anh lại nói với khách câu trên. Là vì câu nói đó là một lời chào hỏi mang ý nghĩa cảm ơn theo cách nói của người Nhật. Nó có nghĩa là thể hiện lời cảm ơn vì tôi đã thất lễ làm anh nhọc công cho tôi làm công việc cắt tóc của mình.

Qua những cách dùng trên, có thể nhận thấy nguyên nhân sự không rõ ràng của người Nhật là do:

Thứ nhất là họ không muốn làm tổn thương tình cảm của người khác. Đặc điểm văn hóa xấu hổ của dân tộc Nhật thể hiện qua sự việc này. Người Nhật không muốn người khác chỉ trích, làm tổn thương mình nên họ cũng không muốn chỉ trích làm tổn thương người khác. Ngoài ra tâm lý tình cảm cũng ảnh hưởng đến cách sử dụng ngôn ngữ của họ. Vì họ sợ bị ghét nên họ tránh không thể hiện rõ tình cảm, tâm trạng của mình cho người khác biết.

Thứ 2 là họ muốn xây dựng mối quan hệ giữa mọi người với nhau. Quan điểm của họ là chúng ta có chung tâm trạng, tình cảm thì mới có mối quan hệ với nhau. Người Nhật là dân tộc xem trọng chữ “hòa”, xem trọng “cùng tính chất”. Vì họ muốn mình giống người khác nên họ không nói ý kiến của chính mình. Nếu chủ trương quá ý kiến của mình thì sẽ làm phá chữ “hòa”. Do đó, người Nhật sống trong tình trạng không rõ ràng và họ đã thể hiện không rõ ràng qua suy nghĩ, tình cảm và ngôn ngữ của đất nước mình.

Quả thật người Nhật được cho là dân tộc thích sự không rõ ràng. Càng học tiếng Nhật càng nhận ra sự không rõ ràng trong cách thể hiện tiếng Nhật.

Thêm một vài ví dụ thể hiện sự không rõ ràng của họ. Khi từ chối thì hầu như họ cũng không từ chối rõ ràng mà họ chỉ nói là 「ちょっと」 (Chotto) nghĩa là một chút, nhưng theo họ đó là cách từ chối lịch sự.

Có những từ có 2 ý nghĩa nhưng lại ngược nhau, ví dụ từ: 「しばらく」 (Shibaraku) và 「留守」 (Rusu). 2 từ này phải hiểu ý nghĩa mạch văn, ngữ cảnh thì mới biết được ý nghĩa của nó.

しばらくお待ちください。²¹ (Shibaraku omachikudasai – Xin chờ một chút) . Trong ngữ cảnh này, từ 「しばらく」 có nghĩa là: “khoảng thời gian một chút”.

しばらくごぶさたいたしました。²²(Shibaraku gobusataishimashita – Lâu quá mới gặp). Trong ngữ cảnh này, 「しば

²¹新国語辞典 (1997).三省堂. Tạm dịch: Từ điển tân Quốc Ngữ (1997).Nhà xuất bản Sanseidou. Trang 441

²²新国語辞典 (1997).三省堂. Tạm dịch: Từ điển tân Quốc Ngữ (1997).Nhà xuất bản Sanseidou. Trang 441

らく」 có nghĩa là: “khoảng thời gian hơi lâu, hơi dài”.

あいにく父は今留守です。²³ (Ainiku chichi wa ima rusudesu – Không may là bố tôi không có ở nhà ạ). Trong ngữ cảnh này, 「留守」 (Rusu) có nghĩa là “vắng nhà, không có ở nhà”

隣の人に留守番を頼む。²⁴ (Tonari no hito ni rusuban wo tanomu – Nhờ hàng xóm trông nhà). Trong ngữ cảnh này, 「留守」 (Rusu) có nghĩa là: “trông chừng nhà”.

Ngoài ra, từ 「どうも」 (Domo) giống như là từ vạn năng vậy, nó có nhiều ý nghĩa, nó là từ để chào hỏi cho cảm ơn, xin lỗi, chúc mừng và còn nhiều nghĩa khác nữa.

どうもありがとうございます。 (Doumo arigatougozaimasu – Chân thành cảm ơn)

どうもすみません。 (Doumo sumimasen – Chân thành xin lỗi)

どうもこのたびはおめでとう。²⁵ (Doumo konotabi wa omedetou – Lần này thành thật chúc mừng anh).

Trong những ngữ cảnh trên, 「どうも」 có nghĩa là “thành thật, chân thành”.

どうも上手に話せません。 (Doumo jouzu ni hanasemasen – Dù gì cũng không thể nói giỏi được). Trong ngữ cảnh này nó thể hiện ý nghĩa dù có nỗ lực thì cũng không thể.

どうも違うようだ。 (Doumo chigauyouda – Hình như là sai). Trong ngữ cảnh này có nghĩa là “hình như là....”.

Những kiểu từ như thế này trong tiếng Nhật có rất nhiều. Lý do đó là vì nó nằm trong bối cảnh văn hóa Nhật Bản. Đó là bối cảnh văn hóa trong đó người Nhật không thể hiện rõ ràng tình cảm cũng như suy

²³ <https://context.reverso.net/>

²⁴ 安藤栄里子. 耳から覚える日本語能力試験語彙トレーニングN3. アルク. Tạm dịch: Tác giả Andou Eriko. Luyện tập từ vựng Miikara oboeru cho kỳ thi năng lực Nhật ngữ trình độ N3. Nhà xuất bản Aruku. Trang 27

²⁵ 新国語辞典 (1997).三省堂. Tạm dịch: Từ điển tân Quốc Ngữ (1997). Nhà xuất bản Sanseidou. Trang 719

ngữ của mình nên ngôn ngữ cũng không rõ ràng. Người ta thường hay nói rằng đặc tính của ngôn ngữ thường hay phụ thuộc vào người sử dụng ngôn ngữ đó.

III. MỘT SỐ TRƯỜNG HỢP THỂ HIỆN SỰ KHÔNG RÕ RÀNG TRONG TIẾNG NHẬT CỦA NGƯỜI NHẬT

❖ Từ vựng

Từ vựng trong tiếng Nhật đa nghĩa là một trong những cách thể hiện không rõ ràng của người Nhật. Trong bài viết này tôi liệt kê và phân tích một số từ vựng điển hình đa nghĩa trong giáo trình tiếng Nhật sinh viên ngành ngôn ngữ Nhật trường Đại học Mở TP.HCM đang sử dụng từ sơ cấp đến trung cấp.

| | Trình độ sơ cấp | Trình độ trung cấp | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| あまり 【副詞】 | | | |
| Minna - Bài 8 - trang 66 | <p>シャンハイは寒いですか。</p> <p>...いいえ、あまり寒くないです。</p> <p>(Sanhai wa samuidesuka.</p> <p>...Iie, amari samukunaidesu.)</p> <p>Thượng Hải có lạnh không?</p> <p>...Không, không lạnh lắm.</p> | <p>あまりに寒くて息ができなかった。</p> <p>(Amarini samukute iki ga dekinakattadesu.)</p> <p>Vì quá lạnh nên không thở nổi.</p> | Toreningu N2 - Bài 4 - trang 44 |
| ずっと 【副詞】 | | | |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Minna - Bài 12 - trang 98 | <p>ニューヨークは大阪より寒いですか。</p> <p>...ええ、ずっと寒いです。</p> <p>(Niuuyyouku wa Osaka yori samuidesuka.</p> <p>...Ee, zutto samuidesu.)</p> <p>New York lạnh hơn Osaka phải không?</p> <p>...Đúng vậy, lạnh hơn hẳn đó.</p> | | |
| Minna - Bài 31 - trang 46 | <p>私はずっと日本に住むつもりです。</p> <p>(Watashi wa zutto nihon ni sumutsumoridesu.)</p> <p>Tôi dự định sống ở Nhật suốt.</p> | | |
| とても 【副詞】 | | | |
| Minna - Bài 8 - trang 66 | <p>ペキンは今寒いですか。</p> <p>...はい、とても寒いです。</p> <p>(Peikin wa imasamuidesuka.</p> <p>...Hai, totemo samuidesu.)</p> <p>Bắc Kinh bây giờ đang lạnh phải không?</p> <p>...Đúng vậy, rất lạnh.</p> | <p>歯が痛くて、ご飯はとても食べられなかったの で、コーヒーで済ませた。(Ha ga itakute, gohann wa totemo taberarenakattan ode, kouhii de sumaseta)</p> <p>Vì đau răng, hoàn toàn không ăn được gì nên tôi đã uống cà phê cho xong.</p> | Tema - Bài 18 - trang 101 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| まだ 【副詞】 | | | |
| Minna - Bài 30 - trang 34 | <p>資料を片付けてもいいですか。(Shiryou wo tsuketemoiidesuka.)</p> <p>...いいえ、そのままにしておいてください。まだ使っていますから。</p> <p>(...Iie,sonomamanishit eoitekudasai. Mada tsukatteimasukara.)</p> <p>Tôi thu dọn tài liệu được không ạ?</p> <p>...Không, hãy để nguyên vậy giúp tôi. Vì tôi hãy còn đang sử dụng.</p> | | |
| Minna - Bài 31 - trang 44 | <p>レポートはもうできましたか。(Repouto wa mou dekimashitaka.)</p> <p>...いいえ、まだ書いていません。(...Iie, mada kaiteimasen.)</p> <p>Báo cáo đã xong chưa?</p> <p>...Chưa, tôi chưa viết xong.</p> | | |
| もう 【副詞】 | | | |
| Minna - Bài 7 - trang 56 | <p>私はもうメールを送りました。</p> <p>(Watashi wa mou meeru wo</p> | | |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | okurimashita) Tôi đã gửi mail rồi . | | |
| Minna - Bài 8 - trang 67 | コーヒー、 もう 一杯 いかがですか。 (Kouhi, mou ippai ikagadesuka.) Uống thêm 1 ly cà phê nữa nhé! | | |
| Minna - Bài 8 - trang 67 | あ、 もう 6時ですね。 そろそろ失礼します 。 (A, mou rokujidesune. Sorosoro shitsureishimasu) A, rồi cũng đến 6 giờ nhỉ. Tôi xin phép về nhé. | | |
| Minna - Bài 21 - trang 179 | あ、 もう 帰らないと... (A, mou kaeranaito...) A, đến lúc cũng phải về thôi. | | |
| Minna - Bài 33 - trang 60 | もう 時間がない。 (Mou jikan ga nai) Không còn thời gian nữa . | | |
| 今 【名詞】 | | | |
| Minna - Bài 14 - trang 120 | ミラーさんは 今 レポ ートを読んでいます 。(Miraasan wa ima repooto wo yondeimasu) Anh Mira bây giờ | | |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | đang đọc báo cáo. | | |
| <i>Minna - Bài 29 - trang 27</i> | <p>すみません。今の電 車に忘れ物をしてし まったんですが...</p> <p>(Sumimasen. Ima no densha ni wasuremonowoshites himatandesuga...)</p> <p>Xin lỗi. Tôi đã để quên đồ trên xe buýt hồi này ạ....</p> | <p>まだ出かけない んですか。</p> <p>...今、出かけると ころです。</p> <p>(Mada dekakenaindesuk a.</p> <p>...Ima,dekakeruto korodesu.)</p> <p>Chưa đi ra ngoài à?</p> <p>...Tôi sắp đi ra ngoài từ bây giờ nè.</p> | <i>Temabetsu - Bài 12 - trang 65</i> |
| 先 【名詞】 | | | |
| <i>Minna - Bài 29 - trang 26</i> | <p>一緒に帰りませんか 。(Isshoni kaerimasenka.)</p> <p>...すみません。このメ ールを書いてしまい ますから、お先にど うぞ。</p> <p>(...Sumimasen. Konomeeru wo kaiteshimaimasukara, osakini douzo)</p> <p>Cùng trở về nhé!</p> <p>...Xin lỗi nhé. Tôi còn phải viết cho xong cái mail này nên anh về trước đi nhé.</p> | <p>会社の上司や取 引先の人が乗っ てくると、慌て て席を譲ったり することさえあ る。</p> <p>(Kaisha no zyoshi ya torihikisaki no hito ga nottekuruto, awatete seki wo yuzuttarisurukoto sae aru.)</p> <p>Có đến cả sự việc khi cấp trên ở công ty và người ở nơi đối tác lên xe thì họ vội vàng nhường chỗ.</p> | <i>Temabetsu - Bài 15 - trang 80</i> |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | シャープペンシルの0.5ミリしんの先一面に、ウィルスに乗せたでしょう。 (Shaappenshiru no reitengo miri shinnosakiichime n ni, wirusu wo nosetatoshiyou) Hãy để vi rút lên trên một bề mặt đầu nhọn của lõi bút chì bấm 0.5mm. | <i>Tài liệu lý thuyết dịch Tin tức trẻ em - trang 29</i> |
|--|--|---|--|

(Bảng2)

Không chỉ như trên mà có từ đóng nhiều vai trò từ loại khác nhau nên ý nghĩa cũng khác nhau. Tiếng Nhật rất phức tạp và đa dạng, có thể nói rất khó dùng nếu chúng ta chưa hiểu rõ. Vì thế chúng ta phải hiểu rõ ý nghĩa và cách sử dụng từ, ngữ của người Nhật theo từng ngữ cảnh khác nhau.

❖ **Người Nhật còn thể hiện cách nói không rõ ràng trong đàm thoại hằng ngày.**

Trong đàm thoại hằng ngày người Nhật thường hay sử dụng cách thể hiện tiếng Nhật không rõ ràng trong gia đình, trường học hay nơi làm việc.

Hội thoại 1:²⁶ Hội thoại của 3 chị em gái trong một gia đình người Nhật: Midori (みどり 緑) - học sinh cấp 2, chị Yumi (ゆみ 由美) - học sinh cấp 3, chị cả Ayako (あやこ 綾子) - sinh viên đại học. Bối cảnh hội thoại là người em gái Midori trong bộ váy ngắn ngày thường, đang đứng trước

²⁶国立国語研究所 (2005) 暮らしの中の「あいまいな表現」, tạm dịch: Viện nghiên cứu quốc ngữ (2005). Cách thể hiện không rõ ràng trong cuộc sống, trang 7

gương ướm bộ váy dài mới mua về.

緑 : あ、ねえねえ、どう？これ、 Đây này, cái này em mua đó.
買ったんだけど... Chị thấy sao?

由美 : (チラッと見て) ...全然似合 (Cô chị nhìn thoáng
わない qua)...Hoàn toàn không hợp.

緑 : (ムツとなり、そして、しょ (Cô em khó chịu)...Cất công
げかえり) せっかく買ったの mua...vậy mà...
に...

綾子 : (それを見ていた長女の綾子 (Cô chị cả nhìn thấy, đến gần
が近寄り、新しい方を指差し chỉ vào cái áo mới) ...Trông
て、) hơi người lớn đó. Hôm nay
 em đi chơi với bạn à? Nếu
 ちょっと大人っぽい感じかな vậy thì nên mặc cái váy đang
 。今日は友だちと遊びに行く mặc đi nha.
 んでしょう？それなら、今、
 はいてる方がいいかな。

緑 : (見比べて) そっかあ。失敗 (Cô em nhìn so sánh)...Thế à.
 だったかな。 Thất bại rồi.

Qua bài hội thoại trên bé Midori bị cô chị Yumi chê thẳng quá nên khó chịu. Lúc đó lời nói của cô chị cả Aiyako trấn an Midori. Câu nói **ちょっと大人っぽい感じかな** (Chotto otonappoikanzikana – Trông hơi người lớn đó) là cách nói không rõ ràng của người Nhật, cách nói này thể hiện sự quan tâm đến tâm trạng của đối phương, trấn an đối phương, không làm đối phương buồn hay bị tổn thương.

Hội thoại 2:²⁷ Bối cảnh người thợ cắt tóc đối thoại với 2 vị khách trong tiệm cắt tóc.

▪ **Đối thoại với khách trẻ**

²⁷国立国語研究所 (2005) 暮らしの中の「あいまいな表現」, tạm dịch: Viện nghiên cứu quốc ngữ (2005). Cách thể hiện không rõ ràng trong cuộc sống, trang 8

理容師：今日はどのようにしましょうか。 Hôm nay cô cắt sao?

若い客：耳のちょっと上、5ミリぐらいのところでカットしてください。後ろも刈り上げないで、そろえるぐらいで。分け目をはっきりつけないで

Cắt giúp tôi trên tai 5 mili. Phía sau không cắt lên mà ôm sát vào. Không để mái che mắt.

理容師：かしこまりました Tôi hiểu rồi ạ.

▪ Đối thoại với khách trung niên

理容師：今日はどのようにしましょうか。 Hôm nay bà cắt sao ạ?

中年客：いつものように、**適当に短く**... Như mọi khi...ngắn vừa...

理容師：はい。分かりました。 Dạ, tôi hiểu rồi ạ.

Bài hội thoại trên, người thợ cắt tóc hỏi 2 người khách cắt như thế nào. Người khách trẻ yêu cầu cắt rất tỉ mỉ và chi tiết, còn người khách trung niên dùng cách nói **適当に短く**...(Tekitou ni mizikaku...- Ngắn vừa...). Đây là cách nói ngắn gọn, bỏ lửng ý nhưng người thợ cắt tóc vẫn hiểu vì bà khách hàng là khách thường xuyên và luôn một kiểu tóc. Cách nói này cũng là một trong những cách thể hiện không rõ ràng trong tiếng Nhật của người Nhật.

Hội thoại 3: ²⁸ Bé Hikari(ひかり) - học sinh cấp 3 đến nhà bạn

^{たろう}Tarou (太郎) chơi và có gặp cả mẹ của Hikari (^{たろう}太郎のお母さん)

太郎のお母さん：ひかりちゃん、よかったら、お昼ご飯、太郎と一緒にどう？ Hikari, Ăn cơm trưa với Tarou luôn nha con.

ひかり：あ、え、でも... Dạ....nhưng...

²⁸国立国語研究所 (2005) 暮らしの中の「あいまいな表現」, tạm dịch: Viện nghiên cứu quốc ngữ (2005). Cách thể hiện không rõ ràng trong cuộc sống, trang 8

太郎 : 食べていきなよ Ăn đi nha!

太郎のお母さん : そうよ。遠慮しないで... Đúng đó. Đừng ngại
nha con.

ひかり : ...でも、やっぱり、ちょ ...Dạ....nhưng....mà....th
っと... ôi ạ...

太郎のお母さん : そう...じゃあ、また、今 Vậy...khi khác ăn nhé!
度ね

Bé Hikari trong bối cảnh này không từ chối rõ ràng. Vì nếu từ chối rõ ràng sẽ làm đối phương phật ý. Vì thế cách nói **ちょっと...** (Chotto...- nghĩa gốc là “một chút”) là cách từ chối thể hiện sự không rõ ràng của người Nhật. Cách nói này rất hữu hiệu khi từ chối mà không làm mất lòng đối phương.

Có thể nói cách thể hiện không rõ ràng trong tiếng Nhật của người Nhật đôi lúc dẫn đến sự hiểu nhầm và xung đột. Bên cạnh đó khi người Nhật từ chối hay phản bác ý kiến của đối phương hầu như họ sử dụng cách nói không rõ ràng để tránh làm đối phương bị tổn thương vì họ luôn quan tâm đến tâm trạng và tình cảm của đối phương. Điều này được xem là điểm tốt trong cách thể tiếng Nhật của người Nhật. Tiếng Nhật dù tốt hay không tốt cũng được đánh giá là “không rõ ràng”. Tuy nhiên không phải lúc nào họ cũng sử dụng cách nói không rõ ràng này mà trên thực tế tùy vào từng đối phương và từng bối cảnh khác nhau mà họ sử dụng cách nói không rõ ràng hay cách nói khác. Bởi vì họ cho rằng có trường hợp nên truyền đạt chính xác, chi tiết, nhưng có trường hợp e ngại làm tổn thương đối phương nên sử dụng cách nói không rõ ràng sẽ hiệu quả hơn. Chính vì vậy mà trong giao tiếp của người Nhật có rất nhiều cách thể hiện không rõ ràng này.

Qua những bài hội thoại trên tôi muốn những người học tiếng Nhật hiểu rõ hơn người Nhật dùng cách nói không rõ ràng trong những trường hợp nào và vì sao họ phải nói như thế. Từ đó người học sẽ chú ý hơn khi học tiếng Nhật và dễ dàng chấp nhận cách thể hiện không rõ ràng trong tiếng Nhật của người Nhật. Có như vậy người học tiếng Nhật sẽ nói được tiếng Nhật tự nhiên hơn, nghe hiểu ý của người Nhật nói và

kỹ năng nói sẽ được cải thiện hơn. Ngoài ra nghe hiểu ý người Nhật nói cũng cải thiện được kỹ năng nghe. Đặc biệt sẽ có hiệu quả hơn trong các bài thi nghe năng lực Nhật ngữ.

Kết luận

Vấn đề về ngôn ngữ có rất nhiều điều cần tìm hiểu và nghiên cứu. Đặc biệt ngôn ngữ Nhật càng có nhiều điều phức tạp hơn bởi vì nó được cho là một trong những ngôn ngữ khó nhất trên thế giới vì sự không rõ ràng trong cách thể hiện của người Nhật.

Bài nghiên cứu trên đã nêu lên được đặc tính của tiếng Nhật là một ngôn ngữ dè dặt, không rõ ràng trong cách thể hiện, sử dụng cách nói phủ định để nói giảm nói tránh không muốn làm tổn thương đối phương. Lý do của sự không rõ ràng trong tiếng Nhật phụ thuộc vào tâm lý, tình cảm của người sử dụng nó là xem trọng tập thể, nghĩ và quan tâm đến đối phương, thích sự dung hòa. Ngoài ra bối cảnh văn hóa và tinh thần dân tộc cũng ảnh hưởng đến điều này. Vì thế người nước ngoài khi học tiếng Nhật phải hiểu văn hóa Nhật Bản và tâm lý của người Nhật để hiểu tiếng Nhật, biết cách sử dụng và vận dụng cho đúng văn phong, bối cảnh Nhật Bản. Một trong những phương pháp học hiểu quả nhất đó là hiểu cách nói và thuộc nằm lòng những cách nói đúng của người Nhật trong những bối cảnh thích hợp.

Đề tài “Những khó khăn khi học tiếng Nhật và sự không rõ ràng (Aimai) trong cách thể hiện tiếng Nhật của người Nhật” là đề tài tôi nghĩ rằng có rất nhiều vấn đề để đề cập đến. Tuy nhiên dưới sự hạn chế về mặt thời gian nên tôi chưa tìm hiểu hết về mọi mặt, mọi khía cạnh, nhưng qua những gì tôi tìm hiểu về khó khăn của sinh viên khi học ngôn ngữ Nhật, tôi đã đưa ra biện pháp khắc phục cho sinh viên bằng cách tìm hiểu sự không rõ ràng trong cách thể hiện tiếng Nhật của người Nhật, liệt kê, tổng hợp, phân tích một số cách thể hiện không rõ ràng trong tiếng Nhật của người Nhật để sinh viên hiểu sâu hơn nữa những kiến thức mình còn mơ hồ và tự mình tra cứu, tiếp thu thêm những kiến thức trong ngành học của mình. Tôi hy vọng bài nghiên cứu này có ích cho sinh viên ngành tiếng Nhật nói chung và sinh viên ngành ngôn ngữ Nhật của trường Đại học Mở Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh nói riêng. Hơn nữa đây cũng là cơ hội để tôi xem xét nhận định lại phương pháp giảng dạy của mình nhằm có sự đổi mới tốt hơn trong công việc

giảng dạy tiếng Nhật.

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ようぎょうしょう

楊 曉 鐘 .曖昧な日本語を再認識

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Tác giả

Năm 2013 Chu Vũ Như Nguyễn tốt nghiệp cao học và có bằng thạc sĩ chuyên ngành châu Á học. Cho đến nay cô đã dạy tiếng Nhật ở đại học 10 năm. Cô có nhiều kinh nghiệm dạy tiếng Nhật và cô rất tự tin trong công việc giảng dạy tiếng Nhật của mình. Hiện nay cô đang là giảng viên trực thuộc khoa Ngoại ngữ ngành tiếng Nhật của trường Đại học Mở Thành Phố Hồ Chí Minh. Email: nguyen.cvn@ou.edu.vn

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