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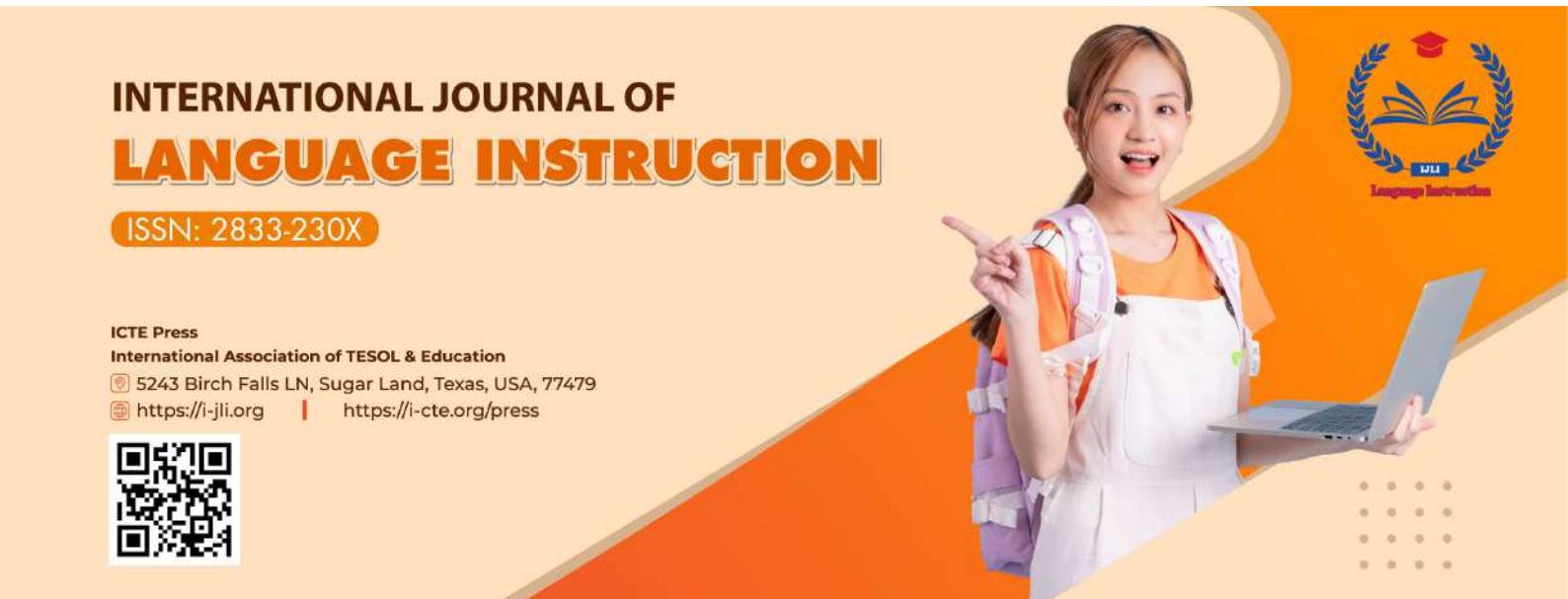

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**Articles** **Pages**

# A Note from the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Language Instructors,

We are delighted to announce the publication of Volume 3, Issue 4 (2024) of the International Journal of Language Instruction (IJLI). This issue continues our mission to advance research and practices in English Language Teaching (ELT) and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), offering valuable insights into innovative teaching approaches, challenges, and emerging trends in language instruction worldwide.

This issue features a diverse collection of high-quality articles that address schema-building activities for listening comprehension, digital storytelling, emotional regulation of teachers, cultural adaptation, and the use of digital tools and EMI courses. Together, these contributions highlight innovative methodologies, critical reflections, and practical implications for educators, researchers, and policymakers in the field of language instruction.

In this issue, Bui (2024) examined the impact of schema-building activities on EFL learners' listening comprehension at a Vietnamese university. Involving 123 students, the experimental study utilized pretests, posttests, questionnaires, and observations. Results revealed significant improvements in listening skills, increased learner motivation, and greater engagement. Schema-building activities proved effective in enhancing comprehension and fostering active participation in listening instruction.

Ngo (2024) investigated novice EFL teachers' emotional regulation in response to student misbehavior at a Vietnamese university. Using classroom observations, interviews, and reflective journals, findings revealed frustration and disappointment caused by discipline issues and disengagement. Teachers managed emotions through reappraisal, attention redirection, and sharing strategies, ensuring effective teaching and fostering a positive classroom environment.

Tran (2024) analyzed Change-of-State (COS) constructions across languages, focusing on English, Mandarin, Spanish, Hindi, and Russian. Using Construction Grammar and thematic role frameworks, the study identified universal patterns and language-specific features in encoding state changes. Findings highlighted morphosyntactic variation, causality, and pragmatic applications, offering insights into linguistic typology and future cross-linguistic research.

Phan et al. (2024) explored EFL students' perceptions of digital storytelling (DST) for language learning in Vietnam. Using mixed methods with 83 participants, findings showed DST enhanced students' confidence, engagement, motivation, and interpersonal relationships. However, challenges included time constraints and technical issues. DST was perceived as beneficial yet requiring improved resources and guidance.

Nguyen (2024) examined culture shock among eight international students in Thailand using Oberg's four-stage framework. Semi-structured interviews revealed language barriers, food, and daily routines as major challenges. Students adapted through observation, social interaction, and language learning, developing positive attitudes and overcoming initial difficulties.

Nguyen (2024) examined how online resources via personal devices affect English-major students' reading practices in Vietnam. Analyzing reports and interviews from 80 students, findings revealed improved vocabulary, reading speed, and general knowledge. Students valued accessibility and convenience but noted challenges like note-taking. Recommendations included discussions, feedback, and structured tasks.

# A Note from the Editor-in-Chief

Ngo and Pham (2024) explored how social media and online communities reshape affordances in English Language Teaching (ELT). Synthesizing studies from 2014–2024, findings revealed enhanced communication, collaboration, and personalized learning. Challenges included digital literacy and privacy concerns. Recommendations emphasized teacher preparedness, constructivist approaches, and professional development.

Dang and Nguyen (2024) examined the impact of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) courses on 154 tourism and hospitality students in Vietnam. Using questionnaires, findings revealed significant improvements in specialized vocabulary, with lesser gains in writing and grammar. Third-year students reported greater progress, highlighting the long-term benefits of EMI.

In brief, this issue emphasizes the importance of innovative teaching methods (e.g., schema-building, DST, EMI), the role of emotional regulation for teachers, and digital tools in ELT. While learners showed notable gains in skills like vocabulary and listening comprehension, challenges such as technical issues, time constraints, and limited writing improvements highlight areas for further pedagogical refinement and support.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the authors whose dedication and scholarly work made this issue possible. Your research has not only enriched our understanding but also contributed significantly to the academic discourse in ELT and EMI.

We also express our sincere appreciation to the reviewers for their tireless efforts in providing constructive feedback and ensuring the rigor and quality of every paper published in this issue. Your expertise and commitment are invaluable to the journal's success.

A special note of thanks to our Editorial Board, whose unwavering support, guidance, and diligence continue to uphold the journal's academic standards and vision.

We hope that this issue will serve as a rich resource for educators, researchers, and practitioners, inspiring new ideas and fostering further exploration in the field of language instruction.

Thank you for your continued interest and support for the International Journal of Language Instruction. We look forward to your contributions and engagement in future issues.

Thanks God for everything!

With warm regards,


Associate Professor Dr. Pham Vu Phi Ho
Editor-in-chief
International Journal of Language Instruction

# Findings of Using Schema-Building Activities to Improve EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension

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## ABSTRACT

EFL students at a university in Ho Chi Minh City faced some problems in learning listening skills. This study aimed to investigate factors influencing listening learning and whether schema-building activities impact students' listening comprehension at a private university in Vietnam, which then gave some possible suggestions to improve EFL learners' listening teaching and learning. The study was experimental research, so the researcher employed pre-and post-tests, questionnaires, and class observations to collect the data to address two research questions. A total of 123 students participated in the research, and they were classified into the experimental group (60 students) and the control group (63 students). The findings revealed that schema-building activities had an impact on enhancing EFL students' listening comprehension. The study's findings contributed some contributions to teaching and learning Second Language (L2) listening skills using schema-building activities. The findings serve as guidelines for teachers and students to teach and learn listening skills and for school managers with material development.

**Keywords**: Schema, schema-building activities, listening, listening comprehension, EFL learners.

## Introduction

Learners of English receive messages mainly through listening and reading. In Vietnam, the teaching of listening skills has not been highly focused on. Vandergrift (2004, p.3) asserts that "listening is probably the least explicit of the four macro language skills, making it the most difficult skill to learn", and Khanh (2006) maintains that "listening has always been presumed to be the most difficult and boring skill to practice" (p.51). Do's (2007, p.115) research observes, "teachers concentrate on presenting vocabulary and structures so much that they may not have enough time to organize other necessary activities or they cannot recognize the importance of the other ones." Indeed, it is essential to introduce new words to students before they listen to listening texts. However, teachers sometimes neglect the importance of triggering prior knowledge of EFL learners in the process of teaching listening skills.

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There have been some controversies about the significance of schema-building activities in improving EFL students' listening comprehension. Brown and Smith (2007) indicate that schema-building activities enhance L2 learners' listening comprehension. On the contrary, Jensen and Hansen (1995) note that schema-building does not improve students' listening learning. Therefore, this study was conducted to verify the impacts schema-building activities have on EFL learners' listening comprehension.

## Literature review

### *Schema*

Various researchers define schema. Rumelhart (1980) sees schema as "building blocks of cognition" as well as a "skeleton around which the situation is interpreted" (pp.34-37). Carrell (1983) classifies schema into two categories: content schemata and formal schemata.

Later, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) clarify that content schemata are "background information" on the topic, whereas formal schemata are "knowledge about how discourse is organized with respect to different genres, different topics, or different purposes (e.g., transactional versus interactional), including relevant sociocultural knowledge" (p.102). So, these kinds of schemata are needed for effective listening comprehension.

### *Benefits of schema-building*

### *Schema and second language acquisition*

A great number of researchers have put an emphasis on the relationship between schema and learner's listening comprehension. Nunan (2007) insists that "comprehension relies on listeners' successful activation of their prior knowledge (schemata)" (p.35) and introduces some methods to activate preexisting or stored schemata, including mind mapping, brainstorming, games, guided questions, picture/diagram, prediction, elimination, and skimming. Also, Carlo and Edwards (2005) postulate that "schemas change with the accretion of new knowledge and the tuning and reconstruction of prior schemas" (p.148). Moreover, Nunan (2007) observes that "it is beneficial for listening course teachers to bear in mind that activating students' stored knowledge structure (schemata) to enhance comprehension and creating new schemata are far more important than imparting new knowledge of the language system" (p.33). Also, Phan (2022) suggests that classroom questioning, and discussion make learners more active in their learning. Accordingly, it can be said that there are numerous benefits of activating learners' schemata for their language acquisition in general and listening comprehension in particular.

### *Schema and Classroom Interaction*

Schema-building activities facilitate learners' interaction in class. Brown (2006) suggests that "it is just as important to give the students the opportunity to use what they already know - their prior knowledge - to help them do the task" (p.4). This means learning involves interaction and participation from the students. In order to acquire L2 listening in particular and acquire second languages generally, Sullivan and McIntosh (1996) suggest that students' roles must be altered from "passive observers to active participants" (p.2). If teachers employ the aforementioned scheme-building exercises more frequently, students will engage in more constructive and active listening in both pair and group settings.

### *Schema and Motivation*

Motivation plays a role in successful listening learning, which is most often attained through schema-building. A listener will be successful with the proper motivation (Brown, 2000).

Learners can use their background knowledge to learn new knowledge in class. Besides, Rajaei (2015) indicates that background knowledge enhances students' motivation in listening comprehension. Tran (2022) also finds that pre-listening activities influence learners' listening learning. Salameh (2017) clarifies the significance of schema activation activities and the change in learners' attitudes toward listening comprehension. Hence, both the teacher and the listeners must provide stimulation and encouragement for learning.

### *Schema-building and listening comprehension*

Some studies have examined the rapport between schema-building activities and listening comprehension. According to Rost (2002), listeners have access to various information sources, facilitating listening comprehension. Additionally, an individual's mental or stored memory information affects their ability to listen, so activating appropriate schemata and possessing schematic knowledge is explicitly advantageous to listening comprehension (Carrel, 1988). It can be said that schema-building has an impact on learners' listening comprehension.

O'Malley and Chamot (1989) state that "listening comprehension is an active and conscious process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and existing knowledge, while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task requirement" (p.420). Fang (2008) contends that "listening comprehension is regarded theoretically as an active process in which individuals concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge" (p.22). Therefore, listeners need to be active in the process of listening comprehension.

However, some researchers investigate the significance of schema-building and listening comprehension. Jensen and Hasen (1995) also highlight the impacts of past knowledge on learners' listening comprehension. They postulate that pupils' past knowledge could skew test results. They came to the conclusion that more research would be required to determine whether schematic knowledge actually helps with listening comprehension after analyzing the data of 128 university-level L2 learners. They also find that previous knowledge does not significantly contribute to L2 listening comprehension. Clemet (2008) states that "prior knowledge may serve as a starting template for constructing a more complex idea", which can so "save the time involved in reconstructing that piece of an idea" and make contributions to the efficiency of learning" (p.419). It can be said that activating learners' schemata is beneficial for listening comprehension.

However, some teachers have not paid much attention to activating learner's schemata in listening classes. McMahon et al. (2005), "Teachers were attempting to teach them only the pertinent information that they would need to pass a test" (p.180). Do (2007) also observes that "it seems that the teachers only tried to cover the listening tasks in the textbook with a focus on linguistic content, and the students pretended to listen by 'picking up' as many answers from teachers as possible" (p.124). However, Long (1987) observes that pre- and post-listening activities are very important in helping EFL learners learn how to listen because they give them many opportunities to apply their prior knowledge, or schemata, to learn new information and construct new schemata. Furthermore, Hoang (2006) states that learners would be unbalanced in listening properly if they do not practice top-down or bottom-up processing. It is important to activate learners' schemata for their better listening comprehension.

### *Research Questions*

The study addressed two research questions below:

1. What factors influence EFL students' listening comprehension at a university?
2. What impacts do schema-building activities have on EFL learners' listening comprehension?

## Methods

### *Pedagogical Setting & Participants*

This study involved 296 students from several faculties at a university in Ho Chi Minh City, of which 123 were first-year students. Every student had to take English as a required course, following their completion of the identical pretest and the questionnaire throughout the first two weeks of class. Since the students in Class A (60 students) and Class B (63 students) from six classes had almost identical backgrounds and listening competence levels, they were chosen as the control group and experimental group, respectively. There were 58 students in the control group and 60 students in the experimental group who completed the questionnaires since some students were not present in class when it was given out.

**Table 1**

Students' profile

| **Learners' background information** | **Control group** (58 students) | **Experimental group** (60 students) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Age | | |
| - 18 | 45 (77.6%) | 50 (88.3%) |
| - 19 | 10 (17.2%) | 10 (16.7%) |
| - 20 | 3 (5.2%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| 2. Gender | | |
| - Male | 21 (36.2%) | 22 (36.7%) |
| - Female | 37 (63.8%) | 38 (63.3%) |
| 3. Place of entering high school | | |
| - In a city | 29 (50%) | 31 (51.7%) |
| - In the countryside, | 29 (50%) | 29 (48.3%) |
| 4. English learning duration | | |
| - 3 years | 2 (3.4%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| - More than 3 years up to 7 years | 29 (50%) | 41 (68.3%) |
| - More than 7 years | 27 (46.6%) | 19 (31.7%) |
| 5. Studying at a foreign language center | | |
| - Yes | 12 (20.7%) | 9 (15.0) |
| - No | 46 (79.3%) | 51 (85.0) |

Table 1 shows certain commonalities between the experimental and control groups. To determine their level of entrance listening skills, students in both the experimental and control groups performed the same pretest. The experimental group had 5.07 mean pretest scores, while the control group received 5.04 mean scores. It was concluded that the pupils' English listening skills were almost identical in both sessions.

**Table 2**

Group statistics for pretest mean scores

**Group Statistics**

| | Groups | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| scores of pretest | Control group | 53 | 5.04 | 1.881 | .258 |
| | Experimental group | 55 | 5.07 | 1.476 | .199 |

**Table 3**

Independent samples t-test analysis of the pretest listening scores

| | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference |
| Equal variances assumed | 3.636 | .059 | -.108 | 106 | .914 | -. 03 | .325 |
| Equal variances not assumed | | | - .107 | 98.612 | .915 | -. 03 | .326 |

According to Table 1's data, certain parallels existed between the experimental and control groups. The pretest used to determine the students' entrance listening skill level was administered to both the experimental and control groups. The control group's pretest mean scores were 5.04, whereas the experimental group's were 5.07. It was assumed that the pupils in the two classrooms were almost equally proficient in listening to English.

## *Design of the Study*

### *Instruments*

This study aims to examine the variables that affect listening comprehension and how schema-building exercises affect EFL students' listening comprehension. To accomplish these research goals, three tools were employed in the study: tests, observations, and questionnaires.

### *Questionnaire*

The researcher designed a questionnaire for this study based on the literature review. This research used the questionnaire to find the answers to the two research questions. The first instrument - the questionnaire - was delivered to 296 students in the six classes at this university during the first two weeks of the course, which was essential to collect the data for the present study. The questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese to ensure students' understanding. The questionnaire was piloted among 30 EFL students to test its validity and reliability two weeks before it was officially delivered to the subjects.

### *Tests*

The pretest administered at the start of the course sought to determine whether the English listening proficiency levels of the control and experimental groups were comparable, while the posttests given at the end of the course sought to ascertain whether the students' test scores differed between the experimental and control groups following a 15-week period of experimental period instruction.

The pre-tests and post-tests were taken from the book Developing Tactics for Listening (Richards, 2003) and formatted to be identical. This book has been widely used in many universities in Vietnam, and the contents of this book contain tasks related to schema-building activities. These tests comprised picture selection, True/False, and multiple-choice questions. In order to mitigate any potential bias on the part of the researcher and ensure the impartiality of the post-test results, the researcher enlisted the assistance of her colleagues to grade the post-tests taken by the students in both groups. The results were then returned to the researcher.

### *Observation*

In order to enhance the triangulation of the research, classroom observation was used as the third instrument. The observation aimed to discern students' interaction and motivation in the listening class when they participated in schema-building activities. The observation instrument was based on Luu's (2000) format. Luu (2000) suggested some criteria for collecting the data from the class observations. These collected data were significant in proving the effectiveness of schema-building activities in listening classes. Through class observation, the teacher collected the records of students' participation and motivation during the listening class, during which the teacher employed schema-building activities.

### *Experimental teaching*

The university ran the experimental teaching program for fifteen weeks. The listening course book utilized by the experimental group and control group was titled "Developing Tactics for Listening." While students in the experimental group learned listening with schema-building activities exercises, those in the control group learned listening without any such activities.

The goal of the experimental teaching was to compare, after 15 weeks, the performance of the students in the experimental group (which included schema-building exercises) with the control group (which did not).

### *Data collection & analysis*

The pretest was delivered to 296 students of 6 classes from different faculties during the first two weeks of the course in 2010. The pre-test and questionnaire identified the two classes of nearly the same proficiency level and background, which were classified into the control and experimental groups. The researcher delivered the questionnaire to each class during the first two class meetings, who explained the requirements for filling out the questionnaire to avoid some mistakes and misconceptions from the students. The participants were required to leave the questionnaire anonymous in order that they could answer the questions honestly and completely. They spent less than 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Following that, two classes were chosen, the control group and the experimental group, based on their similar listening competence levels and backgrounds. The purpose of the posttest, which was given to the students in both classes in the fourteenth week, was to assess the improvement in the listening competence between the students in the experimental group – who had been taught schema-building activities and the control group, who had not received such instruction. Throughout the experiment, observation was done to track changes in the student's

motivation and interactions within the experimental group.

Collected data from the three instruments were then analyzed using the SPSS software and Microsoft Office Excel 2003.

## Results/Findings

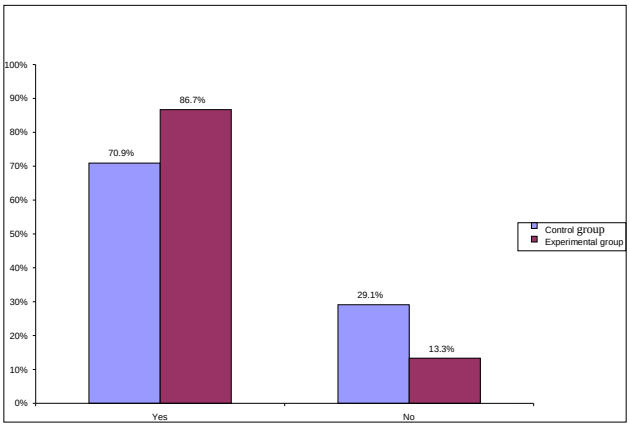
**Research question 1:** What are the factors that influence listening comprehension?

The first dimension of influential factors of listening learning encompasses five questions concerned with the listening teaching method.

**Question 1:** Do your teachers teach listening by asking you to look at listening parts in the book and to listen to the tape?

**Figure 1.**

Looking at listening parts in the book and listening to the tape

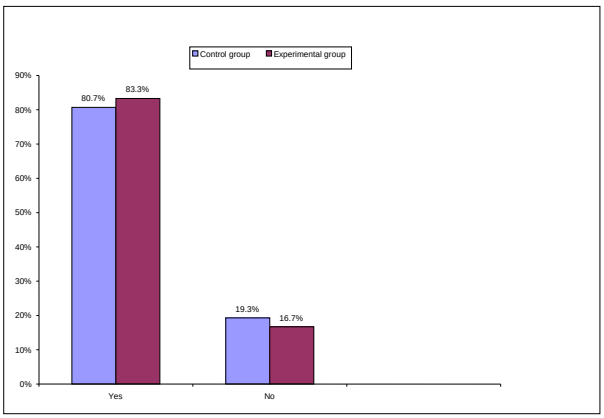



As displayed in Figure 1, the responses to Question 1 from the two groups showed that teachers instructed listening by requiring students to look at listening parts in the book and listen to the tape. 70.9% of the learners in the control group and 86.7% of the students in the experimental group did not have a chance to participate in pre-listening activities, which help activate students' schema.

**Question 2:** Do your teachers pre-teach some new words that will occur in the listening text?

**Figure 2**

Pre-teaching some new words

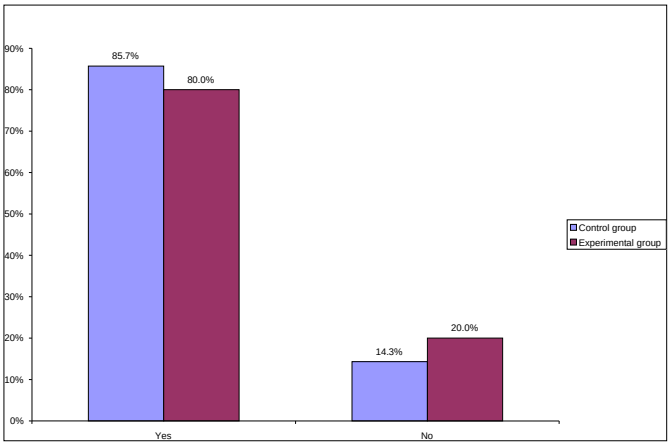


Most students in both classes admitted that they were taught new words that would occur in the listening text. Over three-fourths of the learners (83.3%) in the experimental group and 80.7% of the learners in the control group chose the 'Yes' option, while the 'No' option was selected by 19.3% and 16.7% of the participants in the control group and experimental respectively.

**Question 3:** Do your teachers introduce the topic of the incoming listening text you are going to listen to?

**Figure 3**

Introducing the topic of the incoming listening text



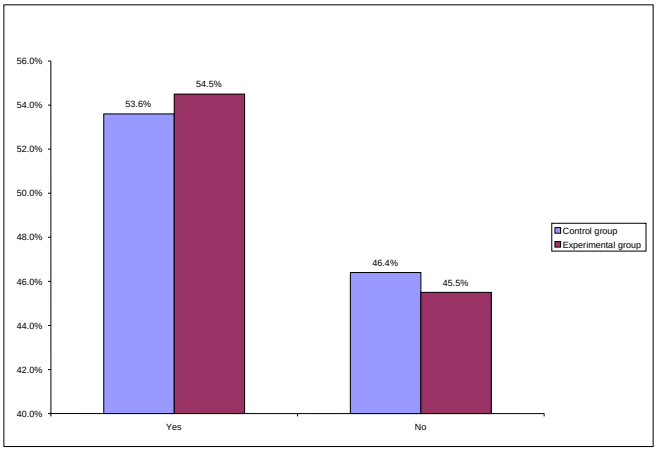

85.7% of the learners in the control group were introduced to the text topic they were going to listen to. However, in the experimental group, the percentage was just 80.0%. 14.3% of the learners in the control group and 20.0% of those in the experimental group gave a negative response that their teachers did not introduce the topic before listening.

**Question 4:** Do your teachers involve you in the group discussion on the topic you are going to listen to?

The results from Figure 4.4 showed that the teachers' involvement in the group discussion on the topic they will listen to was dominant. In the control group, 53.6% of the respondents were involved, and 46.4% of the students were not. Similarly, in the experimental group, 54.5% of the participants were immersed in the group discussion, and 45.5% of the students were not.

**Figure 4**

Involving students in group discussion on the topic

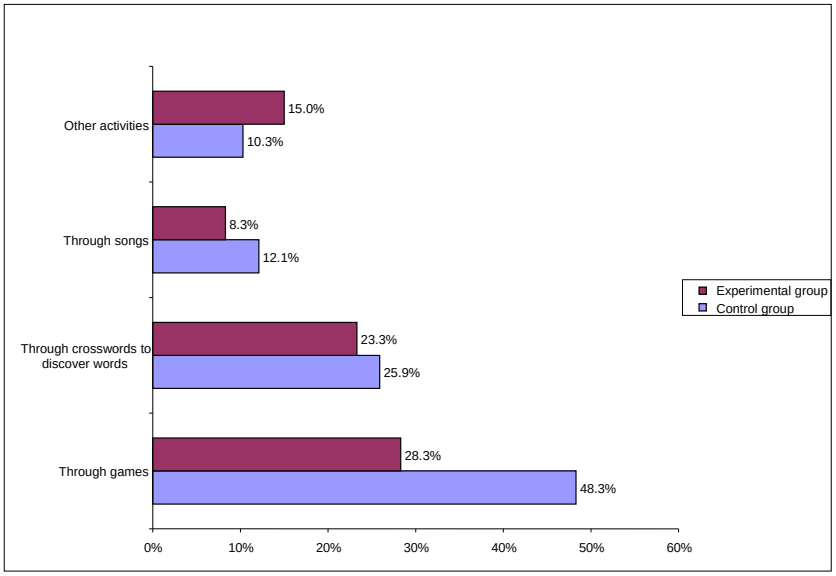


**Question 5:** Do your teachers offer other activities to lead you to the listening text?

When asked whether the teachers offered other activities to lead them to the listening text, in the control group, games were chosen by 28 students (48.3%), crosswords by 15 students (25.9%), songs by seven students (12.1%); and other activities by six students (10.3%). In the experimental group, 17 students (28.3%) placed their tick on games, 14 students (23.3%) on crosswords, five students (8.3%) on songs, and nine students (15.0%) on other activities.

**Figure 5**

Offering other activities to lead students to the listening text




Besides, in the control group, the learners informed their instructors offered other activities to lead to the listening text that they were going to listen to, such as asking questions about the topic (one student 1.7%), pre-teaching vocabulary (one student 1.7%), telling a story (one student 1.7%), describing pictures (one student 1.7%) and even no activities (two students 3.4%). In contrast, in the experimental group, students answered that the teachers gave other activities to lead to the listening text, such as writing for asking friends questions in English (one student 1.7%), discussing with friends (one student, 1.7%); group discussion (one student 1.7%); having few chances to listen (one student 1.7%), pre-teaching new vocabulary (one student 1.7%); talking about the content of the listening text (one student 1.7%); teacher's asking questions about the listening text (one student 1.7%); and even writing that their teachers offered no activities (two students 3.4%).

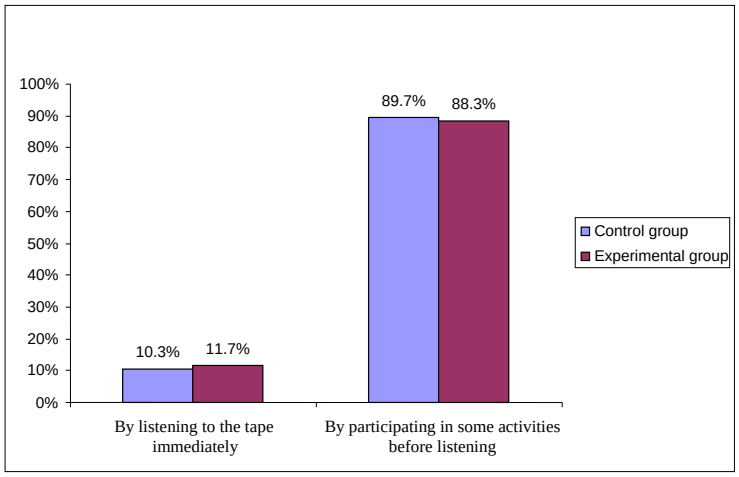
The second dimension of influential factors behind listening learning is concerned with EFL learners' favorite ways to learn listening.

**Question 6**: How do you want to improve your English listening?

Figure 6 below divulges that most of the learners in the two groups preferred learning listening by participating in some activities before listening. Merely six students (10.3%) in the control group and 7 learners (11.7%) in the experimental group liked listening to the tape immediately without doing any activities before listening to the listening text. 89.7% of the learners in the control group and 88.3% of students in the experimental group answered that they preferred learning listening by taking part in some activities prior to listening to learning listening by listening to the tape instantly.

**Figure 6**

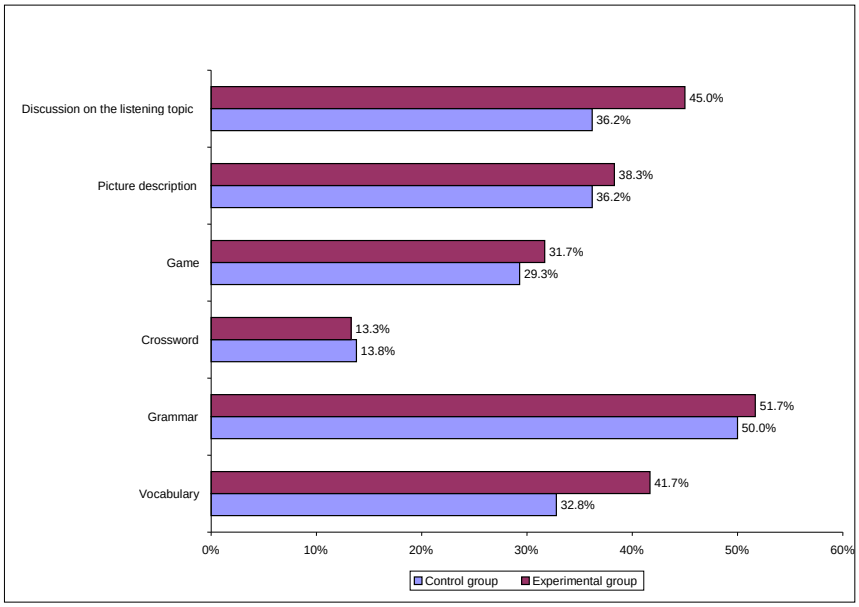
Preferred ways of English listening learning




**Question 7**: If you participate in some activities before listening to the listening text, which activities do you prefer?

**Figure 7**

Some preferred activities before listening to the listening text

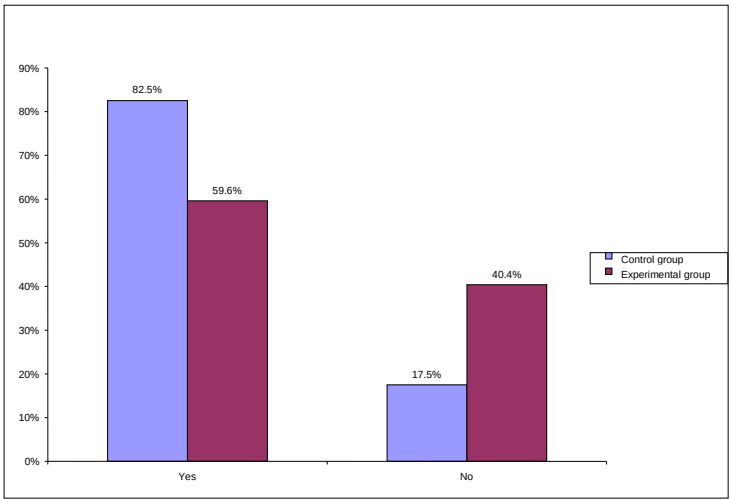



The results from Figure 7 denoted that in the control group, three out of 6 activities before listening to the listening text that the students preferred were grammar activity chosen by 29 students (50.0%), picture description by 21 students (36.2%) and discussion on the listening topic by 21 students (36.2%). Conversely, in the experimental group, the students preferred such schema-building activities as grammar, chosen by 31 students (51.7%), discussion on the listening topic by 27 students (45.0%), and vocabulary activity by 25 students (41.7%).

**Question 8**: Do you participate in any activities after listening?

**Figure 8**

Students' participation in some activities after listening

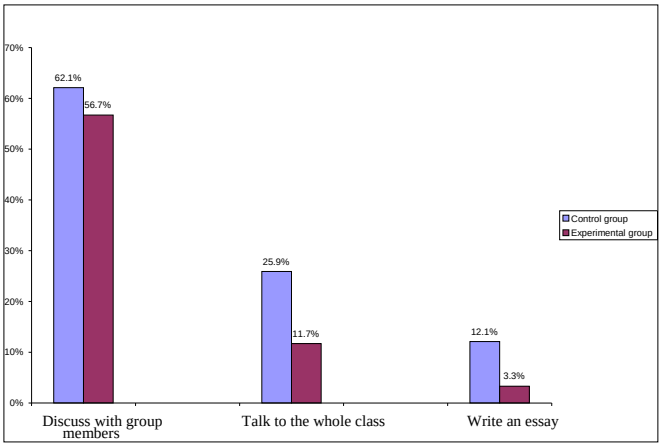



The percentage of the students (82.5%) participating in the activities after listening to the text in the control group outnumbered that (59.6%) in the experimental group. Nearly half of the learners (40.4%) in the experimental group admitted not participating in any activities after listening to the text.

**Question 9**: If yes, what activities do you use to present your opinions on the listened text?

**Figure 9**

Activities used by students to present their own opinions on the listened text



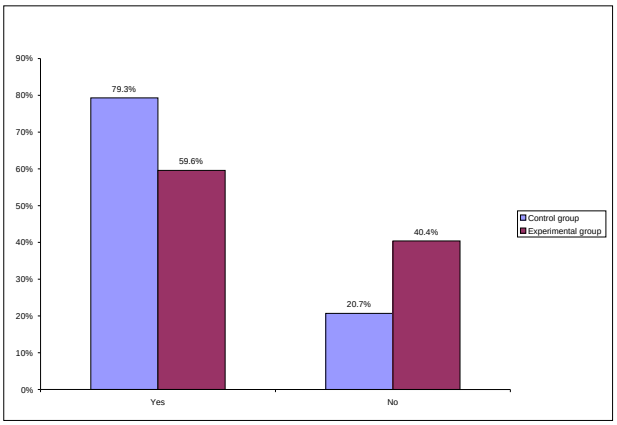

As Figure 9 on the activities used after listening to the listened text shows, over half of the learners in the control group (62.1%) and in the experimental group (56.7%) liked the discussion with group members to present their own opinions on the listened text. 7 students (12.1%) in the control group and only two learners (3.3%) in the experimental group preferred writing an essay, and 15 students (25.9%) and 7 students (11.7%) in the control group and experimental group respectively preferred talking to the whole class.

The third dimension of the influential factors behind listening learning is related to listening materials.

**Question 10**: Do your school materials for listening contain pre-listening activities?

**Figure 10**

School materials for listening contain pre-listening activities




As Figure 10 reveals, the percentage of the learners (79.3%) in the control group that said "yes" outnumbered that (59.6%) in the experimental group when they were asked whether school materials for listening contained pre-listening activities. Approximately half of the learners (40.4%) in the experimental group found that there were no pre-listening activities in school listening materials, although in the control group, the percentage was as low as 20.7%.

**Question 11**: If yes, these pre-listening activities are …

**Figure 11**

Pre-listening activities

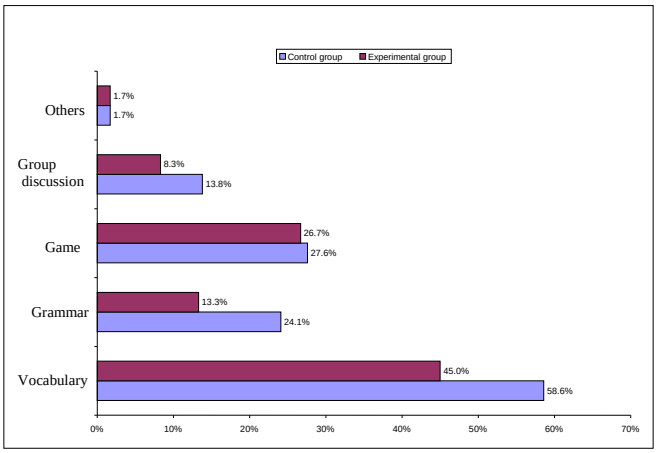
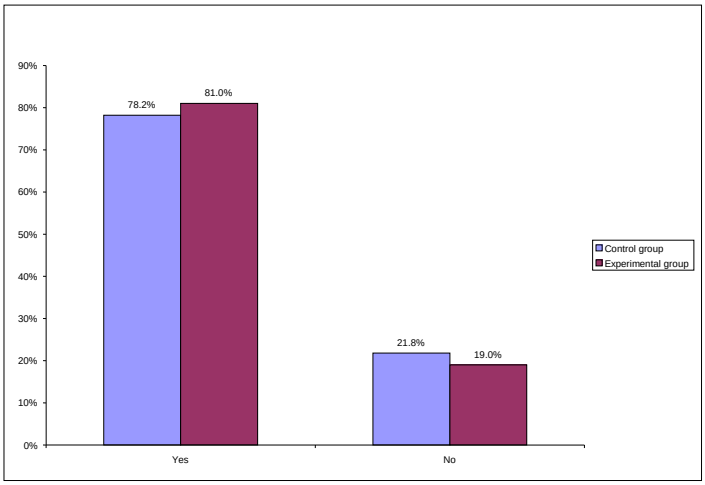



Figure 11 shows that the majority of the students in both classes claimed that pre-listening activities in school materials consist of vocabulary the most, followed by games, grammar, and lastly, group discussion the least. Only 8 students (13.8%) in the control group and 5 students (8.3%) in the experimental group selected group discussion.

**Question 12**: Are listening topics relevant to your present or future life?

**Figure 12**

Listening topics are relevant to students' life

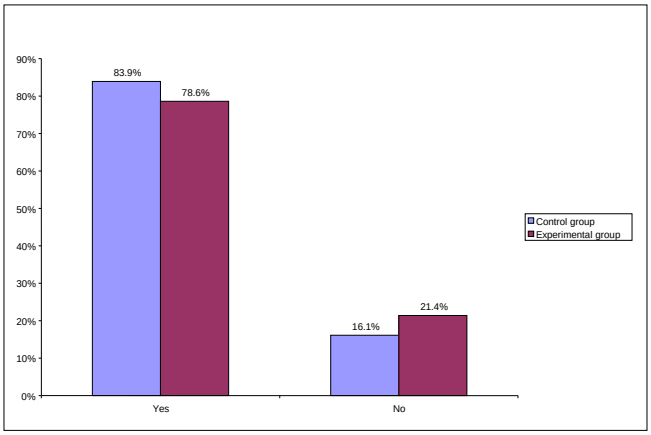



The findings collected from the students' responses on whether listening topics were relevant to their life were noticeable. Up to 78.2% of the learners in the control group and 81.0% of the learners in the experimental group chose the 'Yes' option, while only 21.8% of the students and 19.0% of the learners in the control group and experimental group, respectively said 'No.'

**Question 13**: Are listening to texts in your English materials too difficult for you?

**Figure 13**

Listening to texts in materials is difficult

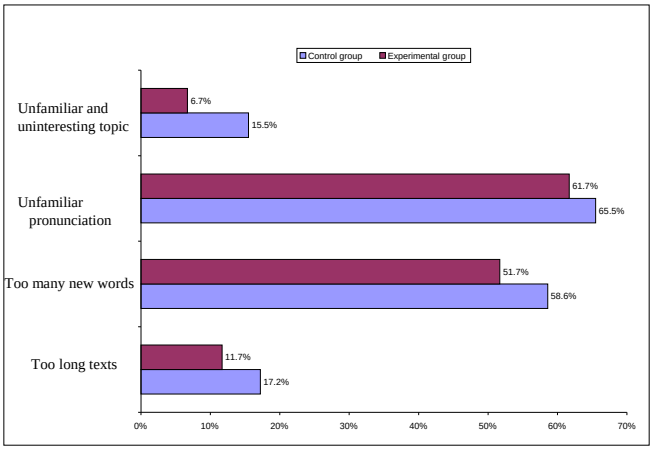



Over three-fourths of the students in both classes contended that listening to text in their materials was too difficult for them, and the percentages were 83.9% of the learners in the control group and 78.6% of the students in the experimental group. Figure 13 shows that most of the learners found listening texts difficult for them, whereas only 16.1% of the students in the control group and 21.4% in the experimental group thought listening texts in their materials were not at a high level of difficulty.

**Question 14**: If yes, what are the reasons?

**Figure 14**

Reasons for difficult listening texts




Question 14 was intended to find out the reasons behind the difficulty of listening to texts. Thirty-eight students (65.5%) in the control group and 37 students (61.7%) in the experimental group claimed that unfamiliar pronunciation made the listening text difficult. In the same vein, 34 students (58.6%) and 31 students (51.7%) in the control group and experimental group, respectively, thought that their listening texts were not easy because they contained myriads of new words.

**Research question 2:** What impacts do schema-building activities have on EFL learners' listening comprehension?

*Listening test scores*

Tests were used to determine whether schema-building exercises had an effect on EFL learners' listening comprehension. Following a 15-week instructional period during which the experimental group's students participated in listening sessions utilizing schema-building activities – an approach not used by the control group - they took the identical posttest. The posttest results were utilized to compare how differently the two classes' listening comprehension progressed.

As was previously indicated, the experimental group consisted of 66 pupils, while the control group consisted of 63 individuals. Only 53 students in the control group and 55 students in the experimental group took the post-test, though a small number of students in both groups did not take it because they were not present on the day the tests were given.

The output produced by the independent t-test analysis of the post-test listening scores is presented in Tables 4 and 5 below.

**Table 4**

Group statistics for post-test mean scores

| | Groups | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scores of posttest | Control group | 53 | 5.70 | 1.588 | .218 |
| | Experimental group | 55 | 6.82 | 1.806 | .244 |

**Table 5**
Independent samples t-test analysis of the post-test listening scores

| | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | Sig. | t | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference |
| Equal variances assumed | 1.931 | .168 | -3.417 | 106 | .001 | -1.12 | .328 |
| Equal variances not assumed | | | -3.426 | 105.133 | .001 | -1.12 | .327 |

The following is an analysis of both classes' pretest and posttest scores in detail.

**Figure 15**
Pretest and posttest score classification in the control group

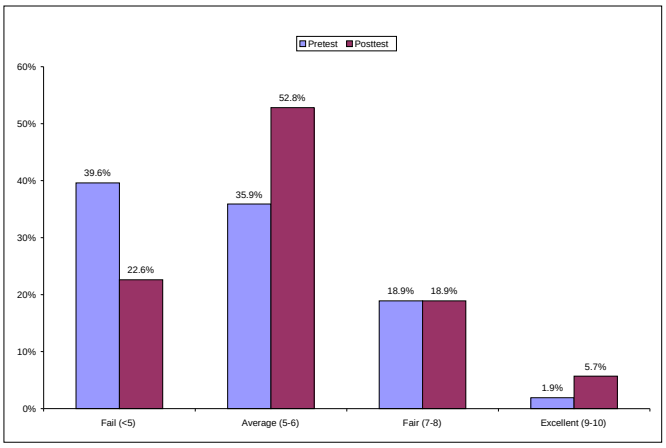
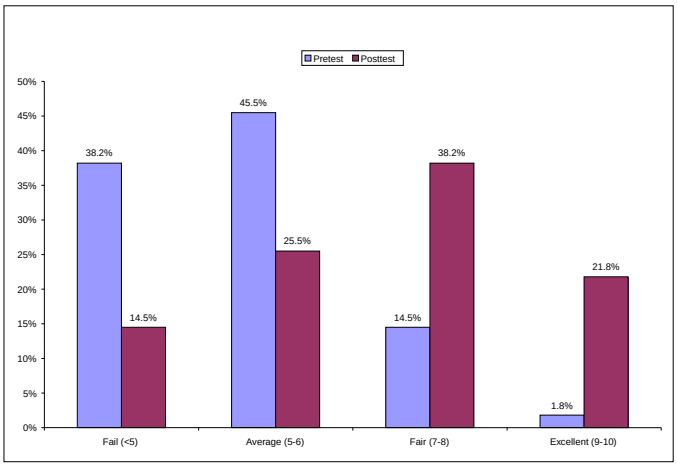



**Figure 16**
Pretest and posttest score classification in the experimental group



As the charts in Figure 15 and Figure 16 show, the fail grade in the control group decreased by 17.0% from 39.6% to 22.6%, but the decrease in the fail grade in the experimental group was higher—23.7% from 38.2 to 14.5. Finally, in the control group, the excellent score slightly increased by 3.8% from 1.9% to 5.7% in comparison with the significant increase of 20.0% from 1.8% to 21.8% in the experimental group.

### *Findings from class observation*

Apart from the tests, the classroom observation was also used to address the research question 2. The interaction and learning motivation were observed in the experimental group. The findings from observation revealed changes in students' interaction and motivation through five observations. The findings from the two last observations (Meeting ten and Meeting 12) differ from those from the first observation. In the last two observations, the teacher nominated the students less, and the number of students who volunteered to answer or raise questions about vocabulary or the listening topic was increasing and greater than that of the first observation.

Moreover, there was a marked level of peer interaction among the students in the two last observations (Meeting ten and Meeting 12) in comparison with the first observation. In addition, their motivation changed noticeably. The students looked interested when they took part in the schema-building activities individually, in pairs, or in groups. Furthermore, the findings from the observation denoted that the interaction and motivation of students in the experimental group underwent a lucid transformation through 12 class meetings in which the schema-building activities were applied to teaching listening skills.

## Discussion

Following are discussions of the findings mentioned above in the context of relevant research.

Firstly, the findings from the questionnaire addressed the first research question. The factors that influence the listening comprehension of EFL learners at this university are pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. The findings were consistent with previous research. The findings from Nguyen's (2006) research indicated that phonological knowledge, such as weak form, stress, linking, and intonation, influences listening, learning, and comprehension. Besides, he highlighted that introducing vocabulary and grammar at the pre-listening stage lessened difficulties in listening comprehension. Therefore, it was concluded that pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar played an important role in increasing EFL learners' listening, learning, and comprehension.

Besides, the findings from the questionnaire survey revealed that teachers tended to ask students to listen to the tape with few or even without warm-up listening activities at all. The teachers used a few activities: ‘introducing listening topic’ and ‘pre-teaching new words that would occur in the listening text’. That means the teachers acted as class controllers, and the learners were passive followers because they just received what their teachers instructed them. The findings demonstrated the students in both classes admitted that their teachers seldom involved them in a group discussion on the listening topic, but they used activities like games and crosswords to lead the students to the listening text. The findings of group discussions in listening class differed from those of some previous researchers.

Moreover, the results from the dimension of the questionnaire on learners' favorite ways to learn to listen indicated that learners preferred participating in some activities before listening to the tape immediately. The most preferred activities were grammar, discussion on listening topics, picture description, and vocabulary; the least preferred were games and crosswords. Teachers

used games and crosswords the most, while learners preferred the least. Learners also showed that the post-listening activity they liked the most was "discuss with group members." The findings of teaching vocabulary before listening as a schema-building activity were similar to Do's (2007).

Furthermore, the findings from the questionnaire survey revealed that listening materials contained pre-listening activities. These activities focused primarily on vocabulary but apparently ignored group discussion. Learners agreed listening topics were relevant to their lives, but they thought listening texts were too difficult for them because of unfamiliar pronunciation, many new words, long texts, and unfamiliar and uninteresting listening topics.

The findings from the test scores and observation answered the second research question. That means that schema-building activities have impacts on EFL learners' listening comprehension. The disparity in post-test scores two groups proved that students instructed with the schema-building activities made more progress in listening learning than students taught without these activities. The findings from the observation reflected that learner became active, autonomous, and interested in participating in pre-listening schema-building activities by using what they knew in order to interact with their peers and teachers to build new schemata. These findings were the same as those of Sullivan and McIntosh (1996).

It was also noticeable that the more interesting, familiar, and relevant the listening topics were, the more motivated the learners were to learn listening. This was consistent with Khanh's (2006, p. 52) view that "learners could study, practice and use what they are so familiar with since the final purpose of language learning is to be a good part of the real world."

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that the influential factors affecting listening learning are related to teaching methods, learning methods, and listening materials. In this study, the schema-building activities were effective and beneficial to the learners' listening learning, as proved by the positive change in the scores of the learners in the experimental group. Schema-building activities also encouraged learners to participate actively in class listening activities and interact with their peers cooperatively. Additionally, the learners find schema-building activities interesting, and their interest and motivation are aroused when pre-listening and post-listening activities rustle their schemata.

Some implications are drawn from the findings discussed in the previous sections. First of all, EFL learners have different schemata, which are helpful when learning a second language. Teachers can use different activities before listening, such as questioning, group discussion, making a list of words, phrases, or structures, semantic mapping, and picture description. Secondly, suppose the activities are employed to trigger learners' schemata. In that case, learners will take responsibility and become autonomous in their learning, and teachers also have to hold different roles, such as instructor, facilitator, and observer. Thirdly, unfamiliar grammatical and phonological patterns must be introduced to learners based on their existing grammatical and phonological knowledge before listening to the tape. Hence, the knowledge of grammar and phonology can help learners recognize acoustical signals and comprehend the texts they are listening to better. Additionally, some characteristics of spoken language, such as weak form, reduced form, schwa, linking, intrusion, assimilation, stress, intonation, and prominence, should be introduced in advance to learners. Lastly, learners still have limited prior knowledge of culture, which prevents them from comprehending listening texts related to the cultures of countries. Hence, teachers need to prepare some extra reading materials or other visual activities

related to the cultures so learners can better listen to the texts.

As with any study, this one also had some weaknesses. The students in this research were freshmen at one university in HCMC, Vietnam, and the number of subjects was small. Therefore, the generalizations and recommendations can be restricted to this particular group of learners at this university.

From the limitation above, it is suggested that further research needs to be a longitudinal study; that is, future research should observe the effects of schema-building activities on the improvement in students' listening skills from the time they enter university until their completion of university.

## Acknowledgments

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# Novice EFL Teachers' Belief and Emotional Regulation in Response to Students' Misbehaviors in the Classrooms

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## ABSTRACT

This research report shares the findings that emerged from a qualitative study in which the main objective was to discover whether or not novice EFL teachers regulate their negative emotions during their initial teaching practice and, if so, how they do this. Semi-structured interviews, recorded classroom observations, collected the data, stimulated recall interviews, and wrote journals for reflections and explanations of why they expressed and regulated their emotions in those incidents. The participants were three novice teachers who have been teaching English at the same university for about five years. Data collection of student-teacher interaction was carried out during their teaching. The research findings reveal that teachers often experience negative emotions triggered by students' conduct in the classroom, such as discipline issues, lack of engagement, and incorrect responses. Teachers successfully used techniques to redirect their attention and reassess the situation to counteract annoyance and disappointment. Ultimately, these strategies replaced negative emotions with a new outlook through substitute teaching activities. These observations provide EFL teachers with insightful advice on dealing with negative emotions effectively, resulting in a more positive classroom atmosphere where English is taught.

**Keywords**: Emotion regulation, emotions, novice EFL teachers

## Introduction

There has been a growing interest in teachers' emotional experiences and emotional regulation in education. Nevertheless, it is impossible to overlook a clear research vacuum in the field of English language instruction. Several studies, including those by Bielak and Mystkowsks-Wiertelak (2020) and Greenier et al., have emphasized the negative impacts of teachers' unpleasure and disappointment in teaching in particular, as well as Talbot and Mercer (2018). Notably, Su and Lee (2024) have recently drawn attention to the paucity of studies on the techniques for emotion regulation that EFL teachers use in EFL classrooms. Martínez and

CITATION | Ngo, T. C. T. (2024). Novice EFL Teachers' Belief and Emotional Regulation in Response to Students' Misbehaviors in the Classrooms. *International Journal of Language Instruction, 3(4), 20*-45. DOI: https://doi.org/10.54855/ijli.24342

Azzaro (2018) have also called attention to the paucity of studies on the feelings of EFL teachers in classroom settings. The importance of EFL teachers' emotions in forming their professional identities and impacting their interactions with students, coworkers, and the work environment has long been recognized, as highlighted by Cowie (2011). Morris and King (2023) have emphasized the practical and pedagogical significance of understanding teacher emotions in the classroom and have strongly advocated for more research on the emotional skills of EFL teachers to improve psychological wellbeing and classroom management.

Transitioning from the role of a college student to that of a teacher in a tertiary classroom involves navigating numerous multifaceted challenges for novice instructors. In addition to refining their pedagogical skills, they also confront the complexities of managing the emotions and expectations of colleagues, students, and parents (Cross & Hong, 2012). It is imperative to cultivate a culture of respect for educators' dedication and hard work (Nguyen & Tong, 2024). While prior research has delved into the professional development and skill enhancement of novice teachers, there has been a scarcity of longitudinal studies that comprehensively explore the emotional journey of new teachers, particularly during the formative stages of their careers (Nazari et al., 2023).

Therefore, there is a pressing need for further studies to comprehensively explore the factors leading to novice EFL university teachers' negative emotions while teaching English in the classroom and how they navigate and regulate these emotions amidst the challenges encountered during lessons (Namaziandost et al., 2022). This study aims to delve into the intricate emotional landscape of novice EFL teachers during instruction, providing invaluable insights into the following two questions:

1. What factors cause novice EFL teachers' negative emotions while teaching in the classroom?
2. How do novice EFL teachers regulate negative emotions in the classroom?

## Literature review

### *Negative Emotions in EFL teaching*

Emotions play a significant role in the field of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching, as they are closely tied to the social and psychological aspects of EFL teachers' professional lives (Akbari et al., 2017). When it comes to negative emotions, EFL teachers commonly experience feelings of frustration and impatience when students struggle to grasp certain concepts. Additionally, they often feel irked when they witness instances of student misconduct (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2024). It has been observed that EFL teachers experience these emotions and actively manage, control, and sometimes conceal their emotions to meet specific educational goals (Cowie, 2011; Su & Lee, 2023).

Furthermore, the presence of burnout can impede a teacher's ability to effectively address student misbehavior. On the other hand, EFL teachers who can effectively regulate their own emotional responses are better equipped to employ constructive management techniques. This study employed a qualitative approach to understand the factors contributing to negative emotions among novice EFL teachers and how they navigate and regulate their emotional responses to student misbehavior within English language classrooms (Nazari & Karimpour, 2023).

### *Emotion regulation*

Emotion regulation is the process of managing one's emotions through a combination of behavioral and cognitive actions, commonly referred to as emotion regulation strategies (Chen & Tang, 2024; Gross, 2015; Koole, 2009). These methods are used for a range of personal (within oneself) and social (with others) purposes, assisting people in adjusting and dealing with various emotional conditions. In the sphere of language learning,

The study defines emotion regulation strategies as EFL teachers' intentional actions to impact or modify their emotions. These tactics encompass a broad range of techniques, such as focusing on the outside world, cognitive functions, attention, and various facets of emotional experiences. A frequently used tactic, for instance, is reappraisal (e. g. g. Reevaluating how one interprets a particular situation in order to modify one's emotional response is the method (Gross 1998b 2015). EFL teachers may employ reappraisal by mentally adjusting their perspective of a challenging classroom situation to alleviate feelings of frustration or annoyance. Similarly, another strategy - expressive suppression (e.g., Gross, 1998a, 2015), involves hiding or disguising one's emotional displays.

In the context of an EFL classroom, a teacher might opt to suppress their negative emotions by maintaining a composed and neutral facial expression, even when faced with a challenging or frustrating situation. EFL teachers can also talk to friends, family, or coworkers about their negative feelings to get support (Zaki and Williams, 2013). Speaking up about difficult experiences in the classroom can be a way to get help, let off steam, or win others over with empathy and understanding.

### *Intrapersonal Emotion Regulation (ER)*

Intrapersonal perspectives on ER are defined as the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions (Gross, 1999, pp. 275-275). The traditional theories of ER are based on these viewpoints. Gross (2015) proposed a process model of intrapersonal ER that included two primary techniques for emotion regulation: response-focused ER and antecedent-focused ER. Gross's (1998) emotion regulation process model serves as the current study's foundation. It provides a thorough framework for comprehending the intricate sequence of situation-attention-appraisal-response in emotional processes. The model suggests that there are a number of ways to manage emotions. An approach called antecedent-focused emotion regulation entails controlling the input of the system. Situation selection is one example of this kind of regulation in which people deliberately seek out or avoid particular people or circumstances according to the anticipated emotional impact. Moreover, situation modification entails modifying the surroundings to modify the emotional impact. Another element is attention deployment, which is the deliberate shifting of attention toward or away from particular stimuli in order to affect feelings.

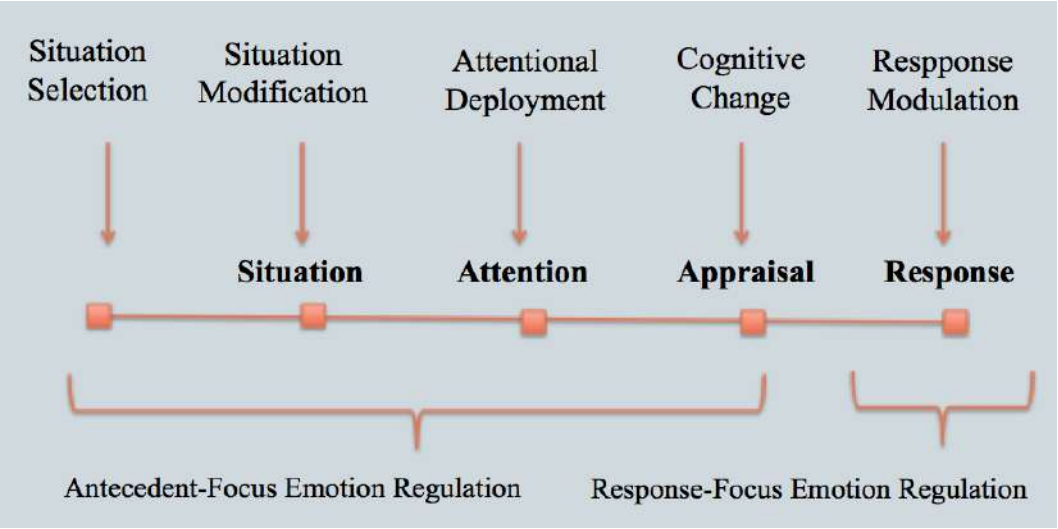
Additionally, this method includes cognitive change, in which people reevaluate their circumstances or capacity to control them to change how they feel. Conversely, response-focused emotion regulation focuses on controlling the emotions that are released. This includes techniques that can be used to increase, decrease, lengthen, or shorten ongoing emotional expressions and body reactions. One may need to employ strategies such as deep breathing relaxation exercises or other approaches to control and modify one's immediate emotional reactions. The purpose of these tactics is to have a direct effect on how emotions are experienced internally and externally.

Within the context of this study, the definition given above relates to the use of actions to alter

the course of emotions. These strategies can vary in complexity, involving adjustments to the external environment, attentional systems, cognition, or the cumulative effects of emotional experiences. The reappraisal technique (e.g., Gross, 1998a, 2015) involves manipulating the appraisal component. When using this method, a person adjusts their feelings about an emotional stimulus. A teacher, for example, may reclassify a misbehaving student as 'generally well-behaved' in order to mitigate any negative emotions they are experiencing. Alternatively, the expressive suppression method (e.g., Gross, 1998a, 2015) includes hiding the expressional component of an emotion. A teacher, for instance, may want to disguise their displeasure from the class by assuming a neutral expression. There are numerous possible emotion regulation strategies, which will be examined in detail in the discussion section.

*Figure 1*

*The process model of emotion regulation (adapted from Gross & Thompson, 2007)*

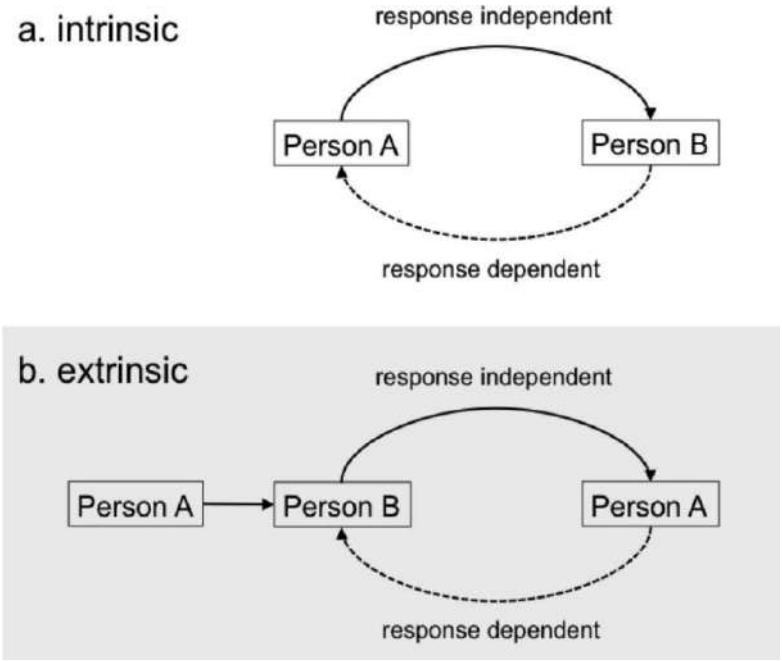



*Interpersonal Emotion Regulation (ER)*

Even while Gross's process model is helpful for understanding the intrapersonal process of ER, it ignores how people's emotional experiences relate to their sociocultural environment (Hofmann, 2014). Interpersonal functions of EFL teacher emotions are adopted from Zaki and Williams' model (Zaki & Williams, 2013). This strategy highlighted the social process of affective message transmission between the sender and the recipient. Teachers typically do not manage their emotions in isolation; they do so through social interaction to seek social support (Zaki & Williams, 2013). As such, EFL teachers can alter their own emotions – intrinsic interpersonal ER (Zaki & Williams, 2013) or the emotional states of others through social engagement.

*Figure 2*

*Interpersonal regulatory processes as viewed from the perspective of two individuals Adapted from Zaki and Williams, 2013, p.805*




This study thoroughly explores the essentiality of forging meaningful connections within a social support network to bolster emotional wellbeing and facilitate the professional development of novice EFL teachers. Through in-depth analysis and real-life examples, the research sheds light on the invaluable impact of such networks on the overall success and fulfillment of novice EFL educators.

### *Novice EFL teachers*

According to Farrell (2012), novice teachers are characterized as individuals who have recently attained their teaching qualifications and commenced instructing English within an educational institution, typically within three years of completing their teacher education program. This study aims to identify the factors leading to novice EFL teachers' negative emotions, and the relationships between their emotion regulation and their professional efficacy while teaching in the classroom. The emotion regulation strategies employed in the present study encompass a variety of methods utilized by EFL university instructors to manage unwanted emotions. Additionally, they can help their students in the classroom with the English language learning process more effectively by using these strategies.

### *Previous studies*

More research has been conducted in the last few years on the emotional interactions and emotional regulation strategies of novice EFL teachers. The importance of prioritizing the welfare of teachers is becoming increasingly recognized, leading to a rise in curiosity. Consequently, studies have investigated the specific strategies inexperienced EFL teachers use to effectively manage their emotions in the classroom and other spheres of their lives.

In order to better understand how recently qualified EFL instructors control their emotions while teaching English, Arizmendi Tejeda and colleagues (2016) conducted a study in 2016. The primary methods of this study were in-depth interviews, firsthand accounts, and

classroom observations. The study aimed to find in-depth information about how EFL teachers manage their emotions while teaching English in the classroom. The study discovered that students' learning outcomes can be greatly impacted by their ability to effectively manage negative emotions. Many emotional strategies were used by new teachers, suggesting that these techniques can promote healthy learning environments and enhance students' overall educational experiences.

Gloria and Mbato conducted a comprehensive study in 2024 that looked at the ways in which emotional regulation techniques impacted the professional development of EFL teachers in the Indonesian educational system. They employed in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires to fully investigate these tactics and their significant influence on the teaching process. According to the study, teachers frequently employ the suppression strategy, which suggests that this method is popular for controlling emotions. It was discovered that EFL teachers demonstrated exceptional resilience and adaptability in their professional roles by using ER strategies, particularly suppression with skill. The study also underlined the importance of professional development for EFL teachers and suggested adding ER training to teacher preparation programs as a way to help them develop even more.

Santihastuti et al., in a recent study in 2022, looked into the methods that novice EFL instructors employ to control their emotions when dealing with disruptive students. Through reflective journals and in-depth interviews, two novice EFL teachers who participated in this qualitative study shared their emotional experiences and coping mechanisms. The study's findings showed that to effectively control their emotional reactions when confronted with student misbehavior, new EFL teachers frequently used emotional labor techniques such as surface acting, deep acting, and genuine expression. These techniques helped the teachers manage their emotions in difficult teaching scenarios. Teachers who were more likely to use emotional labor strategies also reported feeling less inclined to repress their students' negative emotions when dealing with misbehavior. It is noteworthy, nevertheless, that the limited sample size and the students taught by the participants—the majority of whom were from low socioeconomic backgrounds—may limit the study's generalizability. As a result, the researchers emphasized that additional research is required to validate and expand on the results.

Although the emotions of EFL teachers have drawn more attention from researchers, there is still a lot of unanswered research in this area in Vietnam, especially when it comes to comprehending the emotions of inexperienced EFL teachers while they are teaching. In order to learn more about the opinions of 24 EFL lecturers as well as four academic and administrative leaders at a Vietnamese university, Tran and Ollerhead (2017) conducted an interview study. The findings revealed both positive and negative feelings regarding the policy, including doubt, frustration, and discontent. Positive emotions included enthusiasm and contentment. Remarkably, these results run counter to some research suggesting that career stage, education, and specialization do not always affect lecturers' emotional reactions (Dasborough Lamb & Suseno 2015; Hargreaves, 2005).

To sum up, earlier studies have examined the reasons behind novice EFL teachers' emotional regulation in the classroom. Additionally, various emotion-regulation techniques these educators employ have been identified, including expressive, adaptive, suppressive, avoidant surface acting, and deep acting. Still, the absence of stimulated recall interviews—a technique that allows for the instantaneous recording of teachers' feelings in response to events in the classroom that elicit intense emotional responses—sets this study apart. By allowing for a deeper understanding of the emotions that new EFL teachers experience and how they reflect

on those emotions, this innovative approach could contribute to the advancement of a more complex model of emotion regulation in the classroom.

## Methods

### *Research Design*

The main goal of the study was to learn more about how new EFL university instructors dealt with their emotions in the classroom. Analyzing clips from classroom recordings that showed the teachers emotional states allowed for the collection of qualitative data. Teachers then took part in stimulated recall interviews in order to shed light on the motivations behind their emotional outbursts and develop a thorough understanding of their actions.

As Creswell (2007) noted, participants were also urged to keep reflective journals after their teaching sessions. This facilitated an examination of their experiences and reflections and ultimately produced a genuine portrayal of their teaching lives. To capture the what and how of the participants' emotional encounters, stimulated recall interviews and journals were used to facilitate discussions about the participant's experiences managing negative emotions (Moutakas, 1994). The study's main goals were to thoroughly explain the feelings that inexperienced EFL university instructors felt in the classroom and to emphasize the intentional behavioral and cognitive techniques they employed to control their emotions to manage and instruct their students effectively.

### *Participants*

The study included three inexperienced EFL teachers from a private university in Vietnam. They all had four to five years of teaching experience and held a Master of Arts degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Prior to data collection, the researcher individually contacted the participants to secure their consent while respecting their privacy through the use of pseudonyms. Table 1 conveniently presents a comprehensive overview of the participants' demographic characteristics.

### *Data Collection Tools*

This study employed a qualitative approach to elicit teachers' emotions in the language classroom (Creswell, 2007; Mills & Morton, 2013). This approach was used because most research on teachers' perceptions used the combination of classroom observation with stimulated recalled interviews, semi-structured interviews, and journals. This enabled a more comprehensive exploration of teachers' emotions in the classroom and encouraged participants to explain their emotions.

**Table 1**

Demographic characteristics of the participants

| Pseudo-name | Gender | Age | Years of teaching | Subject assigned to teach | Other details |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Helen | Female | 28 | 5 | Phonetics | Helen is an enthusiastic and highly experienced EFL teacher with over ten years of teaching English at the university level. Her dedication to teaching and her constant pursuit of innovative ideas make her an exceptional educator. |
| Tyra | Female | 27 | 4 | Semantics | Tyra is a young, dynamic, and innovative teacher who was once a student at this university. After earning her Master's degree in New Zealand, she returned to Vietnam and applied for a position as an EFL lecturer. Tyra has an open-minded and approachable nature that makes it easy for her to connect with the behaviors and lifestyle of Gen Z students. She has rarely complained or expressed discomfort about her negative emotions. |
| Phoebe | Female | 26 | 4 | Writing | Phoebe is a young EFL teacher who has a gentle and patient approach when teaching her students. She spent about two years teaching English in a secondary school after graduating from university. Then, Phoebe studied for a Master's degree for nearly two years before becoming an EFL lecturer at a university for about three years. During the three recorded class observations, Phoebe was teaching writing and grammar and had to remind her GenZ students to be quiet as they were rather noisy. However, she was always eager to bring new and exciting ideas to her students and was passionate about teaching. |

### *Video-recorded classroom observations*

Using video recordings of classroom sessions enabled data collection in a realistic educational environment (Otrel-Cass et al., 2010). As such, videos can recount a story and provide the viewer with perspectives on those involved in the research that go beyond language. Because the study was oriented toward investigating the emotions of teachers in these situations, interactions that splintered with nuanced emotional responses by the teachers themselves were often best caught on video. A further strength lay in this study's purposeful use of video recording to enable a comprehensive review of data and support stimulated recall interviews conducted with teacher participants, as Pirie (1996) recommended.

The participating teachers were approached individually and asked for their informed consent to be recorded while conducting their English language classes. Each instructor's teaching sessions were meticulously captured over two hours, spanning two separate classes. A camera was strategically placed at the rear of the classroom, maintaining a fixed position throughout

the entire 50-minute duration of each session. This recording process was systematically carried out over the course of a month, with each teacher's class being recorded on a weekly basis. It is noteworthy that a cameraman was not present during the recordings in order to minimize any possible interference with the organic flow of the classroom.

### *Stimulated recall interviews*

A stimulated recall interview was used in the current study to provide a deeper understanding of the teachers' emotions in educational settings. It comprised two stages: observation and interview. The researcher recorded three teacher participants during the observation stage during their lessons. After viewing the recordings, the researcher identified the incidents that showed the teachers' emotions and invited them to view the video recordings for recall stimulated interview. This approach was to ask the teachers what emotions they felt in the incidents and how they regulated their negative emotions.

The stimulated recall interview was intended to elicit the teachers' recollections of, and reflections on, their emotional experiences in relation to these incidents. This enables the interviewer to probe into the feelings they experienced and how these emotions were managed and mobilized in specific contexts of their practice. Journal entries and stimulated recall interviews were used in this study to examine how English teachers deal with their emotions during significant classroom events. The findings may change instructional approaches and improve the educational opportunities for students. Hence, stimulated recall interviews are essential for researchers and educators dedicated to improving education and student outcomes.

### *Semi-structured interviews*

This study used semi-structured interviews to get in-depth answers from EFL teachers. By employing this method, the interviewer was able to ask follow-up questions and explore the teachers' emotional experiences and coping mechanisms in the classroom. In keeping with the process model of emotion regulation, the interview questions focused on the positive and negative emotions experienced by EFL teachers as well as the corresponding emotion regulation strategies.

### *Journals*

Designed to align with Gross's (1998) process model of emotion regulation, the journal aims to motivate educators to recount the occurrences in their classrooms meticulously, articulate their affective responses to these occurrences, and clarify the rationale behind their evaluations. Maintaining a journal is merely one of many techniques employed to thoroughly understand educators' knowledge, convictions, and experiences. Obtaining a thorough grasp of teachers' emotional experiences in their particular teaching and operating environments involves actively gathering and recording personal accounts or a sequence of events (Murray, 2009).

Participants were first asked to write journal entries to express and reflect on their individual experiences. The decision to conduct all interactions in the participants' native language, Vietnamese, is significant. Although the participants were English teachers, this deliberate choice was made to improve communication, ensure clearer expression of their thoughts, and reduce any unnecessary intimidation. It was strongly believed that using their primary language rather than their secondary language would facilitate a deeper and more authentic conveyance of their unique experiences and diverse perspectives.

### *Data Analysis Technique*

Data coding and topic identification were conducted using a comprehensive methodology, incorporating input from recorded classroom observations and transcriptions of semi-structured interviews. Although the study analysis was presented as a linear, step-by-step approach, it actually involved an iterative and reflective process. The researcher carried out additional investigation to validate that the initial data substantiated the emerging themes.

Following their teaching sessions, participants were instructed to record their emotions and strategies to manage any negative emotions in a reflective journal. The emotions experienced and the strategies employed for emotion regulation were systematically coded and interpreted within the framework established by Gross and Thompson (2007) and Zaki and Williams (2013).

## Findings

This chapter represents the findings of the study, which answered three questions related to the factors leading to aroused emotions in teachers while teaching in the classrooms, their strategies to regulate such emotions, and how they think such emotion regulation contributes to their teaching. Data were collected from video-recorded classroom observations, stimulated recall interviews, teachers' journals, and general interviews after the observation.

### *Factors arousing EFL university teachers' emotions while teaching in English classrooms*

This section reports the findings related to the factors that impacted EFL teachers' feelings or emotions while teaching. Data were collected from the recorded classroom observations, stimulated recall interviews, and teachers' journals. The transcripts of the recorded classroom observations and stimulated recall interviews were scrutinized for the negative emotions experienced by the participants in their English classrooms. An inductive data-driven approach was applied to discern the factors leading to EFL teachers' negative emotions in the classroom. Extracts indicating factors leading to teachers' emotions are presented below.

### *Data from the recorded classroom observations and stimulated recall interviews*

#### *Emotions aroused by students' discipline matters*

*Students using mobile phones during the lessons*

Extract 1:

Teacher Helen: *Oh my god, it turns out you were playing a game the whole time. Do you keep playing games and only focus on games? Now, answer the questions on the board and give examples.*

As can be seen from Extract 1, when the teacher went to the end of the class, she noticed a male student playing a game on the mobile phone. She asked the student to answer two questions. However, he only worked well with the first one. The transcript in extract 1 indicates some disappointment and irritation of the teacher.

*Making noise*

Extract 2: In this extract, the teacher (Phoebe) was giving instructions for homework assignments during the Lunar New Year holiday. Extract 2 is from the recording of the class that teacher Phoebe was teaching.

Teacher: *Anybody would like to go out for further discussion?*

As can be seen from Extract 2 and the video, the students were too noisy, and they constantly spent time exchanging and talking privately while Phoebe was lecturing, so this made the classroom atmosphere messy and, and the teacher could not focus on discussing and answering, students' questions as well as delivering lectures smoothly. Therefore, the teacher asked some students to leave the classroom if they needed to discuss things privately with each other because this affected her teaching. This incident made her stop the lecture to strengthen class discipline and then return to the lecture. The transcript in extract 2 indicates the teacher's disappointment and negative emotions.

### *Emotions aroused by students' engagement in the lessons*

#### *Students' passiveness in learning*

Extract 3: In this excerpt, Helen (the teacher) is lecturing on Phonetics and asking the students to do the assignment in groups after the lesson. It is from the recording of the class that Helen was teaching.

Teacher: *Why are you alone? Oh my God! Then, who do you group with? You don't have a group yet? Come here! Do you work together? Why do you keep sitting alone?*

As can be seen from Extract 3, when the teacher walked to the end of the class, she recognized some students goofing off and not paying any attention to the assignment. They even did not know which group to work in. The transcript in extract 3 indicates some disappointment in the teacher when the students were not energetic and active in their learning.

#### *Teachers' Emotions: their reflections via journals and interviews*

To explore factors causing EFL teachers' negative emotions while teaching which was recorded on videos, the journals were written or orally recorded and analyzed immediately after the teachers finished their teaching. This section presents the causes leading to EFF teachers' unpleasant experiences in the classrooms.

### *Emotions aroused by students' discipline matters*

The following was an explanation for the aroused teacher's emotion.

As for Phoebe, she felt that she was interrupted because of the students' overactive participation in the lesson. In her journal, she wrote:

> *Today, the students were too active, and they constantly spent time exchanging and talking privately while the lecturer was lecturing. This made the classroom atmosphere messy and noisy, and the lecturer could not focus on discussing and answering students' questions as well as delivering lectures smoothly (Journal, Phoebe).*

Overall, Troy, Tracy, Nicole, and Phoebe's journals vividly recorded the factors that led them to be annoyed and unhappy while teaching. Those factors are related to students' discipline for coming to class late or doing private talks during the lessons.

In the interviews, some teachers explained why students' discipline aroused negative feelings in students. For example, Helen answered, "I won't say directly that I'm upset, I'll just mention it to the whole class. For example, a student comes to class too late". The answer indicated that Helen felt irritated by that student's late arrival. In the same vein, Hannah answered in the interview why she felt angry, " There is also the feeling of anger, when students are late, or when they have just finished a lecture, but when asked again". Hannah further explained

another reason for her anger,

> *I told my students that they had prepared their lessons to practice teaching in class, but when I came to class, they said they had forgotten to prepare. At first, I was angry. However, I tried to calm down and allowed them to prepare in 10 minutes. After that, they taught very well. (Hannah, interview)*

For Tyra, her feeling was connected with students' lazy attitude during her lesson:

> *I am very disappointed because students almost don't respect their teacher. More specifically, they don't respect the words the lecturer requested, and they have been irresponsible in working together (Tyra, interview).*

Overall, the teachers explained quite clearly the discipline-related incidents from the students that made them angry, disappointed, and unhappy.

*Emotions aroused by students' engagement in the lessons*

Besides the discipline matters, students' lack of participation in the lessons was also reported to be a factor leading to uncomfortable feelings in the teachers.

Teacher Helen wrote about her reflection on a student's lack of engagement in her journal (see also the reflection in the journal): "A student is late and she seems isolated. When I let the class do activities, she just sits quietly. I went to ask for the coursebook but she didn't answer, and looked at me strangely. I think it could be because her communication is poor, or lack of confidence" (Journal, Helen). Helen also explained in her journal what happened in the reflection in the journal.**:**

> *Some students came to class late, interrupting the lecture. A male student constantly used his phone. When I got there, I discovered that he was playing games. A female student came late, but did not participate in group activities, did not have a textbook, and used the phone during class**.** (Journal, Helen)*

Phoebe similarly seemed unpleasured when "at the beginning of the lesson, students were still a bit moody and not focused on the lecture. This causes lecturers to have to lecture over and over again, affecting the teaching progress. There, lecturers like us feel less motivated" (Journal, Phoebe). This journal explains what happened in the reflection.

The journal

reflection in the previous session revealed that students were late for class. That is why Tyra wrote in her journal: "The class started a bit late because students arrived late to class, and the mechanical preparation was slow, so it took time. This reduced the quality of the lesson" (Journal, Tyra).

Overall, the journals of teachers Helen and Tyra reflected one common matter related to students' reflecting participation in the lessons, which caused unpleasant feelings in the teachers.

In the interviews, the teachers also recalled the incidents that aroused their negative feelings. For instance, Helen said,

> *Sometimes I feel disappointed because I explained to the students, but they still couldn't do their work, but I hide that emotion inside; I don't say it out loud; I just say it gently, especially for those students who are in their senior year, I'll be gentle. But there are also times when I feel sad, for example, when the students' attitudes are really bad. I wanted to support them, but they stayed silent, which made me very sad.*

*(Helen, interview)*

Similarly, Phoebe expected students to contriubte to the lesson but when they did not, he felt "a bit stressed because teaching students requires deeper knowledge. Before teaching, I did lot of research, but when I was in class, I still felt a little shaky because they did not pay attention to me." She further explained in the interview:

> *I feel a little disappointed because sometimes there are some students who are not focused or just raise similar queries over and over again, although I have already explained that issue or as soon as I have just finished talking about them. (Phoebe, interview)*

### *Emotions aroused by students' understanding of the lessons*

The teachers also reported how their emotions affected students' understanding of classroom lessons. For example, Helen wrote, "After the break time, some students were confused when asked to analyze the structures of several frequently used structures, which made me angry and disappointed" (journal, Helen). This is to explain why the transcript in the reflection in the journal indicates her voice that way.

To Phoebe, she tended to be overloaded when, "This class has a group of students who are too passive and a bit slow to understand, so they could not catch up with the content of the course, which meant I felt like they were floating and I had to spend twice as much effort teaching to help them grasp the knowledge" (Journal, Phoebe).

### *Emotions due to workload*

The factors leading to negative feelings in teachers come from student-related factors and the workload. For instance, Phoebe wrote, "The lecturer had negative emotions, specifically discomfort and mild discomfort. Therefore, teaching the same topic over and over again and having to take the time to test students' knowledge many times makes the lecturer a bit frustrated when re-lecturing" (journal, Phoebe).

Other teachers, however, did not mention the workload in their teaching. This could be because they focused more on the lessons at hand and at the time when they were teaching.

### *Emotions due to unfavorable teaching environment*

One more factor influencing teachers' mood when teaching was the classroom environment. Tyra, for example, wrote, **"***There was a problem with the projector which disrupted my well-prepared presentation. I was upset a little bit because I was afraid the incident could be time-consuming and affect students' attention"* (journal, Tyra). The class schedule may also affect teachers' emotions. Phoebe wrote in one journal: **"***This class starts studying at 3:30 pm and students are basically a bit sleepy. Today, I was a bit tired so I went out to drink water and wash my face to make me more alert" (journal, Phoebe)*

In general, this section presents data from classroom recording transcript and teachers' journals. The transcript indicates a range of emotions experienced by the teachers that come from student-related factors such as class discipline, insufficient participation in the class, and not understanding the lessons. The journals further explained why the teachers reacted, as documented in the transcripts. Both sources of data visualized the classrooms, teachers' teaching, and their emotions in those incidents.

### *Teachers' emotional regulations in teaching English in the classrooms*

This section presents the findings for the second research question on how teachers regulate

their emotions during teaching in the classrooms. Data were obtained from stimulated recall interviews and journals. For each extract presented in section 4.1 (teachers' emotions while teaching), the researcher conducted a stimulated recall interview with the teacher to ask him/her why he/she reacted that way.

*Teachers' emotion regulation: Adjusting teaching attitudes*

From the extracts recorded in the classroom as presented in section 4.1, those that indicate the changes in attitudes of the classroom teachers notified and coded. This section presents data from stimulated recall interviews and journals written by the teachers related to the extracts. Table 1 below illustrates how Troy handled his emotions while teaching.

In Table 2 below, Helen's emotion regulation is presented.

**Table 2**

Helen's emotion regulation while teaching

| Teacher | Extract no | Teacher's emotion | Teachers' emotion regulation: Adjusting teaching attitudes | | Sub-strategies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Stimulated recall interview | Journal | |
| **Helen** | **1** | Irritation and disappointment because the student used a mobile phone to play games during the lecture. | I disguised my anger by saying some funny words and asked him to answer the questions on the screen. I did not want to disturb the working atmosphere of the other students. | I learned from the previous case so that I could control my emotions and not let myself get involved in too many negative emotions. In the previous lesson, I ran out of time, so this time, after handling students' discipline matters, I immediately returned to the lecture. | **Changing attitude** |

As Table 2 shows, Helen tended to suppress her emotions during teaching. The stimulated recall interview and journal explained that she wanted to keep the students on task and complete her lecture.

*Teachers' emotion regulation: Adjusting teachers' attention and ignoring students' misbehaviors*

The extracts from the classroom observations also indicated another type of emotion regulation by the teachers. This section presents data from stimulated recall interviews and journals written by the teachers that explain how they managed their emotions in the extracts.

The table below presents Helen's emotion regulation.

**Table 3**

Helen's emotion regulation by ignoring students' misbehaviors

| Teacher | Extract number | Teacher's emotion | Teacher's emotion regulation: Adjusting attention | | Sub-strategies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Stimulated recall interview | Journal | |
| **Helen** | **1** | Feeling disappointed because some students at the back of the class were reluctant to work in groups. They were too passive to set up their own group. | I used a normal voice with surprise to hide my disappointment when students were not ready to work in groups to avoid hurting them, which could encourage them to study. Also, I did not want to disturb the other students who were doing their assignments. | I asked the student where the books were and why she wasn't in the group, but the student did not answer. At that time, I tried to get over my discomfort and asked her to join the group behind her. Then, I turned around to calm down and continue my teaching. If I show too much anger, it will increase, scaring other students and reducing students' learning efficiency. | **Ignoring students' misbehaviors** |

Helen tried to suppress her negative emotions so that she could continue teaching because, in her opinion, showing anger could impact students' learning.

### *Teachers' Emotion Regulation: Reappraisal Strategies*

One emotion regulation strategy employed by the teachers was reappraisal. Data were obtained from stimulated recall interviews and journals to explain what was happening in the extracts.

### *EFL teachers' reflections on their emotion regulation during teaching*

The following section presents the EFL teachers' answers in interviews (not stimulated recall interviews after videos). This interview aimed to obtain general opinions of how teachers reported managing their emotions during teaching.

Some teachers gave detailed responses regarding strategies for redirecting teachers' emotions and ignoring students' misbehaviors. For example, in the interview, Helen answered, "*I hide my uncomfortable feelings and don't show them to students. If I get too angry, I won't show it. I didn't say anything or scold the students because I didn't want to hurt the students*".

Phoebe tried to change her mood more positively with humorous comments; she stated, "*If students don't understand something, I will regulate my negative emotions and then remind them. At that time, I looked for a more humorous way of teaching so that students could focus and be interested in my lectures*."

Helen reported, "*My principle is to be gentle and peaceful so that I can keep peace in my*

*lesson and to balance my energy. I want to have a peaceful teaching session so I need to absolutely avoid negative emotions, overreactions or too much anger which will make me very tired. I will not take care of students who have uncooperative attitude. But through other activities, I still pay attention to them*."

Overall, Helen and Phoebe's interview answers indicate that the teachers were aware of their emotions and tried to regulate those feelings to ensure smooth lessons and students' learning.

### *Teachers' emotion regulation: Reactive strategies*

This section presents data related to teachers' reactive strategies. First, data from the stimulated recall interviews and journals are presented to explain the recorded emotions seen in the classroom recordings' extracts.

**Table 4**

Phoebe's reactive strategies

| Teacher | Extract number | Teacher's emotion | Teachers' emotion regulation: Reactive Strategies | | Sub-strategies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Stimulated recall interview | Journal | |
| **Phoebe** | **2** | I was angry because the students made such a loud noise that I had to stop the lecture and ask them to get out of the class for more discussion. | I felt unpleasant because of the noise and had to explain the lesson again. Then, I organized some games to review vocabulary and make the classroom atmosphere more lively. | I feel uncomfortable because students are not really attentive to learning, which affects my emotions and makes me feel demotivated and uninterested in my teaching. | **Ask students to go out of the class.** |

Phoebe felt angry when dealing with the students' discipline issues in the classroom. He requested that the student leave to maintain classroom order and release his emotions.

### *Teachers' interpersonal emotion regulation*

This section presents further findings for the second research question on how teachers regulated their emotions in teaching in the classrooms by sharing their negative emotions with their colleagues or the ones they were close to. Since their sharing about what was happening in the lessons could only take place after the lessons, data were obtained from the semi-structured interviews.

For Helen, she talked to her husband as a way to regulate her emotion related to her teaching:

> *I have learned from my colleagues who shared how to handle situations related to emotions while teaching. When I'm sad or disappointed, it's definitely negative, and I want to adjust my emotions, so I need more advice and often share it with my husband. At that time, he acted as a student, and he stood from the perspective of a student. He helps me look at the problem more objectively. This helps me better understand the attitudes and behaviors of students. Therefore, I have also become more respectful of students. However, after that, I didn't think about it anymore and didn't keep it too much in my heart. (Helen, interview)*

Tyra answered in the interview how she handled her emotions by sharing with different

people:

> *In the early years, I didn't talk to my colleagues, I talked to my parents, like talking about my career. But I have made a rule that everything in the classroom is in the classroom; I don't bring it out to any other environment unless there are issues that need to be discussed. But I sometimes tell my colleagues or the ones I am close to, and understand me so that we can learn from the experience of how to deal with emotion control. I had a new perspective when I told that story in my class. (Tyra, interview)*

Phoebe similarly explained that she looked for some colleagues to talk to when students' behavior negatively influenced her mood.

> *If I feel it is too serious and has an emotional impact, I will share it with a few colleagues. If the experience was a bit negative, but I can still regain my spirit after that, I don't see the need to share. When I have empathy, I don't feel angry anymore, which means I don't have as many negative emotions and feel more relieved. Because there were colleagues and people who understood my emotions at that time. (Phoebe, interview)*

Overall, after the lessons that aroused emotions such as anger, disappointment, or upset, the teachers shared their stories with their relatives and, more often, with colleagues to seek comfort and solutions to their emotional problems.

### *Impact of teachers' emotion regulation on their English teaching in the classrooms*

This section reports the findings related to how teachers' emotion regulation impacted their teaching. Data were collected from teachers' journals as reflections for the recorded extracts taking place in the classrooms.

#### *Teachers' emotion regulation to create comfortable learning environments for students*

In the journals, the teachers wrote about the reasons why they regulated their emotions and the impact of the strategies.

**Table 5**

Phoebe's emotion regulation to create a comfortable learning environment for students

| Teacher | **Extract** | **Regulation Strategies** | **Creating a comfortable learning environment for students** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Journal** |
| **Phoebe** | **2** | Reactive Strategies | Regulating emotions helped me maintain a positive spirit in supporting the learning environment for students. In addition, I am able to provide the most effective instructions for students. Adjusting emotions from negative and uncomfortable emotions to comfortable emotions can help me regain motivation to perform lectures and organize activities in the lessons effectively. |

Phoebe wrote in detail about how his change to a positive mood impacted his teaching and made the classroom environment more favorable for his students.

#### *Teachers' emotion regulation to improve teaching efficacy*

The reflections of the teachers in the journals also indicate how emotion regulation contributed to their sense of efficacy. For example, Tracy wrote, "positive thinking will create energy for students and help them complete their teaching activities efficiently," and this was

thanks to her reappraisal strategy to deal with the situation as in extract 29. For Phoebe, the reactive strategy helped her to hold her motivation in teaching:

> *Adjusting negative emotions while teaching will help the lecturer focus more on the lecture and important topics in the lesson that most students in the class have not yet mastered. This helped them be able to work out an effective teaching method. Emotion Regulation Strategies help teachers regain motivation to deliver lectures and organize activities and lectures more efficiently. (Phoebe, journal)*

Helen wrote in her journal:

> *Emotion control helps me maintain balance in teaching. Secondly, I do not let the incident affect my students. If I show too much anger, my anger will increase, and it will scare other students. Learning efficiency that day will go down. This will cause me many obstacles and difficulties (Helen journal).*

Like other teachers, Helen was aware of her emotions and their effects on her teaching.

Both Phoebe and Tyra applied reactive strategies for their teaching. For example, to handle his emotion shown in extract 36, Phoebe explained, “I could maintain my teaching at a rather self-controlled mood and the other students also felt comfortable to continue their learning. The learning outcome was reached". Tyra reported the lesson continued smoothly when she managed her emotions well, "So the thing called emotion regulation helped me with the teaching ot go on quite gently and smoothly because there were no obstacles at all, so the class went smoothly”.

### *Teachers' emotion regulation for their wellbeing during teaching*

Keeping balance in emotions during teaching was important to the teachers. For example, Helen wrote, “Regulating my emotions at that time can help me keep balance in the lecture. Moreover, I do not let the incident affect other students”. Tyra wrote,

> I view emotion regulation as a skill set that teachers need to learn and equip into our teaching. It helps me prepare better for the next classes. I wanted to teach well and leave the classroom with certain satisfaction, so I wouldn’t let the emotions stand on my way. Besides, I viewed these emotions as part of my job, so I thought knowing how to deal with them effectively would be nice. (Tyra, journal)

Her writing showed that Tyra's reactive strategies were used to ensure she was well prepared emotionally for her teaching. Similarly, Tracy reported in her journal that she calmly acknowledged the classroom situation and self-regulated her emotions to overcome initial negative emotions as part of her teaching career. Nicole wrote that emotion regulation was a way to calm herself, "According to my experience, I should not let negative emotions increase, because it will make me angry and have harsh attitudes and words. This can negatively affect the students' views of the teacher and my teaching.”

Helen explained why she regulated her emotions,

> *So, there's a safe way for me to have an opinion on students' learning style or attitude; it's their choice, and I think doing so will be safe for me. This helps me avoid getting emotionally hurt and affecting my mindset. Prevent me from having negative thoughts about teaching. The unpleasant feelings towards students who are indifferent to their studies will certainly have an impact on future teaching classes. I became more alert and wary of similar situations and did not let myself waste too much time on the incident so I could quickly return to the lecture. Thanks to this, I will have more*

*experience and be able to limit some similar cases. (Helen, journal).*

## Discussion

This study investigated the factors that aroused EFL teachers' emotions in the classrooms, including the kinds of emotions they experienced and how they regulated those emotions. It also explored the reported impact of such emotion regulation on teaching in the classrooms. Data were collected from recorded classroom observations with videos, stimulated recall interviews with the teachers after the video recordings, semi-structured interviews, and journals.

### *EFL university teachers' emotions caused by student-related factors*

In this study, the definition of emotion is re-defined from that of Schutz and Lanehart (2002). It is a teacher's cognitive interpretations and assessments of particular situations which are the foundation of the teaching process. Teachers' emotions encompass both positive and negatives ones. The former includes happiness, pride, and pleasure, and the latter consists of the feelings like fear, anger, guilt, and boredom. However, the current study just focused on negative emotions during teachers' teaching.

Notably, the recordings extracted from the videos of the classroom teaching of the three teachers indicate that teachers experienced various emotions. The most dominant kind is related to students' discipline matters in the classes taught by Helen and Phoebe. To be more specific, students' discipline matters aroused emotions of irritation, mild anger, and disappointment in the teachers. Besides, the observed teachers revealed similar emotions of being upset, disappointed, and negative when the students did not pay due attention or engage in the lessons as the teachers expected. The extract recorded in the classes taught by Helen indicated various emotions aroused in them.

Overall, it could be explained that the teachers' emotions were cognitive and assessment processes. While teaching, they observed the students' behaviors and interpreted and assessed the classroom situations in which they were influenced by students emotionally, as pointed out by Schutz and Lanehart (2002). In general, the current study's findings revealed that EFL teachers' emotions were mostly influenced by students' misbehaviors and their inadequate engagement while in the classes at university. With respect to the causes seen from the recorded classroom observations, most of the extracts were from students' lack of academic engagement and their discipline matters. These findings were confirmed by the teachers' reflections in their journals, where all of the recorded EFL teachers admitted their disappointment and negative emotions because of students' lack of attention in the classroom and using mobile phones for their personal purposes, which were characterized as Generation Z who are commonly criticized for being sluggish and reliant on technology in the classrooms (Miller & Mills, 2019; Ngo & Doan, 2023).

Most of the data in this study were taken from recorded class observations. It is commonly known that the quality of education mainly occurs in the classroom, where the interaction between teachers and students is considered a paramount factor in promoting teaching-learning activities, which leads to the desired teaching outcomes (Li & Yang, 2021; Weizheng, 2019). At first glance, the three participants in the study tried to control their emotions, which was one of the decisive factors leading to a successful teaching hour. However, in some situations, extrinsic factors such as students' misbehaviors and a lack of engagement navigated EFL teachers' emotions to an uncontrolled state, which needed a

timely adjustment for the expected teaching outcome at the end. Most of the EFL teachers in the study chose to hide their disappointment in order to encourage students to fulfill their tasks. They decided to turn a blind eye to the students' discipline matters, which are not easy to deal with, as they reflected in their journals and interviews. Some of them showed reactions such as warning or punishing students, but these occasions were rare.

As far as negative emotions caused by students in the classrooms, Gkonou and Miller (2019), Khajavy et al. (2018), Martinez Agudo (2018), and Oxford (2020) reported findings of similar feelings in the teachers. For example, while Khajavy et al. (2018) did not identify the same frequently experienced negative feelings as this current study, they discovered that EFL teachers' worry, anger, and boredom were mostly related to their students. More specifically, anger was produced by student disobedience, and boredom was provoked by students' refusal to participate.

While boredom was not one of the most prominent EFL teachers' feelings in the current study, it is crucial to note that EFL teachers' disappointment was mostly associated with students. Gkonou and Miller's (2020) study on critical occurrences among language teachers is also relevant to the findings of this study. Teachers who participated in their research shared disappointing and upsetting memories involving their students while teaching. In this study, the teachers' emotions included mild anger, frustration, and disappointment. In certain emotional states, annoyance and anger experienced by the teachers in the current study seemed to be similar to what the participants in Gkonou and Miller's (2020) study described.

In recognition of the current students belonging to Generation Z, who are often characterized as lazy and dependent on technology (Miller & Mills, 2019), the EFL teachers in the study seemed to realize that the idea of getting angry in a classroom did not fit very well with their educational goals of working co-operatively and in collaboration with their students. Therefore, shaping EFL teachers' expectations for student performance and regulating their unpleasant emotions, which were tied to students' inappropriate behavior and lack of motivation, have become one of the most paramount concerns in EFL teachers' professional development.

### *EFL teachers' emotion regulation: from intrapersonal strategies in the classrooms to interpersonal ones after classes*

Another focus of the current study is teachers' emotion regulation strategies, defined as the acts employed to change the direction of emotions. Emotion control tactics can range in complexity, focusing on the external environment, attentional systems, cognition, or the componential effects of emotional episodes (Gross, 1998a). With different emotions recorded and expressed by the teachers in this study, their strategies and ways to deal with those emotions were explored by stimulated recall interviews and journals. Emotion regulation strategies are understood not only as ways that EFL university teachers apply to regulate undesirable emotions but also as tools with which they can more effectively support their students in learning languages in English classrooms.

Overall, the reflections of the teachers via stimulated recall interview, journal, and semi-structured interview indicate their intrapersonal emotion regulation, which is defined as "the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions" (Gross, 1998, p. 275). In situations involving teachers' irritation, disappointment, and unhappiness, the teachers reported not letting their emotions interfere with teaching. The stimulated recall interviews viewing the videos with the participants and their journals also documented the teachers' responses to

apply the strategy to adjust their attention and ignore students' misbehaviors, for example, Helen for extract 1.

One more common strategy for teachers to employ to handle their emotions is the reappraisal strategy, which Gross (2015) defined as involving manipulating the appraisal component. When applying this strategy, teachers adjust their feelings about an emotional stimulus. To be more specific, a teacher may reclassify a misbehaving student as something generally well-behaved so as to reduce any negative emotions that classroom teachers are experiencing. The teachers reported that the reappraisal strategy was used in the current study. For example, In the interviews, Helen and Phoebe further indicated that they were aware of their emotions and tried to regulate those feelings for smooth lessons and for the sake of students' learning.

Overall, from the teachers' journals and interviews, the most frequently used strategies reported by the teachers in the current study were intrapersonal, with reappraisal strategy and attention re-direction because all the participants aimed to achieve their teaching outcomes under any unexpected obstacles in which students' misbehaviors were considered unpleasant. As a result, cognitive reappraisal could successfully affect later emotional behaviors, particularly when used to down-regulate negative emotions, efficiently reducing both the behavioral and experiential components of negative emotion.

Besides, data from the stimulated recall interview and journals aligns with the research findings of Gloria and Mbato (2024), which disclose the reactive strategies used by the teachers to handle the situations in the classrooms that aroused their negative feelings. Reactive strategies, according to Akbari et al. (2017), take place when teachers' emotions run high; thus, instead of giving free rein to an unwanted emotion, they might decide to reduce its undesirable effect by resorting to some solutions as reactions to misbehavior in the class, for instance, teachers' leaving the class, keeping quiet for a while or punishing students' misbehaviors. The video extracts and the stimulated recall interviews, for example, show that Phoebe (extract 2) asked students to leave the classroom to make a loud noise in the classroom.

From the findings on teachers' emotional regulation, it can be drawn out that the EFL teachers in the current study understood the significance of emotional regulation, but they frequently believed that this entails hiding their feelings from students, as pointed out by Santihastuti et al. (2022) and Arizmendi Tejeda et al. (2016). In most situations, they used intrapersonal emotion regulation strategies (Gross, 1998a), which indicate using emotion control methods to target specific stages of a scenario, such as attention, appraisal, and reaction timing. Intrapersonal emotion regulation strategies deal with situation selection, situation modification, attention deployment, appraisal, and reaction modulation. The teachers in the current study considered their students' characteristics, the lesson outcomes, students' learning, classroom atmospheres, and their images as teachers to suppress, let go, or change their emotions to be able to continue with their lessons. When their emotions run high, they would react with some responses to students' behavior matters in the classroom. The teachers also employed interpersonal emotion regulation to share with relatives and colleagues after classes to regulate the emotions they experienced in the classrooms.

According to Sutton (2004), teachers thought that their capacity to control their emotions was connected to their efficiency on the job. 'Down-regulating' negative emotions was the most prevalent purpose of emotion regulation measures, although 'up-regulating' pleasant emotions was also regarded as significant. The participants in the study used cognitive strategies to assist them avoid experiencing some negative emotions. They also used attention direction to

intentionally shift their attention away from an element in the teaching context, primarily student misbehavior, which may elicit an unpleasant emotion, and reappraisal strategies to reexamine an emotionally charged event in order to change their opinion about it.

Different from Gross (1998a), Zaki and Williams (2013) distinguished between interpersonal and intrapersonal emotion regulation. They point out that apart from intrapersonal emotion regulation, teachers may employ interpersonal emotion regulation, which is seen as the desire to share emotional states with others, attenuation of negative feelings in the presence of others, and motivation to alter the affective states of others. The current findings could discuss one form of interpersonal emotion regulation: sharing emotions from teaching, i.e., a class with others. Since their sharing about what was happening in the lessons could only take place after the lessons, data were obtained from the semi-structured interviews. The teachers in the current study, for example, Tyra, Helen, and Phoebe, after the lessons aroused emotions such as anger, disappointment, or upset, shared their stories with their relatives and, more often, with colleagues to seek comfort and solutions to their emotional problems. Interpersonal emotion regulation is considered to be their ability to share and empathize with others (Chavira Trujillo et al., 2022). It is also argued that people typically do not manage their emotions in isolation, but rather through social interaction to seek social support (Zaki & Williams, 2013). The data collected from the current study do not show how the teachers empathized with other teachers because the focus on how they mangaged their emotion in the classroom but it turns out that interpersonal emotion regulation is the side effect or one of the tactics to deal with intrapersonal emotions of the teachers in the current study. However, the findings of interpersonal emotion regulation need further study to see the various aspects of this strategy, for example, how teachers show their ability to share and empathize with other teachers.

## Conclusion

The study looked into the emotions that novice EFL university instructors felt when they were instructing students in the language and how they managed those emotions. The results showed that even though the teachers tried to stay happy, they frequently felt angry, disappointed, and irritated. This was especially true when it came to misbehavior, lack of engagement, and inability to give accurate answers to the students. The instructors employed diverse strategies to manage their feelings, including redirecting their attention, modifying their pedagogical approaches, and reassessing their feelings. They also used suppression and expression to change their answers. In particular, three EFL teachers consciously decided to express their negative feelings to their loved ones and coworkers to defuse stress, get support, or feel understood by others.

A possible avenue for improvement in the present research is to gather more comprehensive data from EFL teachers who instruct in diverse institutional settings and at varying levels. In addition, it would be advantageous for the study to incorporate observations of every class at the research site to guarantee a more thorough comprehension of English teaching and learning settings. Further research on the assessment of teachers' emotions and the comparison of cases across various institutional contexts should take into account the analysis of both verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

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## Biodata

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# A Comprehensive Review of Change-of-State Constructions across Languages with a Focus on English

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## ABSTRACT

Change-of-State (COS) constructions reveal essential aspects of language, bridging syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Current research trends have highlighted gaps in understanding cross-linguistic patterns within COS constructions. This study addresses these gaps by investigating how COS constructions are encoded in English compared to Mandarin, Spanish, Hindi, and Russian, focusing on morphosyntactic structures and argument roles. The study involved analyzing documented linguistic data, employing Construction Grammar and thematic role frameworks to assess verb morphology, syntax, and argument structure. Key findings reveal both universal tendencies and language-specific differences in expressing state changes. These results enhance the theoretical framework for understanding language variability in COS expressions. This research underscores the significance of COS constructions in linguistic typology and proposes directions for further investigation, especially in underrepresented languages and alternative syntactic frameworks.

**Keywords**:

Change-of-State, Syntax, Construction Grammar, Cross-Linguistic

## Introduction

Literature in Construction Grammar has been significantly influenced by seminal works produced by Chomsky (1965), Jackendoff (1990), and Levinson (1983), which demonstrate the relevance of these constructions to syntactic structure, lexical semantics, and pragmatics, respectively. Given the wide range of COS (Change-of-State) structures that occur across human languages, understanding these constructions is crucial for explaining how language dynamically encodes changes in state and perception, ultimately shedding light on the mechanisms that support naturalistic language processing.

This paper systematically investigates the features of COS constructions across multiple dimensions, specifically their complex manifestations in syntax, semantics, and pragmatic packaging. By conducting a thorough cross-linguistic analysis**,** this study refines our understanding of the phenomena and contributes substantive insights into how language variation can be explained within the Construction Grammar framework (Goldberg, 1995).

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The paper is organized as follows: it first provides a historical overview of the theoretical frameworks under which COS constructions have been conceptualized and investigated in various linguistic theories. These are then contrasted with the structural and semantic characteristics of COS constructions in English, serving as a foundation for future cross-linguistic comparisons. The study includes an analysis of COS constructions in different languages, drawing on traditional grammar (Radford, 2004), functional linguistics theory (Halliday et al., 2014), and thematic roles (Dowty, 1989). Additionally, languages that have not been extensively explored in this context - such as Mandarin (Huang, 1997), Spanish (Bergen & Chang, 2005), and Hindi (Michaelis & Lambrecht, 1996) - are considered to broaden the scope of cross-linguistic exploration.

Results are synthesized to capture both universal and language-specific characteristics of COS constructions. The paper concludes with a discussion of theoretical inroads and potential directions for typological and experimental research to achieve a comprehensive cross-linguistic understanding of these core constructions in information structure.

## Historical Background

### *Global Research on Change-of-State*

Circumstances of state (COS) changes, a subset of all COS events, are particularly prominent linguistic phenomena with implications for both language theory and cognitive science, as they facilitate the expression of state transitions. This offers a glimpse into one of the fundamental operations that govern our ways of interacting with the world. The progress made in syntax, lexical semantics, and pragmatics can be traced back to three seminal works: Chomsky (1965), Jackendoff (1990), and Levinson (1983). It is crucial to elucidate therapist-experiencer constructions, as they provide an illuminating case study for analyzing COS constructions in general. By their nature, involving both perceptual and state-change meanings, they shed light on how language construction truly functions.

Linguistic research has long recognized a deep and vivid tradition in the study of changes of state (COS) that spans generations and theoretical orientations. This indicates that COS constructions follow directly from a general theory of grammar rather than one where rules are added somewhat haphazardly to account for specific phenomena (Chomsky 1965). Consequently, they have been interpreted as transformations in terms of transfers from deep to surface structures. These transformations demonstrate how new structures can emerge when syntactic rules are applied. This is evident in sentences such as “the ice melted,” where the surface representation of a change of state in the subject (the subject becomes de-iced) becomes clearer in comparison to the more abstract deep structure.

Expanding this into an analysis of the function of change-of-state constructions in everyday speech, Levinson (1983) examined how speakers deploy such structures to format states of affairs and events as interactionally plausible, contextually conditioned designs. Levinson’s analysis grounds the communicative considerations of COS constructions in more pragmatic factors, such as speaker choice and listener interpretation. This perspective reveals how discourse is shaped through meaning negotiation and, as a result, how these constructions actively contribute to meaning-making.

Turning to another line of research, Jackendoff (1990) studied the lexical semantics of change-of-state verbs and proposed the concept of a complex semantic representation as an explanatory construct for how the meanings of these expressions are linked in the mental lexicon. The author analyzed the behavior of verbs such as *melt* or *break*, and argued that, in addition to thematic

roles, this could only be captured with reference to argument structures -there is more to how the verb encodes these kinds of changes of state. His work addresses the fundamental question of how sentence elements correspond to types of state changes, specifically what it means for a given anticausative verb to occupy different sentence positions.

These works together constitute a comprehensive system that guides all essential aspects of change-of-state constructions (syntax, semantics, pragmatics). They open the door to investigating these constructions in different languages and contexts, highlighting their significance not only for theoretical linguistics but also for applied linguistic research. Thus, the study of COS constructions is of interest both for the theory of language and its practical applications.

### *Emergence of Construction Grammar*

Construction Grammar represents a theoretical revolution in linguistics, reshaping how linguists have traditionally viewed constructions. Goldberg (1995) advanced this position by formally establishing the 'construction' as the basic unit of a form-based grammar, essentially a form/meaning pairing, an expression that embodies meaning in its own right. While traditional linguistic theories view expressions as pairings of forms and meanings stored together in the mental lexicon, Construction Grammar aligns these observations with active cognitive processes rather than mere storage or memory. This perspective enables cross-linguistic generalizations across a wide variety of languages and phenomena. In Construction Grammar, constructions retrieved from memory and activated during production retain their habitual semantics because they are patterns crystallized over the course of history. This view underscores the fluidity of language - how structures adapt to new contexts or evolve with usage over time. The Construction Grammar model also seeks to account for all constructions in a language without competition, unlike models that allow for multiple linguistic theories within and across languages. This work has reshaped linguistic research in the 21st century by challenging and revising our understanding of how constructions operate, both across languages and within individual languages.

However, little progress has been made in this direction, and there is a lack of detailed cross-linguistic comparison of different change-of-state constructions. According to William Croft (2003), cross-linguistic considerations may offer valuable tools for analyzing linguistic universals and constructions. These approaches not only expand the scope of research but also provide alternative viewpoints on how different languages lexicalize their change-of-state meanings (Bochnak & Matthewson 2018).

## Overview of Construction Grammar

### *Definition and Scope*

Construction Grammar is a theory of linguistics that emphasizes how constructions are the basic pieces or units of grammar, where a construction is defined as an association between form and meaning. The Construction Grammar view goes beyond more traditional linguist approaches that consider syntax and semantics as quite distinct: it argues that a construction pairs particular grammatical forms with corresponding functions directly troubing at the idea of there being any kind of division between form and function, which is characteristic to all Langacker's cognitive grammar from 1980 through his work on construals in various domains. The integration of both structural and referential similarity relations in this model is consistent with proposals that the knowledge about natural language as a whole should not be considered just an abstract set of rules but rather involves learned pairings between form and function.

Constructions can range from extremely complex and specific to very simple ones. These ranges from simple morphemes (prefixes, suffixes), through individual words and idiomatic expressions to complex syntactic patterns such as sentence frames(Goldberg 1995). Every construction algorithm mixes meaning and form in its own way, is important for matching up what we say to how our hearers should react. It might consist of a word followed by an element that provides its argument structure, thereby serving as the template for constructing sentences with enough meaning to understand what is being said.

This notion is in agreement with the view of language as a unified whole, and suggests that comprehending or producing linguistic expressions requires accessing these stored form-meaning pairs from the mental lexicon. As Fillmore (1968) has shown, constructions exist at a level deeper than surface structure and each is characterised by well defined roles which are related to one another in particular ways. Constructions are the linguistic mirror images of cognitive processes, and accordingly represent ways in which speakers conceptualize their experiences so that they can be translated into proper linguistically structured forms (Langacker 1987).

Construction Grammar also assumes that these form-meaning pairs are not fixed but fluid: they change over time with language use and accommodate new communicative needs. This extends to novel expressions that speakers create by manipulating old patterns or meshing parts drawn from different ones (Goldberg, 1995). Croft (2001) points out that constructions are important for the study of linguistic variation because they often differ drastically in form between languages even though each construction type is a common way to encode similar meanings.

So in all, construction grammar incorporates numerous types of constraints on constructions to put forth a unified vision of language as an integrated network. It combines syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspect dimensions in an integrated way that confers on it a more holistic framework for linguistic analysis than what traditional frameworks provide. This theory amplifies our ability to grasp how linguistic knowledge is organized, retrieved and employed in communication by identifying constructions as basic elements of language.

### *Key Theories and Contributions*

#### *Fillmore (1968) - Case Grammar*

Fillmore (1968) introduced the notion of Case Grammar, which is a model that analyzes semantic and syntactic properties by roles (also called thematic). According to this approach, each verb constrains the roles (agent corresponding doer of action and patient consisting receiver) that its arguments play. These functions are important in connecting a sentences syntactic structure to its semantic meaning. In this sense, Case Grammar turned to be the first attempt of understanding verbs along with its roles in sentence meaning. Fillmore has made an important step in this direction by making explicit the relation between syntactic positions and thematic roles, which became a theoretical basis for further theories of argument structure as meaning conveying machinery. This formalism has played a central role in the development of our understanding of case marking strategies for semantic roles across languages.

#### *Langacker (1987) - Cognitive Grammar*

Langacker (1987) developed Cognitive Grammar, a model of grammar incorporating insights from human cognition. Grammar is considered here as a network of symbolic units, with constructions regarded as schematic representations of types of recurrent language use. Linguistic representation is often viewed as a form of conceptual knowledge and constructions analyzed in terms of our ability to categorize- or generalize over -experience, the approach exemplified by Cognitive Grammar (CG) theory for instance.

Cognitive Grammar by Langacker basically changed the way we view grammar to be an entirely conceptual phenomenon. He suggested that symbolic units at all levels of the language use-from morphemes to sentences- actually denote structures in thought. This theory deals with how language constructions are the result of our cognition, a development that gives us an elegant deterministic model for seeing how linguistic forms tie meanings to cognitive processes.

### *Goldberg (1995) - Cognitive Construction Grammar*

Goldberg (1995) extended to the cognitive construction grammar perspective, where constructions are learned pairings of form and meaning that detailed link syntax with semantics as well as pragmatics. This perspective views constructions as a spectrum of specific idiomatic phrases through broad grammatical rules and all provide templates for the production/understanding of language.

Through his research, Goldberg opened up new dimensions in our understanding of how the knowledge underlying language is structured and accessed in a manner that has put construction at its very center. Asuka Teruya shows in her monograph that this distinction is not black (flexible) and white (fixed), but a matter of complex constructions on an implicational cline. The implications for studying language learning and cognitive linguistic processes are profound.

### *Croft (2001) - Radical Construction Grammar*

Radical Construction Grammar (Croft 2001) rejected traditional syntactic categories, and instead utilized an extremely broad class of constructions as the primary units. From this perspective, the author suggested that constructions, rather than abstract syntactic categories as in the traditional view of syntax should be central to a theory grammar.

Croft's perspective provides a more nuanced and taxonomical way of thinking about grammatical constructions across languages. Rather than seeing grammar as a set of invariant rules, focusing on constructions as the basic building blocks of grammatical analysis provides more detailed insight into linguistic diversity and typology. It leads to cross-linguistic comparison, underscoring the ways in which various languages encode similar messages differently via their particular configurations.

## Characteristics of Change-of-State Constructions

### *Syntactic Features*

There are specific properties of change-of-state constructions that highlight their nature as a specialised syntactic process.

These properties signal states and transitions between them. In this construction, the subject expresses an entity that undergoes the change (Fillmore, 1968), and the verb indicates the change, often referred to as the process. Change-of-state constructions highlight the dynamic nature of language, as they represent the transition between states. These constructions typically follow a Subject + Verb structure where the subject undergoes a transformation, and the verb describes the process, as in "The ice melted." This type of construction is akin to existential sentences, which also encode spatial or state-related transitions. For example, in Chinese, existential sentences describe "somewhere appears, exists, or disappears something or someone," emphasizing the spatial and transitional nature of entities (Vo, 2022). Similarly,

change-of-state constructions across languages often rely on such syntactic structures to convey the shift from one state to another, whether it be physical, emotional, or situational.

More complex structures can involve a series of objects, complements, or adverbial phrases that characterize the change and the circumstances in which it occurs. A sentence like "The sun melted the ice" (subject – agent, object) introduces an explicit cause-effect relationship with added syntactic complexity (Croft, 2001). Complements inherently describe the resulting state, as seen in constructs like "The water turned into steam," where the complement ("into steam") specifies the new state of the subject.

Finally, the focus of a sentence can shift, as change-of-state constructions are equally suited to both active and passive voices. In passive constructions, however, the emphasis moves from the subject or patient (the entity whose state is changing) to the action itself. For example: "The sun melted the ice" (active) becomes "The ice was melted by the sun" (passive), which aligns with a more typical view of turn-taking in sensory perception, akin to Langacker's perspective in cognitive semantics.

### *Semantic Elements*

Change-of-state constructions are semantically tied to state changes and causality. This is due to the inherently decomposed nature of the verbs in these constructions. Verbs like "melt," "freeze," "break," and "grow" are tied to transitions between states, making it difficult for them to express states without referring to the events leading to or from those states. These verbs essentially express both the starting and ending states, emphasizing the process of transformation.

Change-of-state verbs refer to various types of change. Some verbs represent physical changes, like "melt" or "freeze," others depict biological transformations, such as "grow" and "age," and some relate to changes in status or condition, such as "promote" versus "demote" (Levinson, 1983).

Change-of-state constructions also introduce causality into the semantic framework: a verb in such a construction entails a cause (indicating predictability and control). This causative connection can be unambiguously established (X caused Y to happen), as in "The heat melted the ice." It can be explicit, as in a specific external cause that led to the melting (e.g., "The ice melted"), or implicit, depending on its contextual relationship (Goldberg, 1995).

### *Pragmatic Applications*

From a pragmatic point of view, change-of-state constructions appear in everyday life to describe facts so common that they form part of a linguistic device signaling transitions and changes from one state to another across various fields. Both in normal discourse and at the scientific level, the different narratives each participant employs to describe the influencing event are crucial (Goldberg, 1995). These constructions serve practical purposes, reflecting a given community's cultural and communicative norms. For instance, the analysis of cultural categories in American and Vietnamese shop signs reveals that linguistic expressions are influenced by the typical psychology, cognition, and shared knowledge of each speech community (Pham, 2024). Similarly, change-of-state constructions may differ in their pragmatic functions across cultures, reflecting the ways in which speakers use language to negotiate meaning within their specific cultural and communicative realities.

Change-of-state constructions describe how people perceive events around them on a daily basis: *the bread toasted*; *the leaves turned brown*. Through this means, individuals can share their physical experiences and observations (Langacker, 1987). Change-of-state constructions

in scientific and technical communication provide explanations of processes and phenomena (e.g., *The compound dissolved in water*) or states (e.g., *Cells divided*). Using these constructions facilitates effective communication of experiments or natural phenomena, contributing to better learning and understanding (Croft, 2001).

Thus, when the predicate conveys transitions from one state to another (e.g., *The caterpillar turned into a butterfly*; *Through his efforts, the preservation of the war was achieved*), these changes are often depicted literally in the predicates, described image by image. These constructions help expand narratives and frameworks of explanation (Levinson, 1983).

Overall, change-of-state constructions are pervasive across languages, serving to express changes, causality, and transitions spatially and contextually.

## Methodological Approaches

### *Traditional/Structural Approach*

Among the influential theories that have contributed to the understanding of these constructions, several can be characterized as traditional or structural. These theories assume some form of deep structure or representation on one hand, and transformation rules that operate exclusively in terms of syntactic structures on the other.

Chomsky's Transformational-Generative Grammar revolutionized the field of linguistics by proposing that all sentences share an underlying deep structure, which can be transformed into surface forms through a process governed by syntactic rules. This model explains how deep structures of fundamental meanings are transformed into surface structures, as seen in examples like "The ice has melted" or "The water evaporated." It demonstrates both the regularity of syntactic transformations and the capacity of these transformations to generate an infinite number of sentence types from a single basic structure (Chomsky, 1965).

Kayne's *The Antisymmetry of Syntax* posits that syntax is fundamentally asymmetrical, with a universal specifier-head-complement order. It is argued that syntactic structures in all languages follow this basic order, regardless of the word order seen at the surface level. Kayne's model predicts that languages exhibit a universal specifier-head-complement hierarchy in the domain of change-of-state constructions. This hierarchy can account for surface word order, even when variations in word position exist. Numerous constructions are designed based on syntactic principles, including the more direct government-based syntactic structure (Kayne, 1994).

Radford's Minimalist Syntax is an extension of Chomsky's minimalist program, which aimed to eliminate the perceived excesses of generative grammar, simplifying the theory by reducing it to a few core principles. This approach seeks linguistic explanations through the smallest possible number of rules and constraints on their interactions. In his treatment of change-of-state constructions, Radford views this phenomenon as evidence that minimal syntactic operations can yield structures (e.g., "The ice melted") using a small, principled set of rules to account for their derivation. In doing so, he emphasizes the efficiency and economy of syntactic processes, particularly when dealing with surface grammatical complexity (Radford, 2004).

### *Functional Grammar Approach*

The functional grammar approach places greater emphasis on the relationship between linguistic form and function, focusing on how grammatical structures serve social and communicative purposes.

In Dik's Functional Grammar, language systems are seen as mechanisms that interpret human

communication phenomena, with grammatical structures playing dedicated communicative roles. Dik (1997) argues that change-of-state constructions in a clause express changes over time in a state that either fulfills the speaker's desires or meets the conditions for speech acts, interests, and expectations. This view highlights how different contexts shape grammatical preferences, providing suitable grounds (evidence) through grammatical forms that correspond to the means-end relationship between grammar features, from phonological to pragmatic, within a language system driven by communicative function.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) takes a unique perspective on language as a social semiotic system, where grammatical choices represent ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. SFL recognizes that context shapes language use. In the study of change-of-state constructions, SFL investigates how these structures represent processes and events (ideational function), construe speaker-hearer relationships (interpersonal function), and create coherence among information units across a text (textual function). This inclusive view highlights the multifunctional nature of change-of-state constructions, treating ergative and similar subjects as experientially equivalent to nominal agents (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

### *Thematic Analysis*

A thematic analysis approach is adopted, identifying and analyzing recurrent themes or patterns in language use, including change-of-state constructions. The focus will be on COS verbs that explicitly involve transitions in state, such as "break," "melt," "open," and "destroy," which represent prototypical change-of-state events across languages**.** Based on his work (Dowty, 1991), Dowty's Proto-Roles categorize arguments into Agent and Patient roles, and this analysis will apply his framework to these specific verb types to explore how their arguments (subjects and objects) are assigned roles in different languages.

Dowty's theory posits that agentive roles lie on a continuum with properties unique to each verb class, rather than assuming a fixed number of roles across all languages. For instance, "break" involves an Agent causing the action and a Patient undergoing the change, while "melt" may feature a less explicit Agent, focusing more on the internal properties of the Patient. His proto-roles will be used to understand how arguments in these COS constructions may exhibit varying properties across different languages, such as volition, causation, and affectedness.

In conjunction with Dowty's framework, Talmy's (2000) Theory of Causation will be utilized to explore how different languages encode causality in COS verbs. Talmy distinguishes between various types of causation, such as direct vs. indirect causative constructions, and shows how these are expressed morphologically (through the verb), via auxiliary verbs, or through syntactic structures. This framework will be applied to the selected verbs to analyze how languages combine cause and effect within their internal grammatical structures, particularly in COS events like "melt," "break," "burn," and "freeze."

### *Insights from Comparative Linguistics*

**Mandarin ba (把) Construction:** The ba (把) construction in Mandarin Chinese is used to emphasize the result or consequence of an action performed on an object. This structure follows the general pattern: "Subject + 把 (ba) + Object + Verb + Complement." The construction places focus on the object and describes its state after the action. For example, in the sentence 他把书放在桌上 (Tā bǎ shū fàng zài zhuō shàng), which literally translates to "He put the book on the table," the auxiliary word ba highlights that the result of the action is the book being placed on the table. This structure offers a clear way to show how Mandarin emphasizes the transitivity of an event, specifically focusing on its result. Thus, it is particularly useful for analyzing

change-of-state constructions, where the focus is on the final state of an element (Huang, 1997).

**Spanish Reflexive Constructions:** Spanish also uses reflexive constructions to represent actions involving self-induced changes of state, where the subject and object of the action are the same. The reflexive construction utilizes specific elements, such as the reflexive pronoun "se." In the sentence "Se rompió el vaso" (The glass broke), the pronoun "Se" indicates that the glass underwent a change of state without direct human influence. This example demonstrates how reflexive constructions in Spanish can express causative events, focusing on the result of the action rather than the agent (Bergen & Chang, 2005).

**Causative Verbs in Hindi:** In Hindi, causation, which refers to a change of state resulting from an action, is predominantly expressed through causative verbs. These verbs often involve changes in the morphology of a root verb. For example, the verb "jalna" (to burn) changes to "jalana" (to cause to burn) in its causative form. In the sentence "उसने मोमबत्ती जलाई" (Usne mombatti jalai), meaning "He lit the candle," the causative form "jalai" indicates that the subject caused the candle to burn. The use of causative verbs in Hindi is significant because it exemplifies how the language lexicalizes changes of state caused by an agent to trigger a particular event (Michaelis & Lambrecht, 1996).

**Aspectual Pairs in Russian:** perfective/imperfective system, distinguishing whether an action is complete or ongoing. For example, the verb pair писать/написать (pisat'/napisat', write) illustrates this distinction: *написать* is the perfective form, while *писать* is the imperfective form. This aspectual system is crucial for understanding how Russian indicates the timing and completion of state changes, providing insight into its prospective system (Comrie 1976).

## Theoretical Implications

Change-of-state constructions provide a revealing class of cross-linguistically generalizable phenomena that elucidate how to differentiate universal from language-specific features. **Agentive Subject Constructions** and **Cognitive Typology in Change-of-State Constructions**: A comprehensive typology of syntactic and morphosyntactic features at the word and phrase level is generally based on experience and specialization. Universal properties, as noted, are characteristic of change-of-state constructions, seen in almost every language, indicating cognitive and communicative universals. There are clear cases of cross-linguistic phenomena, such as marking the movement of an entity from one state to another (Croft, 2001, a basic applicative feature), present across languages from different language families. Examples include English tense conjugations with Vietnamese durative markers and ambiguous future tense, Mandarin stative-use markers, and Spanish indicative and perfect tense verbs, or analogous Sanskrit middle markers distinguishing both voice and mode. A contrast can be seen with Hindi's deictic megapresence and its relative past infinitive system, rarely found in Russian's momentary aspects — all these seemingly have nothing in common, yet they illustrate fundamental patterns in language.

More language-specific features, meanwhile, show the various ways different languages realize these constructions. For example, English uses simple verbs like *melt* or *break* to express change-of-state events, whereas Mandarin Chinese employs the *ba* construction to focus on the end states of an action (Huang, 1997; Bergen & Chang, 2005). Spanish uses reflexive constructions for causal-inchoative alternations, where participants undergo change on their own (Lubowicz, 2001). Similarly, Hindi’s morphological causatives or Russian’s aspectual pairs present other ways to express causal meanings and temporal features (Michaelis & Lambrecht, 1996; Comrie, 1976).

In cross-linguistic terms, generalizations about these constructions emerge, driven by similarities in the semantics of the concepts they grammaticalize in their respective languages. Ultimately, these constructions support general theoretical models that provide comprehensive coverage of the various linguistic strategies used to express state changes, thus expanding our understanding of language structure and use (Talmy, 2000).

## Discussion

The findings from this study on Change-of-State (COS) constructions across languages reveal both universal and language-specific tendencies in how state transitions are encoded. In the context of Construction Grammar, this confirms the central role of constructions as form-meaning pairings that function not only syntactically but also semantically and pragmatically (Goldberg, 1995). The cross-linguistic analysis has revealed how various languages, such as English, Mandarin, Spanish, and Hindi, utilize distinct morphosyntactic strategies to express COS events, thereby reinforcing the Construction Grammar perspective that constructions are cognitive patterns rather than arbitrary rules (Langacker, 1987).

Dowty's (1991) Proto-Roles theory has proven useful in analyzing the argument structures in COS verbs like "melt," "break," "open," and "destroy." The Agent and Patient roles in these verbs help illuminate how different languages assign thematic roles and encode causality. For instance, in languages like Mandarin, the *ba* construction allows a clear demarcation between agentive action and resultant state (Huang, 1997), whereas Spanish reflexive constructions like *se rompió* in "Se rompió el vaso" highlight a self-induced state change, emphasizing the affectedness of the Patient without requiring explicit agency (Bergen & Chang, 2005).

Talmy's (2000) Theory of Causation further enriches this analysis by distinguishing between direct and indirect causative constructions, as seen in Hindi's morphological changes to express causality (Michaelis & Lambrecht, 1996). This supports Talmy's claim that languages systematically encode causality in varied ways, with verbs often morphologically marked to distinguish between causation and result (Talmy, 2000). The Russian aspectual system similarly provides a fascinating example of how languages differentiate between ongoing and completed actions in COS events (Comrie, 1976), which aligns with the universal nature of COS constructions as noted in Croft's Radical Construction Grammar (2001).

This study has also underscored the importance of pragmatic factors in COS constructions. As Levinson (1983) argued, speakers use COS structures to negotiate meaning in interaction, with the constructions representing state changes and shaping the discourse around them. For example, English allows flexibility in whether the focus is on the agent or the process, as seen in active-passive alternations like "The ice melted" versus "The ice was melted by the sun." This pragmatic flexibility aligns with the findings from cognitive linguistics that emphasize how speakers conceptualize and communicate experiences through grammar (Langacker, 1987).

Despite these insights, this research faces limitations. The data primarily focused on a small set of well-studied languages (e.g., English, Mandarin, Spanish, and Hindi), limiting the generalizability of findings to less-documented languages. Future studies could broaden the scope by incorporating languages from underrepresented families, potentially revealing new linguistic strategies for encoding COS events (Bochnak & Matthewson, 2018). Additionally, while this study engaged with Construction Grammar and thematic roles, it could benefit from exploring alternative frameworks, such as Minimalist Syntax (Radford, 2004), to provide a more comprehensive understanding of COS constructions. Methodologically, this research

focused on documented linguistic data, but experimental or computational approaches could yield further insights into how COS constructions are processed in real-time language use.

Overall, the findings contribute to our understanding of how change-of-state events are universally relevant across languages while simultaneously shaped by language-specific morphosyntactic and pragmatic factors. The Construction Grammar framework remains highly relevant for analyzing these phenomena, but future research should aim to expand both the language sample and theoretical perspectives to gain an even deeper cross-linguistic understanding of change-of-state constructions.

## Conclusion

### *Summary of Key Findings*

This review has examined the different aspects of change-of-state constructions in multiple languages, including their structures, semantics, and pragmatics. At a structural level, constructions of this type typically consist of a Subject + Verb pattern, which represents the transformation and describes how the subject changes. Although this distinction may be realized differently across languages (see, e.g., Fillmore, 1968, and Huang, 1997, for English and Mandarin, respectively), all languages clearly distinguish between an idle state and increasing activity.

In terms of meaning, change-of-state verbs describe transitions from one state to another, often with a cause or consequence. These verbs encode changes—whether physical, biological, or cultural—and thus we can infer a certain degree of cross-linguistic generality (Jackendoff, 1990; Levinson, 1983). Typologically, change-of-state constructions are vital in multimodality and human communication at large. Indeed, they are essential for everyday language use (Goldberg, 1995), scientific explanations, and narrative storytelling.

### *Limitations and Implications for Future Research*

While this review has provided a detailed analysis of change-of-state constructions across several well-studied languages, a limitation lies in the scope of language data. The focus on a limited set of languages (e.g., English, Mandarin, Spanish, and Hindi) may restrict the generalizability of findings to lesser-studied languages, particularly those from underrepresented language families. Future research should incorporate a broader range of languages, including rarer or less-documented ones, to uncover universal and language-specific features. Furthermore, while rooted in Construction Grammar, the theoretical scope could be extended to engage with alternative grammatical frameworks to provide a more comprehensive perspective.

Methodologically, this research relied primarily on cross-linguistic comparisons of documented languages, which may not capture the full range of cognitive and communicative functions of change-of-state constructions in natural language use. Future studies could employ experimental methods or computational models to explore the processing and acquisition of these constructions in real-time language use.

### *Final Thoughts*

This is of theoretical interest, as it may reveal whether there are language-specific change-of-state constructions or whether these encodings are universally found across languages. In various languages, constructions like these are broadly used to represent force dynamics, both in everyday conversation and specialized discourse (Langacker, 1987), as they form the basis

for how languages lexically encode transitions, causality, and changes of state. Investigating these constructions further will help provide a clearer understanding of which properties are language-specific and which are universal across languages. This research not only contributes to theoretical models but can also be applied to language teaching, translation, and computational linguistics. If the ultimate aim is to fully understand human language in all its complexity (Langacker, 1987; Goldberg, 1995), then research becomes more valuable when change-of-state constructions are more fully explored, as they represent an integral piece of the larger puzzle.

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# From Words to Wonders: EFL Students' Perceptions of Digital Storytelling for Language Learning

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the use of digital storytelling (DST) in university-level foreign language classes in Vietnam, focusing on students' perspectives. While the term "digital storytelling" may not be widely recognized, it has been adopted by educators, students, and others worldwide as a way to create short films by integrating multimedia elements. The research problem addressed in this study was to extensively examine students' views on incorporating DST projects into their foreign language courses to enhance students' confidence, interaction, and motivation. Data was gathered through various methods, including questionnaires, interviews, observations, student-made videos, and online comments, to describe and interpret the case from the participants' (83 EFL students) perspective. The results indicate that DST positively impacted students' language confidence, critical engagement, motivation, and interpersonal relationships. Students recognized the advantages of DST, such as enhancing language skills and boosting engagement, but also acknowledged the need for more time, resources, and a clear educational strategy to fully integrate DST into the language learning curriculum.

**Keywords**: Digital Storytelling, Multimedia, EFL, Teaching, Learning

## Introduction

The power of storytelling has long been recognized as a beneficial teaching technique, dating back to the origins of civilization (Kuyvenhoven, 2009). In more recent times, the rise of e-learning and m-learning has brought renewed attention to the potential of storytelling in the digital age (Robin, 2020). It is believed that cutting-edge technology can be used to improve both teacher instruction and student learning and foster a new generation of information creators, not just gatherers (Robin & McNeil, 2012).

At its core, digital storytelling (DST) has evolved as a modern embodiment of the classical art of word-of-mouth storytelling (Lambert, 2013). DST enables almost anyone to weave personal

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stories using off-the-shelf hardware, instructional software, and their own creativity and technical skills (Ohler, 2021). While there are various definitions of "Digital Storytelling," they all revolve around the idea of merging storytelling with different forms of digital multimedia, such as graphics, text, pre-recorded voice, video, and music (Robin, 2020).

Despite the growing recognition of DST, the percentage of teachers who actively incorporate it into their instructional activities remains relatively low (Smeda et al., 2014). This study aimed to address this gap by integrating a new type of extracurricular activity, namely digital storytelling, into the curriculum of first-year engineering students enrolled in a General English course.

Building on this context, the present study sought to achieve the following three objectives:

- Explain the theoretical background of "digital storytelling" and its potential applications in language learning.
- Explore whether DST can be considered a versatile tool that meets practical requirements and aligns with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) within the curriculum of the General English course.
- Provide a detailed account of the empirical research, including compelling examples of author-composed digital stories created by university students.

To address these objectives, the study posed the following research questions:

### Research Questions

1) How does DST impact the students' real language confidence, critical engagement, strong motivation and interpersonal relationships?

2) What are the advantages and disadvantages of using DST in their language learning process?

3) How do students feel about the implementation of DST?

The findings of this study will contribute to the growing body of literature on the integration of digital storytelling in higher education language learning environments, providing insights for educators and researchers alike.

## Literature review

### *What is Digital Storytelling?*

DST was initially presented by Lambert and Atchley, co-founders of a nonprofit community arts group in Berkeley, California, in the late 1980s. Lambert and CDS have kindly provided on-the-job training and hands-on support for those interested in developing and sharing their personal stories since the early 1990s (Digital Storytelling Center, 2005). Scholars such as those mentioned above generally agree that, as Robin has put it, DST, by nature, is a "*combination of powerful yet affordable technology hardware and software that blends perfectly with the needs of many of today's classrooms, which are focused on providing students with the skills they will need to thrive in an increasingly diverse environment*" (Robin: 2008, p. 222). In turn, Lambert (2002) explicitly defined DST as follows: *"It begins with the notion that in the not-too-distant future, sharing one's story through multiple medium of imagery, text, voice, sound, music, video and animation will be the principal hobby of the world's people"* (p.125). Table 1 simply shows several different points between oral and digital storytelling.

**Table 1.**

Oral storytelling vs. Digital storytelling (Yoon, 2013)

| Items | Oral Storytelling | Digital Storytelling |
|---|---|---|
| Time of Advent | thousands ago | in 1994 by Atchley & Lambert at the Center for Digital Storytelling |
| Type of main style | human voice and gesture | multimedia components (video, image, sound, etc) |
| Contents delivering | verbal communication | information devices (PCs, Tablets, etc.) |
| Data Forms | typically painted or printed paper | stored electronically in digital form |
| Way of learning | verbal delivery-centered / one-way speaking & listening | multiple way delivery / Interaction & collaboration |
| Main character | Primarily oral combined with gestures and expressions | to unfold a highly sensory experience with narrative voice, images, sound, and music into illuminated understandings |

DST, as defined above, appears to be a powerful combination of "digital" and "story." The right combination of these two phrases might imply a variety of meanings. "Digital" refers to everything related to the digital age, and "story" implies so many different things to so many different people that it defies strict definition. DST, in its broadest sense, is the use of personal digital technology to merge many sources into a coherent story. As a result, the striking difference between traditional and digital storytelling is the medium itself and the real possibilities that its digital aesthetic offers over others. Rodriguez (2007) listed some salient characteristics of digital aesthetics introduced by Holtzman (1997), who argues that nonlinearity, discontinuity, and autonomy are the main determining factors of digital media with the physical world. In the same vein, Handler Miller (2008) asserts: "*While traditional stories are told through a single medium - verbal, for example on the printed page - digital storytelling encourages the use of a number of different mediums, all tied together to serve the core story"* (p.124).

This point is also illustrated by Burmark (2004) in his summary of the role of DST by combining high-quality technology to collect, create, and examine visual images and text. This means that integrating visual images with written text will broaden and accelerate learners' ability to deepen their understanding through the speculative exploration of new ideas. In accordance with Benmayor (2008), at much the same time, Alan Davis offers a different definition of a digital story when focusing attention on the presentation on the screen as a type of short story, usually a personal story told in a home first, presented as a short film to be displayed on a TV or computer monitor or projected onto a screen (Kajder et al., 2005). In the wake of these developments, Marta (2024) emphasizes his attention to technology when defining digital storytelling as a combination of factors such as low-cost digital cameras, non-linear authoring tools, and computers to create short multimedia stories. Normann (2011), an early key figure in DST studies, defined DST as a short story, only two to three minutes long, in which the narrator uses his or her own voice to tell his or her own story. With the boundaries for DST largely outlined, scholars have turned their attention to stating the personal element which will give a story a personal touch and is used throughout academic and non-academic contexts (Shinas & Wen, 2022; Windy & Chakim, 2023; Kukul, 2024;). After a comprehensive discussion of the topic, the Digital Storytelling Association postulated DST as "*a modern expression of the ancient art of storytelling*" (Digital Storytelling Association, 2011). Although

there is no unified definition of DST, most definitions have in common, emphasizing the combination of multimedia tools to tell a story, including graphics, sound, video, and audio. This fact has been confirmed by many serious studies to date. For example, Benmayor (2008) found that DST is a multimedia short story that combines voice, visuals, and music. On another line of argument, Kajder, Bull, and Albaugh (2005) claim that a good digital story is the synthesis of a group of still images, joined with narrated background music related to a particular story. However, it is necessary to readily acknowledge that these findings used studies of Western rather than Asia people.

According to Alexander (2011), Chico, a California State University, has developed a comprehensive five-part definition of digital stories, indicating that, for assessment purposes, they should:

- Include a compelling narration of a story;
- Provide a meaningful context for understanding the story being told;
- Use images to capture and/or expand upon emotions found in the narrative;
- Employ music and other sound effects to reinforce ideas
- Invite thoughtful reflection from their audience(s) (p. 27)

Photo stories (Microsoft, 2007), slide-show-style videos (Salpeter, 2005), conversational media (Lambert, 2021), multimedia sonnets (Meadows, 2003), and even radio-with-pictures (Meadows, 2003) are all examples of digital stories that may be used as a versatile teaching and learning tool. DST, at its core, enables most people to weave their personal narratives, including still/motion photos, music, and sound, depending on the author's superior technological ingenuity and creativity. Scholars have turned their attention to DST as a real-world mode of expression that provides significant autonomy for learners since the boundaries for a digital story have been substantially set.

### *Digital Storytelling: A Promising Approach to Language Learning*

Digital storytelling has emerged as a promising approach to language learning, building on the well-established power of storytelling as an effective pedagogical technique (Robin, 2020; Du et al., 2024). At its core, DST involves the integration of traditional storytelling with various forms of digital media, including images, video, audio, and text (Lambert, 2013; Ohler, 2022). This fusion of story and technology creates a dynamic learning environment that can engage students and foster a range of language learning outcomes.

The existing literature suggests that the use of DST in language education can positively impact students' confidence, critical engagement, motivation, and interpersonal relationships (Smeda et al., 2014). By crafting and sharing their own digital stories, students can develop a deeper sense of ownership and investment in the learning process, boosting their confidence in using the target language (Maylia, 2021; Mahmawati & Mubayyinah, 2024). Furthermore, the process of planning, organizing, and creating digital stories encourages critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as students must make strategic decisions about the content, structure, and multimedia elements of their narratives (Yang et al., 2020). The motivational aspect of DST has also been well-documented in the literature. The opportunity to create and share personal narratives using digital tools can foster a sense of engagement and enthusiasm among language learners, which is crucial for sustained language development (Van et al., 2021; Chau et al., 2021; Nair & Yunus, 2022; Murad et al., 2023). Moreover, the collaborative nature of the digital storytelling process can strengthen interpersonal relationships and foster a sense of community within the language classroom (McLellan, 2024). Despite the growing body of

research on the benefits of DST in language learning, the integration of this approach into mainstream educational practices remains limited (Smeda et al., 2014). This study aims to address this gap by exploring the implementation of DST in a university-level foreign language course in the Vietnamese context, with a focus on students' perceptions and experiences.

### *Digital Storytelling in Foreign Language Learning*

Studies on how DST might enhance successful learning in EFL classrooms are still the focus of quite a number of studies. Kajder (2006) and Rance-Roney (2008), for example, have convincingly argued, supported by a number of empirical investigations, that "*learners have numerous chances to connect with and use language in ways that are authentic and personally meaningful*" (p. 30). As a result, students become "storytellers," telling their stories to an audience (Kajder, 2006). Although DST is discussed briefly in these and other studies, only Le (2020) has concentrated her empirical research, especially on the issue of DST application in the context of a new Vietnamese university. The study's major goal was to investigate the impacts of DST on student learning, motivation, and engagement through concept organization, opinion expression, and idea formation.

**Figure 1**

The convergence of DST in education (Robin, 2008)


### *Benefits of the DST*

Despite its limitations, the DST offers many significant benefits to students' language learning in the EFL classroom. Few learning activities like DST can help learners improve not only all language skills but also other language areas as well as 21st-century skills (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2**

Advantages of DST to Audience (Robin, 2008)


Perhaps the most enormous benefit of adopting DST in a foreign language classroom is that learners can create their own digital stories individually or as part of a small group. In addition, DST is a way to ingest and teach 21st-century technological skills to the 21st-century student (see Figure 1). This creative work helps students build a strong foundation for developing the skills that many educators (Partners for 21st (Century Skills, 2004; Brown et al., 2005; Jakes, 2006) call 21st Century Literature, Digital Age Literature, or 21st Century Skills. Regardless of the specific term being used, these skills are described as a powerful combination of the following:

• Digital literacy is the ability to communicate, discuss problems, gather information and seek help;

• Global knowledge is the ability to read, interpret, respond to, and contextualize news from a global perspective

• Technological proficiency is the ability to use applications and other technologies to enhance learning, productivity, and performance;

• Visual literacy is the ability to understand, develop, and communicate through images;

• Information literacy is finding, evaluating, and summarizing information.

Digital storytelling can be a rewarding learning experience that many researchers fervently hope students will know and master in the 21st century. Along with developing advanced communication skills, students also practice researching a topic, asking questions, organizing ideas, expressing opinions, and building meaningful stories. The study purports that this learning pushes students to acquire 21st-century literacy skills by incorporating the latest technology to communicate effectively while creating digital stories (Yang & Wu, 2021).

DST is mainly used to help students improve their writing skills because it improves their critical awareness and understanding of writing as a recursive and cyclic process (Pardo, 2014). However, other studies have also shown that DST can also be used effectively to develop students' vocabulary, grammar, reading, and speaking skills in the EFL classroom (Arroba & Acosta, 2021; Murad et al., 2023; Du et al., 2024). As such, DST can be viewed as a multi-approach teaching strategy for language and literacy instruction to provide students with an engaging, meaningful, and authentic L2 learning experience.

### *Challenges of DST*

Although many recent academic studies consistently show that DST significantly improves students' language skills, particularly literacy, in many respects, it still presents some serious limitations in the EFL classroom, which can be identified as follows. For example, a joint study by Mullen and Wedwick (2008) showed that in some cases, educators simply view DST as a perfect combination of images and music and, therefore, assume that it does not allow students to develop and respond to language skills and holds students from using L2 skills. The next important limitation of student-created small-group digital stories is that students are often distracted by not wanting to collaborate with their classmates (Hwang et al., 2014). This distraction leaves many students with fewer opportunities to regularly practice and significantly improve their speaking and writing skills during the DST process. The third severe limitation, research by Lee (2014), shows that students face some considerable difficulties related to technical problems during the DST process and often fall into a state of frustration when they do not use the full range of topics given by the teacher because of insufficient knowledge of the content. As a result, teachers' ignorance of key components of the digital narrative can lead to poor results when using DST in the EFL classroom. Therefore, if students lack the distinctive skills and coherent strategies to interact effectively with other group members, DST may not be a sharp tool to encourage coherent writing assignments as well as advanced language skills. Lee's research (2014) shows that practicing DST is time-consuming; many students constantly complain and feel overwhelmed when DST is practiced weekly, especially for students with low L2 potential. Meanwhile, teachers' short time and little experience performing DST tasks is another major obstacle to introducing DST in the EFL classroom.

### *A five-week Pilot Educational Project: Personal Digital Narratives*

### *The description of the digital storytelling exercise*

Digital storytelling is completed over the course of a semester and is framed by course content and textbooks. There are several sorts of digital storytelling, as discussed above. However, for this pilot, I chose personal narratives for educational purposes, i.e. stories about personal reflection or personal growth (Robin, 2020). At this stage, students continue to develop their own digital stories about certain themes, which they publish on Facebook or YouTube as a kind of speaking practice. The author introduced and discussed DST's definition and pedagogical applications with students at the start of the Fall 2021-2022 semester. Furthermore, the researchers provided them with additional references to web stories from previous student group assignments so they could see more examples at home. Five weeks are allotted to complete their project.

### *Materials*

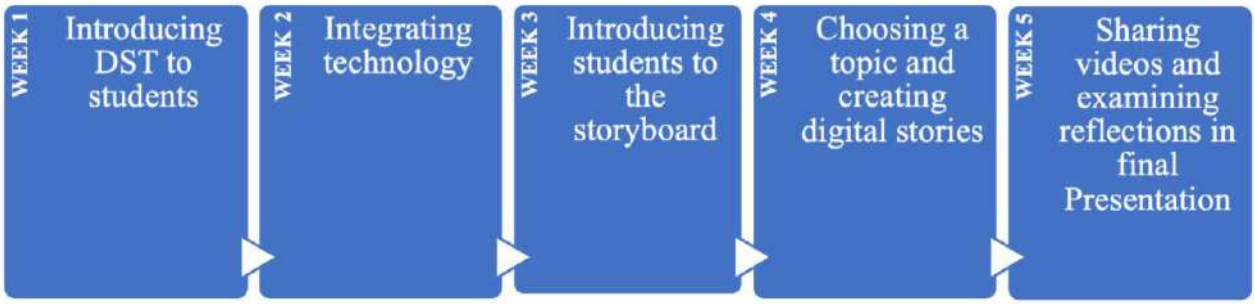
The primary source for this study was the Life: A2-B1 textbook edited by John Hughes (Cengage Learning, 2015), covering five units from unit 1 through unit 5. These five modules were chosen precisely because they were part of the syllabus that I taught my students for 15 weeks.

### *Implementation of the DST project*

The method was carried out over the course of fifteen weeks during the Fall term of the 2021-2022 academic year in a General English course. The figure depicts the digital storytelling implementation plan.

**Figure 3.**

Weekly implementation plan




**1st Week**: *Introducing DST to students*

As earlier mentioned, we began by explaining Labov's (1972) paradigm of individual experiences narrative. Then, these components will be contrasted with the seven criteria mentioned by the Center for Digital Storytelling, emphasizing the distinction between conventional storytelling and the new possibilities afforded by technological mediums (see Gregori Signes, 2007). This analogy aided students in comprehending the structure of DST. They were also exposed to personal narratives, which were the type chosen for this pilot study. Students use this data to select a variety of multimedia tools based on their computer literacy level, construct storyboards (i.e. texts, photos, music, and other materials), and any other effects they wish to include in the final version.

**2nd Week**: *Integrating Technology*

The second part of the introduction taught students about software and apps for making digital stories, which have traditionally been secondary to storytelling. We select simple software: For audio control, we prefer Wevideo, Photostory 3, Windows Movie Maker, and Audacity; other tools such as Powerpoint and iMovie have also been listed.

**3rd Week**: *Introducing students to the Storyboard*

The narrative writing, drawing, photo collection, and music selection could all be accomplished in three weeks, so it took us nearly a month to get the first draft from the students. One of the initial steps toward story training was giving them Lambert's Digital Storytelling Textbook (2007) so they could figure out what type of story they wanted to create and how to do it as an example of personal reflection. Lambert's (2007) descriptions contain a story-type description as well as some question tips to help students develop a possible scenario and storyboard.

**4th Week**: *Choosing a topic and creating digital stories*

Eighty-three pre-intermediate students who were non-English majors were divided into twenty groups (some students chose to work individually). My Favorite Room, My Ideal City, My Photos, My Hobbies, My Vacation Plan/Course, My Journey, My Favorite Place to Eat, and A Souvenir are the topics chosen from the "Life" course book. Then, before publishing on YouTube/Facebook, we intended to employ DST as the central focus of a practical speaking exercise in which all students provided critical feedback on how to develop a technological digital story. They are invited to discuss their ideas and opinions on the topic with their group members and the teacher. The teacher will next introduce some useful tools/software for producing digital stories and, if necessary, give constructive advice. Ordinarily, students find their own solutions to problems they face in their groups to facilitate learning.

**5th Week**: *Sharing videos and examining reflections in the Final Presentation*

Following the project, peer reviews and teacher feedback were collected with teacher-designed rubrics. The stories have also been shared on YouTube and Facebook.

### *Elements of Effective Digital Stories*

An effective digital story has seven basic components: (1) a point of view, (2) a dramatic question, (3) emotional content, (4) economy, (5) pacing, (6) the gift of your voice, and lastly (7) soundtrack. As shown in Figure 2, these elements can be divided into two major phases: the writing phase (1-4) and the construction phase (5-7).

**Figure 4.**

Elements of effective digital stories (Kajder, 2004)


In addition to these elements, the following phases are proposed for creating a successful digital story (Frazel, 2010):

• the preparation stage, during which students choose a topic, write scripts to serve as the framework for their digital tales and revise their scripts in response to criticism.

• the production stage, in which students select relevant multimedia assets to complement their scripts (e.g., music, photographs, sound, or voiceover) and construct digital stories using video editing software (e.g., PhotoStory3, iMovie, or MovieMaker) or Web 2.0 apps.

• the presentation stage, during which students share their stories in class and publish them on the internet.

Composing a digital story consists of six steps, which are as follows: (1) determining the point to be made, (2) searching for supporting information and artifacts, (3) storyboarding the organization of the digital story, (4) group editing of the narrative script with drastic revision, storyboarding the organization of the digital story, (4) group editing of the narrative script followed by revision, and (5) construction of digital movies with music and oral narration, and (6) the web (Kajder, 2004).

**Figure 5.**

Steps of digital storytelling (Kajder, 2004)


In light of the preceding research, this study provides a fresh impetus for the implementation of digital storytelling (DST)-based collaborative activities. First, despite its widespread use in English Language Teaching (ELT), DST lacks a solid foundation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments, particularly among non-English major technology students. Second, it is argued that there are still some gaps in DST research that this study aims to address.

There has been very limited current research on the use of DST in the tertiary setting of Vietnamese EFL. As a result, this study examines the success of DST through a new lens, narrowly focusing on DST projects co-produced by non-English majors and exploring user responses to the feasibility of DST in the language classroom. For these reasons, the current research sought to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of a DST-based collaborative task in an EFL General English classroom in Vietnam.

## Methods

### *Pedagogical Setting & Participants*

The research was conducted at the Faculty of High Quality in the first semester. The participants were 83 first-year students from non-English major programs. According to the Common European Framework of Reference, the learners' proficiency levels ranged from elementary to pre-intermediate (CEFR). The course involved in this project was called "General English 2," and it was a compulsory course for all non-English major students at the university. The coursebook used was Life: A2-B1 by John Hughes (Cengage Learning, 2015), with the learning objective that learners would achieve a CEFR level of A2.

The main participants in this study were EFL university students. The researchers administered a questionnaire survey to thoroughly examine the students' overall perceptions regarding the use of digital storytelling (DST) for real-world learning purposes. The following tables provide details about the student demographics, including their gender, age, and proficiency level.

Table 2
Background information on study participants (1)

| No. | Information | N=83 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Option** | **Frequency** | **Proportion** |
| 1 | Gender | Male | 51 | 61% |
| | | Female | 32 | 39% |
| 2 | Age | 18 | 55 | 66% |
| | | 19 | 15 | 18% |
| | | 20 | 13 | 16% |
| 3 | Years of learning English | 9+ years | 45 | 54% |
| | | 8 years | 25 | 30% |
| | | 7 years | 13 | 16% |
| 4 | Computer knowledge | Poor | 0 | 0% |
| | | Fair | 40 | 48% |
| | | Good | 30 | 36% |
| | | Very good | 13 | 16% |
| | | Excellent | 0 | 0% |
| 5 | Frequency of computer use | Every day | 70 | 84% |
| | | Once a week | 10 | 12% |
| | | Once a month | 3 | 4% |
| | | Never | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | Average time for self-learning of English (hours/per week) | 1-2 hours | 15 | 18% |
| | | 3-4 hours | 50 | 60% |
| | | 5-6 hours | 18 | 22% |

## *Design of the Study*

The current study employed a mixed-method approach to investigate the impact of digital storytelling (DST) on learners' performance. The utilization of a mixed-method approach enables the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the various factors influencing the learning process (Creswell & Plano, 2015). As Mackey and Gass (2012) noted, "*quantitative data can provide researchers with a large numerical database, while qualitative data often furnishes the deeper, contextualized material necessary for a more complete understanding*" (p. 278). The quantitative method is beneficial for the descriptive and statistical analysis of the learners' outcome scores at the end of the project, which represents tangible evidence of improvement in learners' achievement. Conversely, the qualitative method, which relies on the three "I's" - "*Insight, intuition, and impression*" (Dey, 1993, p. 78), can also generate the intangible elements in the projects to deepen the researchers' understanding of learners' experiences. By employing a mixed-method approach, the study aims to provide a

comprehensive examination of the impact of DST on learners' performance, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to offer a more robust and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Table 3

Background information on study participants (2)

| **English proficiency level (self-reported)** | **Frequency** | **%** | **Reasons for learning English** | **F** | **%** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beginner | 10 | 12 | Compulsory course | 30 | 36 |
| Elementary | 30 | 36 | For traveling | 5 | 6 |
| Pre-intermediate | 40 | 48 | For communicating with foreigners | 10 | 12 |
| Intermediate | 3 | 4 | Interested in English | 15 | 18 |
| Upper-Intermediate | 0 | 0 | Interested in culture | 3 | 4 |
| Advanced | 0 | 0 | For future career | 20 | 24 |

## *Methodology*

Before starting the study, undergraduate students expressed a general interest in the topic. Students who have been informed of the opportunity by the researchers are cordially invited to participate. All responses will be anonymous, and the collected data cannot be physically attributed to any individual participant. Furthermore, the students are encouraged by their peers to volunteer for the study. This approach aims to foster a collaborative and supportive environment where students feel empowered to contribute to the research based on their own volition and interest in the subject matter. The emphasis on anonymity and the collaborative nature of the participant recruitment process underscores the study's commitment to ethical research practices and the creation of an inclusive, participant-centric environment.

## *Data collection & analysis*

The study employed a well-designed procedure to address the research questions. The quantitative data was analyzed using Stata software, which automatically and accurately calculated the responses to the survey questions. In addition, 83 participating students provided free-form text comments, which the researchers then systematically sorted and categorized according to emerging themes based on keyword analysis. To organize and manage the qualitative data, the researchers utilized Folio VIEWS, a specialized computer program developed to facilitate the sorting, subsetting, and overall structuring of textual data. The specific research questions and corresponding data-gathering methods are detailed in Table 4, providing a clear overview of the study's methodological approach.

Table 4.

Research questions and data-gathering method

| | |
|---|---|
| **Confidence**<br>*Do students feel more confident with DST-based projects?* | Observation, questionnaire, interviews, student-created artifacts, student's online comments |
| **Engagement**<br>*Are students engaged with learning throughout the project? How to attract them?* | Observation, questionnaires, interviews, student-created artifacts, student's online comments |
| **Motivation**<br>*Does the project motivate students to learn English?* | Observation, questionnaire, interviews, student-created artifacts, student's online comments |
| **Perceptions**<br>*What was the difficult part of composing digital storytelling?*<br>*What are the advantages and disadvantages of the DST process?*<br>*Do students feel comfortable enough with the use of DST?* | Observation, questionnaire, interviews, student-created artifacts, student's online comments |

This study examines students' interest in using their own digital storytelling (DST) to support their learning. The research aimed to investigate the extent to which students are autonomously harnessing DST technology to support their learning and how this is manifested. The study was carried out through planning for the application of DST and the daily involvement of students in their natural learning environment. The study was conducted in a university English course with around 83 participants aged 18 to 22. The class engaged in a range of DST activities for one semester. Data was collected through the following methods:

### *Questionnaire*

The purpose of the questionnaire was to follow up on the pilot studies and fulfill the main aims of the research by providing descriptive data on students' beliefs, practices, evaluations, and relationships to DST implementation (Cohen et al., 2004). Questionnaires provide a standard method for collecting data from numerous participants, allowing researchers to gather both quantitative data for statistical analysis and qualitative data through open-ended questions or follow-up interviews. In this study, the questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data on students' acceptance and adoption of digital storytelling in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

The questionnaire design was informed by the study's objectives and literature review. The researchers aimed to make the questionnaire as simple, direct, and clear as possible, asking only essential background questions and avoiding embarrassing or hypothetical questions. Friendly introductions were used to encourage participants to complete the questionnaires. The research sample included 83 students from the Vietnamese EFL technology field.

### *Piloting and implementation*

The questionnaire items were based on the Likert scale and were designed to confirm and extend the study's findings. The first five items elicited learners' thoughts on DST use, the next five focused on DST interaction, and the final five addressed DST evaluation.

Initially, a 15-question survey was designed to reflect valuable ideas from the literature, presented as a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of using student DST in the EFL classroom. This research questionnaire was piloted among 10 HCMUTE students via the chat group on the social networking site Zalo. The questionnaire was analyzed to evaluate the impact of each word and sentence and how respondents understood them. The final draft was then polished and improved, including content, time, length, and layout.

After the trial, modifications were made to the questionnaires, such as rewriting the first part to make it clearer and more obvious. The comprehensively revised questionnaire was then sent to the students via a hyperlink in an explanatory email. They were asked to what extent they agreed that DST use during school hours is valuable for student learning. The same was then completed with the Negatives, Opportunities, and Threats reading list. Finally, they were asked to suggest other strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats of DST use in the classroom and to provide any personal comments.

83 students at the authors' university completed the questionnaire. After the returned questionnaires, the 10 pilot students were collected into a focus group to examine the results and determine what was considered acceptable and what was not stated regarding DST usage in the classroom. The responders were given pseudonyms to maintain anonymity. The results were processed using the free Stata software.

*Observations*: The observational field note template was used to write research notes right after school. The researcher recorded short videos and, if required, took photographs of the document to serve as a basis for further discussions. An observational protocol that included descriptive and reflective notes was employed to capture information during the observation. The primary goal was to examine the quality of students' participation in authentic learning tasks, such as integrating technology and learning styles, acquiring new knowledge, student roles, the teacher's role, student confidence, motivation, and participation in classroom activities.

*Student Interviews*: Semi-structured interviews guided by focus groups of students were used to investigate their practical experience with DST. Online interviews with prepared questions were used to acquire qualitative data. Each interview lasted 10-15 minutes and was meticulously documented and fully audio-recorded with the participants' permission for future research. It took five days to interview all 10 students.

A follow-up online interview with 10 students was conducted on the Teamlink platform to provide additional evidence for the quantitative survey and to develop these results with an open-ended, qualitative approach. The use of interviews allowed the researcher to explore students' perceptions of the benefits and the problems and difficulties they faced during the application process. Interview protocols were developed to take notes on the interviewee's comments during the interview. All interviews were digitally recorded, then meticulously transcribed and analyzed to draw conclusions for the research questions (Schmidt, 2004). The researchers simultaneously translated the transcripts into English, and these English versions were employed for the content analysis of qualitative data. The responses of ten respondents were coded as ST1, ST2, ST3, ... to ST10. Three questions were given to 10 students in around 10-15 minutes, asking them to provide their feedback on the DST design in terms of its

shortcomings, effectiveness, and recommendations for improvement. Interviewees were recruited through emails sent to participants in closed chat groups, advertising in seminar presentations, and direct suggestions from course instructors to their students. Interested participants then contacted the researchers by email. The following table shows how each interviewee in the study was recruited.

**Table 5.**

Interviewee recruitment

| Participant | University | Course | Recruited by |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student 1 | HCMUTE | General English 2 | Course instructors |
| Student 2 | HCMUTE | General English 2 | Email |
| Student 3 | HCMUTE | General English 2 | Participant 2 |
| Student 4 | HCMUTE | General English 2 | Presentation attendee |
| Student 5 | HCMUTE | General English 2 | Course instructors |
| Student 6 | HCMUTE | General English 2 | Course instructors |
| Student 7 | HCMUTE | General English 2 | Course instructors |
| Student 8 | HCMUTE | General English 2 | Email |
| Student 9 | HCMUTE | General English 2 | Course instructors |
| Student 10 | HCMUTE | General English 2 | Course instructors |

*Student-Generated Artifacts (videotapes)* - Students develop planning documents (such as plot diagrams, scenarios, and storyboards) and finished digital stories as part of the DST process (videotapes). A central focus is also placed on investigating how technology mediates the creation of its planning papers. A favorable comparison of planning documents and digital stories will eventually provide insights into students' digital literacy development. The study "*From Words to Wonders: EFL Students' Perceptions of Digital Storytelling for Language Learning*" explored the use of student-generated artifacts, such as videotapes, to provide valuable insights into students' learning experiences and outcomes (Thang et al., 2014). Using videotapes can capture students' digital storytelling products and provide researchers with valuable data on the effectiveness of digital storytelling in EFL learning. Research has shown that analyzing students' digital storytelling products, as captured on videotapes, can reveal insights into the quality of the story, the use of technology, and the linguistic and cultural elements involved (Yang & Wu, 2012; Castañeda, 2013). Additionally, videotapes can provide researchers with a more comprehensive understanding of students' engagement with digital storytelling compared to traditional written assignments, which may not fully capture digital storytelling's multimedia and interactive nature (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009).

*Students' off-the-cuff online comments* - Students will share their final digital stories online by posting them to Facebook or YouTube, and then they will critique the digital stories of others. Students' online comments can provide researchers with valuable data on students' experiences and perceptions of digital storytelling in a more natural and spontaneous way. Students' immediate reactions and thoughts about digital storytelling can be captured through online comments, which may not be fully captured through structured questionnaires or interviews

(Sadik, 2008; Castañeda, 2013). Additionally, they can be posted in real-time, offering a more authentic and timely perspective (Yang & Wu, 2012). Furthermore, an analysis of students' online comments can provide insights into digital storytelling's social and collaborative nature and EFL learning, as students may comment on their interactions with peers and teachers during the digital storytelling process (Smeda et al., 2014). Students' digital stories are evaluated on a five-star scale, and they offer insightful comments on the Digital Stories they are viewing. These peer-reviewed and insightful critiques of digital stories will give participants with insight into many aspects of their digital literacy (Thang et al., 2014).

### *Ensuring credibility*

The following strategies prove the study's reliability:

• **Triangulation**: Several data sources were employed, including field notes from participant observations in email responses.

• **Peer review**: The data analysis was peer-reviewed throughout the study, which included weekly meetings with supervisors who focused on the analysis process and suggestions for the paper's completion.

• **Reflexivity**: As previously stated, the researcher tries to avoid any bias in the study by first collecting data from the participants' perspectives and then performing the analysis. Data collection will be analysed at a later date. Finally, the strategies outlined above have helped me continue critical reflection on my analysis and findings throughout my study.

### *Evaluation rubric*

In addition to classroom observations, the evaluation rubric provides clear evidence for assessing student engagement and the quality of student-generated engineering stories. Rubrics can be used to acquire reliable information for a variety of tasks. This could also be a traditional method for evaluating student engagement levels and documenting educational outcomes gained through technical storytelling. We prioritized the selection of the rubric sample developed by Wilden (2017) in this part of the research (see Figure 6). The evaluation panel has five criteria: plot, narration speed, soundtrack, characters, and themes. A description of the level of person assigned to each category, with a possible score of 3, 2, or 1, associated with the level of completion of work in that area.

**Figure 6**.

Rubrics for assessing a digital story (Wilden, 2017)

| Digital Story Assessment | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name of group/students: | | | |
| Name of project: | | | |
| Points awarded: | | | |
| **Story element** | **3 points** | **2 points** | **1 point** |
| 1 Plot | We completely understand what happens. | We understand most of what happens. | It is difficult to understand what happens. |
| 2 Pace | The pacing is good and helps the audience get involved. | The pacing is good and helps the audience gets involved. However, sometimes the story moves too fast/too slowly. | The pacing is not good for the style of story. The story is told too fast or too slowly, which makes it difficult to follow. |
| 3 Soundtrack | The music and voices add the right emotion to the story. | Most of the time, the music and voices add the right emotion to the story. | The music is badly chosen and does not fit well with the story. |
| 4 Characters | We know who all the characters are and why they are in the story. | We know who all the characters are, but are not always sure why they are in the story. | It is difficult to understand who the characters are or why they are in the story. |
| 5 Themes | The themes are easy to understand. | The themes can be understood but are not always clear. | It is difficult to understand what the themes are. |

## Results/Findings

A questionnaire was completed at the end of the study to examine the effectiveness of DST from the students' perspective and measure its success in English classes. As a consequence, students had a pleasant learning experience when adopting DST. They all desire to employ DST new tech in their future endeavors. The questionnaire analysis is shown in the figures below.

*1) Findings on Students' Perceptions of the Use of DST for Learning English*

Overall, the students viewed DST as beneficial to their development of English language skills, confidence, engagement, motivation, and interpersonal relationships.

*2) Students' attitudes related to self-confidence*

As stated in Table 7, the next three questionnaire items investigated students' opinions about their DST task abilities. A very high number of students (79% and 75%, respectively) felt confident in their ability to efficiently complete the DST activities and learn all of the essential technical skills, and more than three-fifths were confident in their ability to do well on the DST tasks.

**Table 7.**

Survey items regarding the students' perceptions related to confidence

| Items | Contents surveyed | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | *I was confident that I would complete the DST project successfully.* | 1<br>1.2% | 2<br>2.4% | 14<br>16.9% | 46<br>55.4% | 20<br>24.1% | 3.99 | .789 |
| 1.2 | *I was confident that I would master all of the technical skills.* | 1<br>1.2% | 4<br>4.8% | 15<br>18.1% | 42<br>50.1% | 21<br>25.3% | 3.94 | .860 |
| 1.3 | *I was confident that I could perform admirably on the DST assignments.* | 1<br>1.2% | 7<br>8.4% | 23<br>27.7% | 37<br>44.6% | 15<br>18.1% | 3.70 | .907 |

Notes: SD=strong disagree, D=disagree, N=neither agree nor disagree, A=agree, SA=strongly agree, SD= standard deviation

Table 7 summarizes the findings on students' assessments of the usage of DST to boost their confidence. Overall, the participants thought that the use of DST in language teaching was fair. Participants' confidence in completing the DST project has the highest mean score (item 1.1: M = 3.99, SD =.789), followed by technical abilities (item 1.2: M = 3.94, SD =.860), and lastly the DST tasks (item 1.3: M = 3.70, SD =.907). The table indicates that the majority of students expressed confidence in completing the DST project successfully, mastering technical skills, and performing well on assignments. Three items were above the midpoint of the scale, indicating a generally positive perception of confidence among the students.

According to the interview results, all respondents felt that using the DST project increased their confidence in speaking English and performing in front of the camera. As student 5 said: "*DST is an effective way to tell my stories because it trains me to be more confident when performing in front of the camera*" [Online comments, Participant#6]. This little disagreement was mentioned as a topic for research throughout the interviews. On the bright side, for a variety of reasons, five students felt confident in their abilities to complete the work. One student, for

example, had previously written a wonderful story and was confident in her abilities. Furthermore, the students' perception of the activities as entertaining made them feel more confident. As an example, one student stated: "*I feel more confident to speak in English now even when my friends are laughing at if I make mistakes while speaking. I feel free to do the recording*" [Online Interview with Participant #3].

Despite the general positive trend, two students were concerned about their ability to complete the assignments. They gave several reasons for their concern. The perceptions of students' English skills tend to be the most significant. This was because some students believed that their English was inferior to their peers and that their classmates' films would be superior. As one student put it, "*It's because I'm not very good at English, and when I was making my films, I was constantly thinking that my friends who were better at English would do better, so I wasn't certain that I'd do as well as they would. It makes me feel uncomfortable*" [Interview, Participant #9].

*3) Student perceptions about participation*

Three questionnaire items examined whether students found the DST tasks entertaining. According to the mean scores, all of the things were agreed upon by the students. Table 8 shows the statistics on students' perceptions of using DST to maintain their formal engagement. Overall, participants were intrigued by the usage of DST in language classes. The highest mean score was given to participants who had complete control over their learning while working on the DST project (item 1.5: M = 4.10, SD =.905), followed by the DST tasks being extremely engaging (item 1.4: M = 3.67, SD =.938), and finally the content of the DST tasks being important to me (item 1.6: M = 3.63, SD =1.033). The table shows that most of the students were involved in the DST project, but there were some differences in how they felt about being involved and having control over learning.

**Table 8.**

Survey items regarding the students' perceptions related to their engagement

| Items | Contents surveyed | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.4 | *The DST tasks were very engaging.* | 1<br>1.2% | 8<br>9.6% | 24<br>28.9% | 34<br>41% | 16<br>19.3% | 3.67 | .938 |
| 1.5 | *When doing the DST tasks, I controlled my learning.* | 1<br>1.2% | 4<br>4.8% | 12<br>14.5% | 35<br>42.2% | 31<br>37.3% | 4.10 | .905 |
| 1.6 | *The content of the DST tasks was meaningful to me.* | 3<br>1.2% | 9<br>8.4% | 20<br>27.7% | 35<br>44.6% | 16<br>18.1% | 3.63 | 1.033 |

The qualitative results back up the quantitative data by revealing that the DST projects piqued the students' curiosity. "*I think, not only did DST afford me the chance to use my English naturally in speaking and writing in class but also it afforded me the opportunity to use and share ideas in English outside the classroom*" [Online Interview, Participant #4]. The online questionnaires and weekly reflections revealed three major factors. To begin with, the majority of students felt that working on the DST assignments was entertaining, difficult, and intriguing. Secondly, students felt interested and could engage in DST activities for an extended period of time, especially when compared to other types of tasks, such as paper-based ones. "*I am the*

*sort of person who cannot just sit on the desk and read books for a long time,*" one participant said, "*but doing this is like reading books in a different pattern. For example, the Wevideo tool allows me to listen to my voice over and over again while filming my video. It reminds me to avoid making errors especially in pronunciation and am waiting to do another video.*" [Online Interview, Participant #1]

*4) Students' attitudes related to motivation*

Three questions examined students' motivational views regarding the DST project. The mean ratings in Table 9 show that the majority of students agreed with all of the statements in this area and saw DST as encouraging.

**Table 9.**

Survey items regarding the students' perceptions related to Motivation

| Items | Contents surveyed | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.7 | *The DST project made me like English more.* | 2<br>2.4% | 5<br>6% | 16<br>19.3% | 44<br>53% | 16<br>19.3% | 3.81 | .903 |
| 1.8 | *The DST project was interesting.* | 2<br>2.4% | 3<br>3.6% | 20<br>24.1% | 43<br>51.8% | 15<br>18.1% | 3.80 | .866 |
| 1.9 | *The DST project was challenging.* | 5<br>6% | 9<br>10.8% | 27<br>32.5% | 28<br>33.7% | 14<br>16.9% | 3.45 | 1.085 |

The DST initiative had the participants a deep appreciation for English, according to the vast majority of students (72%). Similarly, a large number of students (69%) believed that the DST project was intriguing. Furthermore, a sizable majority (50%) considered the DST project difficult to complete. Regarding item 1.7, 2.4% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 6% disagreed, 19.3% neither agreed nor disagreed, 53% agreed, and 19.3% strongly agreed. The students found the DST project to be interesting, with a mean score of 3.80 for item 1.8, and the DST project made the students like English more, with a mean score of 3.81 for item 1.7. However, the DST project was also perceived to be challenging by the students, the mean score for item 1.9 was 3.45. This could have had a negative impact on their motivation. Furthermore, the standard deviation values indicated that there were some variations in responses. For example, the standard deviation for item 1.9 was high (1.085), suggesting that there were significant individual differences in how the students perceived the project. In conclusion, the table indicates that the students had a positive perception of the DST project in terms of motivation, but there were also some variations in individual responses, especially related to the perceived challenge of the project.

According to the interviews, the DST project was motivating, engaging, demanding, and enjoyable for the participants. The majority of participants said that the DST research made them feel more involved in studying English and that they eventually loved the language more. According to one participant: "*At first, it was difficult to create a video, but after guidance from my friends and teacher, I can do it. Now, I can create a video in English to present my stories and ideas. It also motivates me to self-check and corrects myself in order to speak fluently without any hesitance*" [Interview with #2 Participant]. Furthermore, when compared to a traditional classroom, the majority of students claimed that using a multimedia tool like DST

helped them feel more motivated and interested in studying English as one participant stated: "*Well, if you compare it with traditional English learning, learning through the DST project attracts my interest. I am involved in creating my own movie, and I feel that it's my own work. This really makes me feel motivated and I learned English from doing this as well. It is also fun to watch my friends' shared videos, and I learn a lot from them. I can listen to their voices. I can leave constructive comments too*" [Interview with Participant No. 8]. According to several participants, working on the DST project was more like playing a game than working on an academic assignment. Therefore, they were more excited about it. Overall, students saw DST as motivating, and no negative feelings were expressed about it.

*5) Attitudes of students toward language skill development*

Two questionnaire items were designed to elicit participants' perceptions of DST activities' impact on language learning.

**Table 10.**

Survey items regarding the students' perceptions related to Language Skills Development

| Items | Contents surveyed | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.10 | *The DST project helped me improve my language skills.* | 8<br>9.6% | 6<br>7.2% | 22<br>26.5% | 28<br>33.7% | 19<br>22.9% | 3.53 | 1.203 |
| 1.11 | *The DST project helped me develop my language areas.* | 4<br>4.8% | 10<br>12% | 15<br>18.1% | 34<br>41% | 20<br>24.1% | 3.55 | 1.074 |

The descriptive statistics in Table 10 show that the participants agreed with all the statements in this category. A survey item in Table 10 was used to measure students' perceptions related to their language skills development through the DST project. There is a five-point Likert scale for responses, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A slightly higher percentage (65%) agreed that the DST project helped them to improve their language areas. A fair number of the students (56%) reported that they had improved their language skills in the project. Item 1.10 asked if the DST project helped students improve their language skills, and the mean score was 3.53, which was a neutral-to-agree answer. The standard deviation was high at 1.203, so responses were very different from each other. Item 1.11 inquired whether the DST project helped students develop their language areas, and the mean score was 3.55, indicating a neutral-to-agree answer. It was found that there was moderate variation in response rates. The mean value of the standard deviation was 1.074. The majority of participants in the DST project believed that it helped them strengthen their vocabulary and grammar, particularly when they responded to open-ended questions and were interviewed. Students reported the following in terms of vocabulary: "*This project helps me to improve my English skills as well as language areas. Making presentations allows me to correct my pronunciation from my friends' valuable comments*" [Interview, Participant #10].

*6) Students' attitudes related to Interpersonal*

One item in the questionnaire intended to elicit participants' perceptions of DST tasks' influence on Interpersonal Relationships.

**Table 11.**

Survey items regarding the students' perceptions related to Interpersonal Relationships

| Items | Contents surveyed | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.12 | *The DST project helped me strengthen my relationship with friends through group work, peer assessment, and ideas exchange.* | 2<br>2.4% | 8<br>9.6% | 24<br>28.9% | 31<br>37.3% | 18<br>21.7% | 3.8 | .866 |

Table 11's descriptive statistics show that this group's members agreed with the statement. The DST project was beneficial more than half of the students (59%) develop their beautiful friendships. Item 1.12 inquired whether the DST project helped students strengthen their relationships with friends through group work, peer assessment, and idea exchanges. The mean score was 3.8, indicating a neutral-to-agree response. It is suggested that there was a moderate agreement among the respondents since the standard deviation was 0.866. In response to open-ended questionnaires and interviews, most participants thought that the DST project helped them improve their interpersonal relationships, as one student stated: "*This technique increases my relationship with friends through group work, peer review, and ideas sharing*" [Online comments, Participant #15].

*7) Findings on the deep troubles encountered in the DST process*

The issues that students experienced while developing DST were examined in three categories: script development, related visual video search, and software testing. The qualitative data were divided into three categories, seven codes, and six direct citations, as given in Table 12.

Table 12 shows that the students encountered three sorts of technical difficulties during the implementation of DST. Four categories of issues are included in the table: scriptwriting, finding related images-videos, attempting to use the software, and minimal just-in-time training. Under each category, the table shows the code assigned to the problem, the frequency of the problem encountered, and some sample sentences that describe the issue. Major problems identified were insufficient background/content knowledge and inability to write scripts in English due to poor vocabulary and bad grammar, with a frequency of 35. Students had difficulties creating scripts, locating photos or videos, and attempting to use a new app. It is tough for students to prepare an original script since they lack a solid background knowledge of the course subject. Students also desperately struggled with script content preparation, text stability, and fluency. "*I have problems writing the script due of my limited knowledge, weak vocabulary, and bad grammar*," the ST11 student explained. The participants were classified as ST1, ST2, etc.

**Table 12.**

The problems encountered during DST development

| Category | Code | f | Sample sentences |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Scriptwriting* | Insufficient background/content knowledge | 35 | ST11: "*I had difficulty writing the script because of my limited knowledge, poor vocabulary and bad grammar*". |
| | Inability to write scripts in English because of poor vocabulary and bad grammar | 22 | ST2: "*Translating it in English was more difficult than writing it in English because it required many different words, sentence patterns, phrases and collocations. We were under a lot of stress*". |
| | | 22 | ST20: "*We faced a lot of grammar mistakes. Everyone used a different grammar style so there was a fierce conflict about which one to use*". |
| *Finding the related images-videos* | Difficult in finding an illustrated picture/video | 13 | ST4: "*First I wrote the script, but I couldn't find any related photos that fit what I wanted. I searched a lot. It took me too long to find the right illustrations*". |
| | Seriously lagged apps | | |
| *Trying out the software* | Technical Difficulties in adjusting character movements | 45 | ST8: *"Another challenge is our dearth of knowledge of how to operate WeVideo. We did understand what you have shown us but during the process it was a bit difficult."* |
| | Stark language choices in software | 20 | ST15: "*In high school, we didn't use technology very often, so some friends and I weren't used to trying out new apps*". |
| | Minimal just-in-time training | 15 | |

The category "difficulties with software usage" consists of four codes. The most often used code is for technical problems (f = 45). Here is an example expression from ST8: "*Another difficulty is our lack of understanding on how to use WeVideo. We did understand what you have shown us, however the procedure was a little challenging*". There is one code for finding related images-videos categories. The most often repeated code among them is difficulties in locating an illustrated picture or video (f= 22). As an example, one student stated:

> "*I started by writing the narrative, but I couldn't locate any comparable photographs that suited what I was looking for." I looked everywhere. It took me much too long to find the right illustrations*." [Interview, Participant #7]

Students encountered technical issues while trying out new apps, such as excessively lagged apps, insufficient technical guidance, and minimal just-in-time training. One participant emphasized:

> "*In high school, we didn't use technology very often, so me and some friends had a hard time installing and using new apps.*" [Interview, Participant #9]

*8) Findings on the Benefits and Drawbacks of the DST Process*

Several classifications are used to categorize students' perspectives on the benefits and drawbacks of implementing DST. The codes and the direct citations that go with them are included in Table 13.

Table 13 shows that the codes linked with DST's benefits vastly outweighed the disadvantages. DST should be used more frequently in the EFL classroom since its benefits greatly exceed its drawbacks. There are three subcategories within the benefits category: creative, entertaining, and motivational, with 36, 40, and 20 sample sentences, respectively. In the sample sentences, one benefit mentioned is that it stimulates creativity and generates interesting and engaging content. The drawbacks category also contains three subcategories: time-consuming, time shortages, and technical issues, with 38, 25 and 17 sample sentences, respectively. Some drawbacks mentioned in the sample sentences include difficulty managing time effectively, technical issues such as poor WiFi connections, and the need for help from others. Students said that the most important benefit of using digital stories in the classroom or creating digital stories was that it was fun, motivation, and creativity in the pros category. "*It was interesting because we had fun and created a project together*," remarked the ST8 student. *It's amazing to show everyone our story and hear all the positive feedback*." There are three codes in the area of digital storytelling contributions. The most often used code is entertaining (f = 40). This code demonstrates that the students loved the process of creating digital stories and considered this to be their most important contribution. Here is an example expression:

> *"It's a fun and pleasant piece of software. It was fantastic. I had some difficulties, but I am pleased. This helped me focus on staying successful rather than giving up. It appears to me to be a useful exercise."* [Group focus Interview, Participant #1]

Table 13.
Benefits and drawbacks of DST

| Category | Code | f | Sample Sentences |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Benefits** | Creative | 36 | ST2: "*While we were working on storyboards and scripts as a team, many ideas came up. Despite the disparate and ludicrous ideas, it fueled our creativity*". |
| | Entertaining | 40 | ST8: "*It was interesting because we had fun and created DST together. Showing our stories to everyone, and hearing all the good reviews was priceless*". |
| | Motivational | 20 | ST3: "*I was happy and proud of my final product. I was striving for the better even when I finished*". |
| **Drawbacks** | Time-consuming | 38 | ST11: "*When I treated DST as my major task, it took a long time to plan, compile, and analyze*." |
| | Time shortages | 25 | ST15: "*Tight deadlines drive me crazy and make me feel stressed*". |
| | Tenuous wifi connection | 17 | ST6: "*Internet was so slow. We wasted a lot of time looking for a wifi spot*". |
| | getting help from friends | 30 | ST19: *"When I couldn't find the tools and had problems with using the software, I asked for help from my friends."* |

Under the challenging phases encountered, there are four codes. Time constraints (f = 35) is the most often used code. There are four codes under the difficult stages faced. The most repeated code is time shortages (f = 35). An example expression is as follows:

> "*Tight deadlines drive me crazy and make me feel stressed*". [Group focus Interview, Participant #4]

There are two codes under the coping strategies for difficulties. Getting support from friends is the most repeated code (f = 30). This rating indicates that when students are in trouble, they usually seek assistance from their peers. An example expression is as follows:

> *"When I couldn't find the tools and had problems with using the software, I asked for help from my friends."* [Online comments, Participant #35]

Under the shortcomings of digital storytelling, there are two codes. The most often repeated code is that creating a digital story takes too much time (f = 38). This code illustrates how students consider the time required for digital storytelling as one of the project's drawbacks. Here is an example expression:

> "*If the instructor creates a digital story, it may take longer. The topic may not be included in the curriculum.*" [Online comments from Participant #40]
>
> "*When I treated DST as my major task, it took a long time to plan, compile, and analyze*." [Online comments, Participant #51]
>
> "*I had trouble utilizing the program. Others aren't as complex as this, but I had problems because it was my first time using this software*." [Online comments from Participant #65]

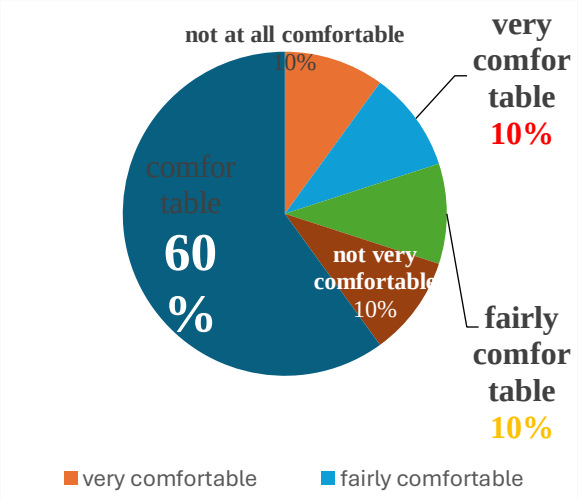
Another difficult challenge in this learning process is time shortages and a tenuous WiFi connection. The ST4 student said: "*The limited time to complete the task is a big challenge for me. We need more time to complete the assignment because we had too much homework from other courses*".

> "*Internet was so slow. We wasted a lot of time looking for a WiFi spot*". [Group focus Interview, Participant #6]

*9) Findings on level of comfort with DST use*

**Figure 7**.

Level of comfort with the DST use



As shown in Figure 7, four-fifths of respondents (80%) felt extremely comfortable using DST in the EFL classroom. In day-to-day group activities, just a fifth (20%) felt uncomfortable with it.

*10) Findings on results from peer and teacher evaluation*

The Digital Storytelling Project has a total score of 3 points. Students are provided a scoring rubric with specific instructions on how to evaluate work based on the five scales listed to assess the work of their peers (see Figure 6). To complete the assessment, students must mark the boxes on the worksheet in Figure 6. Students and instructors adopt the same grading criteria to encourage remarkable consistency. Incorporating students in peer assessment prepares them to function as effective instructors, objectively peer-review, and learn from their peers' creative work. The data received from student and instructor assessments are shown in the table below (see Table 14).

**Table 14.**

Results from peer and teacher assessment

| Group No. | Peer (30%) | Teacher (70%) | Final Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| **G1** | 93 (27.9) | 87 (60.9) | 88.8 |
| **G2** | 66 (19.8) | 70 (49.0) | 68.8 |
| **G3** | 81 (24.3) | 75 (52.5) | 76.8 |
| **G4** | 70 (21.0) | 68 (47.6) | 68.6 |
| **G5** | 82 (24.6) | 85 (59.5) | 84.1 |
| **G6** | 80 (24.0) | 78 (54.6) | 78.6 |
| **G7** | 65 (19.5) | 67 (46.9) | 66.4 |
| **G8** | 85 (25.5) | 90 (63.0) | 88.5 |
| **G9** | 71 (21.3) | 75 (52.5) | 73.8 |
| **G10** | 90 (27.0) | 92 (64.4) | 91.4 |
| **G11** | 75 (22.5) | 80 (56.0) | 78.5 |
| **G12** | 55 (16.5) | 57 (39.9) | 56.4 |
| **G13** | 85 (25.5) | 87 (60.9) | 86.4 |
| **G14** | 87 (26.1) | 90 (63.0) | 89.1 |
| **G15** | 76 (22.8) | 80 (56.0) | 78.8 |
| **G16** | 80 (24.0) | 90 (63.0) | 87.0 |
| **G17** | 77 (23.1) | 80 (56.0) | 79.1 |
| **G18** | 75 (22.5) | 80 (56.0) | 78.5 |
| **G19** | 79 (23.7) | 80 (56.0) | 79.7 |
| **G20** | 58 (17.4) | 60 (42.0) | 59.4 |
| **Mean Score** | **76.5** | **78.55** | **77.9** |

Table 14 above shows the results from peer and teacher assessments for 20 different groups (G1 to G20), of which peer assessment accounts for 30% of the final score, while teacher assessment accounts for 70% of the final score. The final score is the average of the two assessments. The table displays the scores of each group for peer assessment, teacher assessment, and the final score. The scores are presented in numerical values and percentages. It is estimated that the mean score for peer assessment is 76.5, while the mean score for teacher assessment is 78.55. For all the groups, the mean final score is 77.9. Each group's performance is presented in the table based on the assessments. The highest final scores are for G10 (91.4), G14 (89.1), and G8

(88.5), while the lowest final scores are for G12 (56.4), G20 (59.4), and G7 (66.4).

## Discussion

The present study's findings align with and build upon the existing body of research on the use of digital storytelling (DST) in language learning. Consistent with prior studies, the results indicate that DST can positively impact student engagement, confidence, and motivation (Gils, 2005; Ahmad & Yamat, 2020; Ohler, 2022).

The high levels of student engagement observed, particularly during the presentation phase, echo the findings of Gils (2005) who noted that the multimodal nature of DST, engaging the senses of sight, sound, and touch, can foster greater learner involvement. The students' self-reported enjoyment of the project and perceived learning gains from the collaborative elements, such as group discussions and peer feedback, align with researching the social and constructivist benefits of DST (Mirza, 2020; Bui et al., 2021; Windy & Chakim, 2023).

An important contribution of the current study is the in-depth examination of students' perceptions and the specific challenges they faced during the DST process. The struggles with technical aspects like video recording and software use echo findings from previous studies (Yang et al., 2020; Murad et al., 2023), underscoring the need for adequate technical support and scaffolding, particularly when students are new to the DST approach.

The implications of these findings extend beyond the specific context of the study. The positive impacts on student engagement, confidence, and motivation suggest that DST could be a valuable pedagogical tool across a range of educational settings and subject areas, not just language learning. Integrating DST into classrooms, whether for primary, secondary, or tertiary students, could help foster active learning, collaborative skills, and creative expression.

However, the technical challenges identified in this and other studies indicate that the successful implementation of DST requires careful planning and support. Educators should consider providing students with training on the necessary software and hardware and opportunities to practice the technical aspects before embarking on more complex DST projects. Additionally, ensuring reliable access to technology infrastructure, such as stable internet connectivity and adequate device availability, can help mitigate the logistical hurdles.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that DST may be particularly beneficial for certain learner populations, such as those struggling with traditional forms of language learning or expression. DST's multimodal and creative nature can help engage and motivate these students, while providing them with alternative avenues for demonstrating their understanding and skills.

In summary, the present study contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the use of digital storytelling in language education and beyond. By comparing the findings with previous research and exploring the broader implications, this discussion underscores the potential of DST as a powerful pedagogical approach that can foster student engagement, confidence, and learning across diverse educational settings.

Taking all of the above factors into account, the study's primary goal was to examine the influence of digital storytelling on non-English majoring language learners rather than to do a descriptive analysis. The study's fundamental goal was to capture the significant benefits and close ties of employing digital storytelling to investigate student engagement, confidence, and motivation and students' widely held perception of DST as a useful pedagogical tool.

*1) Improving student engagement, confidence and motivation*

According to the findings of this study, student involvement ranges from moderate to high. In other words, students are more engaged in the lesson. The study's findings also revealed that students showed extremely low involvement when completing their storyboards and strong engagement when presenting their finished works on occasion. A questionnaire and teacher observations were examined to obtain students' perceptions of the study. The questionnaire findings showed that the students enjoyed the project and are confident that they gained much from the group discussions, cooperation, peer correction, and self-study. They struggled with recording, drafting the screenplay, and formatting the story. The students were inspired when they saw their artwork exhibited in front of the entire class. As a result, they are more likely to take on more projects utilizing Digital Storytelling Technology in the future. Another conclusion from Gils' comprehensive research indicates that students are more likely to engage in real-world interactions because DST offers the comparative benefit of engaging three separate senses: hands, eyes, and ears (Gils, 2005). Also, suffice it to state that DST is useful in students' fundamental reinforcement work, particularly for teenagers who struggle with speaking and writing. According to Ohler (2022), digital storytelling has a significant positive impact on assisting students to become true storytellers rather than passive consumers of information.

*2) Evaluation criteria based on Overall Performance Impact*

Table 14 displays the average scores for the given assessment criteria for 20 specific case studies. The study's findings revealed that university students were satisfied with the story's essential elements such as storyline, pace, soundtrack, characters, and story theme. This is because they meticulously planned their storyboard. The fact that they spent more time writing and editing their stories was critical to their success. Only Groups 12 and 20 have a bad track record in terms of soundtrack and plot. This greatly impacted their "Plot" and "Soundtrack" scores.

*3) Gaining student perceptions of their learning through DST*

On the bright side, the good news is that students are overwhelmingly positive about using DST in EFL classrooms. Students indicated that DST enhanced their use of technology in the classroom. The study found that students encountered three types of difficulties (screenwriting, video-visual development and software application) in digital development work. During the script writing phase, the learners face serious difficulties such as lack of knowledge of the field and background knowledge or not finding the right photo for their script. Furthermore, the study was defined by students, the obvious points of DST including the time-consuming approach, severe time constraints, and weak WiFi connections. Nevertheless, the students fully appreciate the benefits of DST because it is fun, motivating and creative. In a pilot study, Ahmad and Yamat (2020) reported that students' status files changed since they considered DST fun and enjoyable.

The bulk of the literature on the subject of digital storytelling served as the basis for this study. The results suggest that digital storytelling enhances student-teacher interaction, develops cooperation, makes learning more fun, and increases involvement throughout the course. Yang and Wu (2021) note that there are numerous tools available for creating digital stories. However, it is crucial to select a tool appropriate for the students' age and grade level, while also considering the complexity of the software. There is abundant evidence to demonstrate that the participants primarily struggled with the program. Due to time-consuming tasks or technical difficulties, as well as the software language, this may also be linked to the fact that using such

software was new for the students. In this line, Roy (2024) offers support, noting that the participants needed technical assistance and that the implementation process took a lot of time. This is strongly supported by Arroba & Acosta (2021), who assert that the students had difficulty with digital storytelling because it was their first time using the software. Participants said that digital storytelling promotes cooperation and communication among students and their understanding of the subject matter; however, the author noted that some may need technical support throughout the process. It should be noted that providing users with technical support before they create digital stories and paying for their software and hardware requirements will aid the entire process. According to Lambert (2021), language instruction is one of the most crucial domains for implementing digital storytelling. Vice et al. (2023) state that digital storytelling improves vocabulary learning. For students of all ages and grade levels who want to create their own digital stories, digital storytelling may be a wonderful instructional tool (Robin, 2020). Based on the findings of this study, it is possible to predict that integrating digital storytelling in language education courses would provide beneficial effects.

### *Limitations and suggestions for future research*

The following are some of the study's key drawbacks. To begin, numerical data from 83 undergraduate students at a university in a certain country have a small sample size and are limited by the large environment. As a result, the outcomes should be seen as exemplary rather than usual. Besides, this study was heavily influenced by constructive feedback from General English students. Furthermore, this article did not provide feasible alternatives to employing the DST software, nor did it systematically examine the best length of time to use the DST to enhance the efficacy of learning English. Most importantly, this paper should be read numerous times to critically investigate and fully comprehend the flip side of the coin and the barriers to it.

Since this study lasted just five weeks, a longitudinal study (one semester) is recommended. Since this study is limited to students' perceptions of their potential for language acquisition and motivation, the true impact of DST on language learning and motivation should be examined. Quasi-experimental research and/or longitudinal studies leveraging pre-/post-tests should be carried out to evaluate the significant contributions of DST in language learning situations so that instructors have a clearer understanding of DST's performance when considering using it in their own classrooms.

Additionally, the qualitative research that was selected for this study is also one of the possible weaknesses of the research, as it is often full of wrong turns and mistakes. In order to make this paper as meaningful as possible, I felt it necessary to address some of the fundamental weaknesses of the study as follows:

• **Missing data**: As I mentioned earlier when I started the data analysis phase, I noticed that the response from Google Docs didn't get the expected response. Thus, the opportunity to collect this accurate data was lost.

• **Member checks**: Given the considerable time between data collection and analysis in the study, I could only perform one member check with the participant. However, this proved useful as the participant confirmed that the account was specific and trustworthy.

## Conclusion

The use of digital storytelling in higher education is still in its infancy but has offered a new approach for students to present work and reflect on their work, as predicted by Gregori-Signes

(2008a, p. 6): "*Digital storytelling has the edge of being a new genre for most students, it sparks interest and is therefore probably a good way to boost student efforts*". The findings of this study suggest that incorporating digital storytelling (DST) in higher education language courses can positively impact student engagement and linguistic development. Students reported finding the DST tasks to be fascinating and engaging and believed that the DST project improved their language skills. These results challenge the notion that engagement and motivation cannot coexist in academic tasks, as proposed by Russell et al. (2005). However, it is important to note that this was a small-scale, exploratory case study conducted at a single institution. To build on these initial findings, future research should:

- Expand the sample size and include participants from diverse educational backgrounds, such as English majors and more advanced language learners. This will help establish the generalizability of the results.
- Investigate the specific affordances of different digital storytelling tools and technologies and how their features impact language acquisition and student motivation. This could involve comparative studies of various DST platforms and approaches.
- Assess the long-term effects of DST integration on student outcomes, such as language proficiency, critical thinking, and digital literacy skills. Longitudinal studies would provide valuable insights into the sustained benefits of this pedagogical approach.
- Explore the instructor's role in designing and facilitating effective DST-based learning experiences. Gathering feedback from educators on the challenges and best practices for implementing DST would inform professional development and support for wider adoption.
- Incorporate qualitative methods, such as interviews and classroom observations, to better understand the student experience and the nuances of DST integration in different educational contexts.

By addressing these areas for future research, scholars can better understand how digital storytelling can be leveraged to enhance language learning and student engagement in higher education. The findings from this study suggest that DST is a promising pedagogical approach, but further exploration is needed to realize its full potential. Last but not least, the affordances of various forms of technology must be considered when assessing how they can be used to improve language acquisition and student motivation so that students can study well using the technologies at their disposal.

*"Pedagogy is the driver, technology is the accelerator"*

(Merzifonluoglu: 2018, p.67 as cited in Fullan & Quinn et al 2015, p.82)

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## Authors' contributions

The primary goal of this study was to examine students' complete awareness and profound satisfaction with the application of DST in classrooms with non-English majors. The findings of this research provide a fresh theoretical contribution to the use of DST in foreign language education in Vietnam and present an excellent overview of how DST may be used in language classrooms in a targeted manner. As a result, this pioneering study's beneficial contributions are expected to significantly influence educational policy and practice.

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# The Effects of Culture Shock on The Cultural Adaptation of Overseas Students in Thailand at King Mongkut's University

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the phenomenon of culture shock experienced by international students studying in Thailand for their master's degree and explore their strategies for adapting to Thai culture. This research employed a semi-structured interview with eight international students at King Mongkut's University of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand. The participants completed the open-ended questionnaires and provided responses via a Google Docs link. The writer will use Kalervo Oberg's four stages of culture shock to better understand culture shock and the adaptation process of overseas students studying in Thailand. The research illustrates the causes behind international students' desire to pursue educational institutions in Thailand and their experiences with culture shock across the four stages, along with their adaptation process. The findings suggest that overseas students suffer from culture shock in relation to their surroundings, language, cultural norms, and academic areas.

**Keywords**: Culture Shock, International Students, Cross-Cultural Adaptation

## Introduction

International education offers international students the chance to immerse themselves in diverse cultures, cultivate innovative perspectives and behaviors, forge new friendships, enhance their cross-cultural knowledge and skills, boost self-esteem and confidence, and foster personal growth by living independently in a foreign culture (Haisley et al., 2021). The increasing significance of English-based higher education in Thailand has led to a notable increase in the number of overseas exchange students coming to the country in recent years. According to the British Council's 2018 report, Thailand is becoming a significant study destination in the area (Council, 2018). It attracted approximately 12,000 students in 2017, as estimated by UNESCO, which was also mentioned by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in 2019 (Education, 2019). One significant reason for this rise is the

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deliberate and focused efforts by the government to promote Thailand as a leading destination for higher education in the region.

While several Asean nations may share cultural similarities in certain ways, residing in Thailand presents a significant contrast. Initially, international students in Thailand may encounter several cultural shocks, such as language barriers, unfamiliar cuisine, distinct communication techniques, and so on. These experiences might potentially result in feelings of stress, frustration, loneliness, and homesickness. Culture shock, as defined by Cameron and Kirkman, refers to the profound psychological change experienced by individuals when they are unable to utilize their familiar cultural framework to effectively interact with, understand, or interpret aspects of their new cultural environment (Helen Cameron & Catherine Kirkman, 2010). It is a fact that international students who pursue their education abroad could face several difficulties in various aspects of their lives, such as communication, financial budgets, academic performance, homesickness, and social interactions with peers (Furnham A, Bochner S, 1986). Culture shock is a profound phenomenon that occurs when an individual relocates to a new location and experiences feelings of homesickness, social isolation from unfamiliar communities, or difficulty in adjusting to strange customs (Fitzpatrick, 2017). It would lead to various negative consequences, especially pressure, anxiety, and physical or mental health problems (Martin & Nakayama, 2022).

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of culture shock on overseas students studying in Thailand and to compile strategies for surviving this challenging time. This means that the aim of the study is to analyze how international students can cope with culture shock and develop effective ways of coping with culture shock while studying in Thailand. Eight overseas students pursuing a Master's degree at Thailand's King Mongkut University will have their responses recorded through semi-structured interviews. Each participant had a particular time of residence in Thailand, ranging from one year to around three years.

## Literature review

### *Advantages of education in Thailand*

When students are deciding whether to study in their native country or study abroad, they should consider the benefits and drawbacks of each option. According to a survey, Gen Y students choose to study abroad in order to acquire additional experience, pursue personal development, and fulfill their potential (Pope et al., 2014). According to another study, students opt to study abroad in order to immerse themselves in a distinct culture and language. Additional advantages of studying abroad include the opportunity to reside and work in a foreign country and enhance one's curriculum vitae and the prestige associated with attending an international university. On the other hand, certain considerations must be taken into account, such as the expenses associated with living and the distance from loved ones (Doyle et al., 2009).

A study revealed that the primary determinants that have a beneficial impact on the influx of international students in Thailand are educational and economic incentives. In addition, the Thai Ministry of Education has established a reform strategy to facilitate the transformation of Thailand into a prominent educational center in the ASEAN area. The specific objectives of

this development plan are to improve students' proficiency in the English language and the languages spoken in neighboring countries, and streamline visa issuance regulations to facilitate the mobility of foreign teachers and students to Thailand. The objective is to cooperate together with other ASEAN countries to facilitate the free flow of skilled labor in seven specific areas, including engineering, architecture, surveying, nursing, medical, dentistry, and accounting services (Education, 2019). Thailand is not only more cost-effective than the prominent locations of Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US, but it also has lower tuition and living expenses compared to the leading Southeast Asian destinations of Malaysia and Singapore. When applying for a Thai student visa, students are simply required to demonstrate that they possess funds up to US$360. This requirement serves as evidence of the country's affordability for living and studying. (In comparison, students are required to have a minimum of US$20,000 in funds to cover both tuition and living expenses when applying for a study visa in Australia, Canada, and the US) (ICEF, 2024).

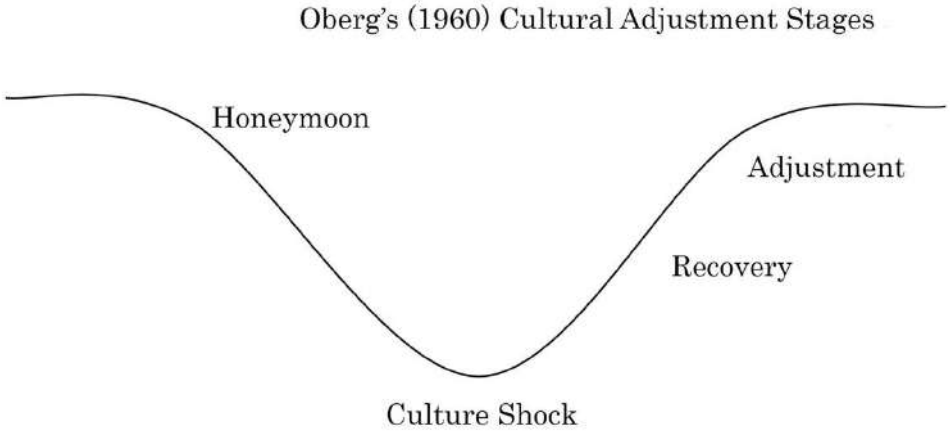
### *Number of international students in Thailand in 2022*

In 2022, the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation in Thailand reported a surge in the population of international students studying in Thai universities, reaching a total of over 30,000, compared to 25,100 in 2019. Since 2009, there has been a steady annual growth of approximately 2,000 foreign students enrolling in Thai universities, primarily driven by a surge in demand from China. According to University World News, the number of Chinese students studying in Thailand has doubled in the last five years, reaching over 20,000. Furthermore, reports indicate that Chinese students account for 60% of all international students in Thailand and Malaysia. Myanmar and Cambodia are Thailand's second and third largest student sources, respectively. However, in 2022, each country sent fewer than 5,000 students (ICEF, 2024)

### *Definition and the four stages of culture shock by Oberg*

Multiple studies on international students indicate that those who are geographically distant from their families and friends frequently experience culture shock when residing in a different country. This includes challenges related to social customs, language, academic systems, dietary preferences, and housing arrangements (Hussain & Shen, 2019). A person's ability to adapt to a new culture decreases during culture shock, which might cause behavioral abnormalities or neurotic symptoms in response to stressful situations (Furnham, 2020). The term "culture shock" was first used by anthropologist Kalvero Oberg to describe the fleeting feelings of confusion and unease that people frequently experience when they move to a new country. It develops when a person realizes that their long-held assumptions and ways of behaving aren't working anymore (Oberg, 1960). Despite its frequency, it is an unpleasant experience that helps people gain confidence, learn about other cultures, and expand their horizons (Milstein, 2005).

Oberg likens the experience of coming into contact with a new culture to taking a fish out of its native water habitat. Irrespective of an individual's level of flexibility, they will still experience a sense of shock. Subsequently, feelings of irritation and anxiousness will arise.




First Stage: The honeymoon stage refers to the first period when individuals arrive in a foreign nation and still derive pleasure from the novel experiences and cultural aspects. The duration of this period may range from a few days or weeks to a maximum of six months, contingent upon the particular circumstances. They could choose to stay at a hotel where the staff members are fluent in their language and display courteous behavior towards foreign guests. Their overseas experience will inspire them, but if they stay longer, they will encounter real-life situations that will lead to the next phase.

Second Stage: As a result of the challenging encounters, individuals develop a heightened level of aggression and animosity toward the host nation. The initial stage of the visitor experience differs from this one. Rural residents exhibit a lack of empathy towards the individual's predicament. They begin to critique the host nation and exhibit stereotyped behaviors. If they can manage it, they will advance to the next phase. However, if individuals are unable to cope with the situation, it may potentially result in a nervous breakdown.

Third Stage: Individuals begin to navigate independently, acquire fluency in the language of the host nation, and strive to adapt to the unfamiliar cultural environment. They continue to face some challenges in their daily lives, but they possess a mindset of being open to accepting these challenges. In the second stage, individuals develop a sense of humor by utilizing their challenges to make jokes rather than engaging in criticism of others. They gain more self-assurance through verbal communication and navigating alone.

Fourth Stage: Individuals undergo a total transformation and readily embrace the customs and culture of the host nation. They may exist without experiencing anxiety and embrace the notion that this is an alternative way of life. They develop a greater comprehension of the intentions and messages conveyed by individuals in the host country and start to derive pleasure from their experience of residing in the host country.

Strategies for overcoming culture shock: According to the study, it is important for individuals to familiarize themselves with the local population by acquiring basic language skills. Additionally, acquiring knowledge about people's actions and their perspectives on money and time would be beneficial. Subsequently, this subject matter can be employed as a means to initiate a discussion with individuals. Additionally, participate in the endeavors of the residents

and gain insight into their reactions. Engaging in conversation might facilitate the individual's comprehension of the underlying causes behind their behavioral patterns (Oberg, 1960)

### *Thai Culture*

Regarding Thai culture, specifically focusing on the concept of "Khwam-KrengJai" (KKJ), Empathy refers to an individual's level of concern for others' emotions, mental well-being, and welfare, which distinguishes it from mere politeness. Politeness mostly pertains to one's perception and self-value (Intachakra, 2012). Therefore, if individuals from other countries want to adapt to Thai society, which does not prioritize "Khwam-Kreng-Jai," it could result in culture shock and hinder their ability to assimilate into Thai culture. Additionally, another illustration of Thai culture is the concept of "saving face," which pertains to preserving one's ego and social status. Therefore, the act of losing one's reputation or social standing is actively prevented. By possessing this value, one can effectively evade criticism. An additional significant principle is reciprocal association, which entails reciprocating acts of kindness and acknowledging the benevolence demonstrated by others (Komin, 1990). Another Thai cultural value is "Sanuk," which refers to the pursuit of happiness and the avoidance of excessive seriousness. Thai individuals extensively employed this notion to evaluate their social status and academic journey. In a Thai classroom, instructors typically provide engaging and intriguing examples. Thai individuals anticipate that work and enjoyment will be intertwined (Kempner & Tierney, 2018).

### *Research Gaps*

Although numerous studies have examined the experiences of international students and their confrontations with culture shock and the majority of this research concentrates on Western contexts or higher education institutions in more globally acknowledged countries, such as the United States, or United Kingdom (Furnham, 2020). However, Southeast Asia, particularly Thailand, has received minimal attention as an emerging hub for international education.

Despite the extensive discourse surrounding Oberg's (1960) four phases of culture shock, there is a paucity of research investigating how students from adjacent ASEAN nations, possessing specific cultural affinities with Thailand, experience these stages distinctively. Furthermore, studies on coping techniques for culture shock within the Thai setting remain limited for educators to help their international learners in their cultural adaptation processes.

This study seeks to address these gaps by examining the culture shock experiences of international students in Thailand, emphasizing their navigation of the distinctive cultural landscape, and identifying the most effective solutions. This research analyzes the distinct obstacles encountered by students from ASEAN countries and suggests tailored coping strategies, providing valuable insights for both students and educational institutions in Thailand.

### *Research Questions*

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey was seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does culture shock affect overseas students at King Mongkut’s University in Thailand?

2. Which factors facilitate cultural adaptation for international students dealing with culture shock at King Mongkut's University?

## Methods

### *Pedagogical Setting & Participants*

According to Oberg's earlier research, culture shock can be divided into four stages: honeymoon, crisis, adjustment, and recovery. The duration of each stage can vary based on individuals. The research framework is utilized to gather and examine data from every international student who has experienced living and studying in Thailand. Through conducting interviews, valuable insights can be obtained regarding the gradual adaptation of participants to different stages of culture shock over time. This paradigm enables researchers to investigate the specific types of culture shock that international students encounter, as well as the duration of each stage experienced by individual students. Additionally, it is beneficial to examine the process of cross-cultural adaptation experienced by the individual.

The sample is comprised of eight international students who are now pursuing a Master's degree at King Mongkut's University of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand. As a result, the interviewees might offer valuable insights into the cultural aspect of the research. Despite their shared status as students, they possess diverse backgrounds. Some individuals have resided in Thailand for an extended duration, although others have stayed for a comparatively shorter duration. Furthermore, each individual possesses a distinct proficiency level in the English language, which could potentially impact their living and learning experiences.

All of the eight participants are full-time students at King Mongkut's University of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand, for a Master's Degree in English Language. Their ages range from under 25 to 40, and the percentage of males and females in this survey was the same at 50%. The majority of participants were at the advanced level for English according to CEFR at 75%, and the proportion for intermediate and upper intermediate was the same at 12,5%. Half of these participants came from Vietnam (4 people accounted for 50%), while there were two learners coming from China (25%). Meanwhile, only one learner came from Korea and the same data for Myanmar at 12,5%. The proportion of learners living in Thailand for 1-2 years was 50%, whereas 37,5% was the data for learners living in Thailand for less than 1 year, and only 12,5% showed that one participant resided in Thailand for 3-4 years.

### *Design of the Study*

The project aims to investigate the phenomenon of culture shock experienced by international students studying in Thailand, as well as their strategies for adapting to Thai culture. Thus, to address the research issue, a qualitative research approach will be employed, namely utilizing in-depth interviews. The research technique employed a descriptive qualitative approach. The data collection method involved conducting an interview consisting of five questions pertaining to culture shock and adaptability.

### *Data collection & analysis*

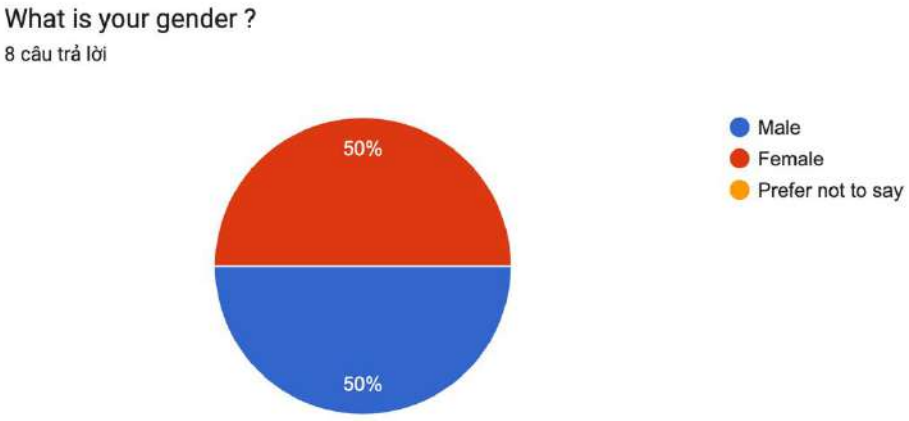
Data collection is conducted through the use of an in-depth interview technique. Open-ended questions are employed to elicit more comprehensive responses from respondents, enabling them to provide additional details regarding their understanding and explanations of actions, feelings, intentions, and attitudes. The respondent has the freedom to answer without any constraints, which facilitates the discovery of novel and distinctive insights. A set of open-ended inquiries is formulated to ascertain the specific instances of culture shock encountered by the international student in relation to Thai culture, as well as the duration of each experience in accordance with Oberg's four stages of culture shock. Additionally, the questions aim to explore the strategies employed by the students to acclimatize themselves to the new cultural environment.

### *Open-ended question list*

1. Could you tell me about your feelings before moving to Thailand (environment, people, language, food, economy)?
2. How did you feel for a few months in Thailand (excited, scared)?
3. Could you tell me about the effects of culture shock on your studies?
4. How do you manage to adjust yourself to the cultural differences? Were there any challenges?
5. What advice would you give to an international learner for moving to Thailand?

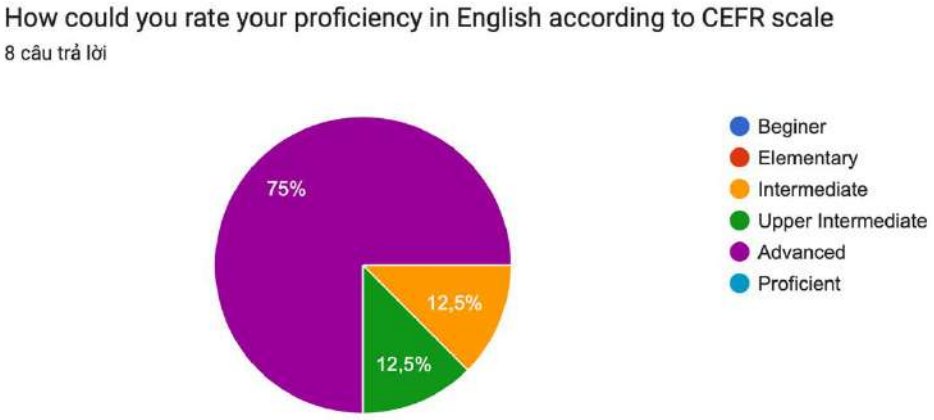
## Results/Findings

Figure 1.
Background information of participants



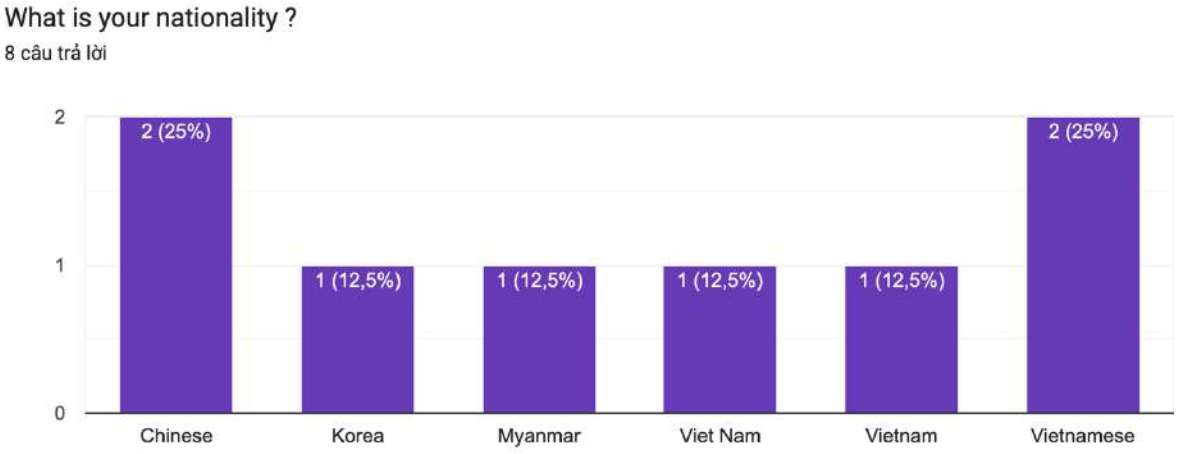

Eight postgraduate learners at King Mongkut's University of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand, had engaged in this survey, and half of them were male while the other was their counterpart.

Figure 2.
English proficiency




Both of them were ranked from Intermediate (B1) to Advanced (C1) according to the CEFR scale.

Figure 3.
Participants' nationalities

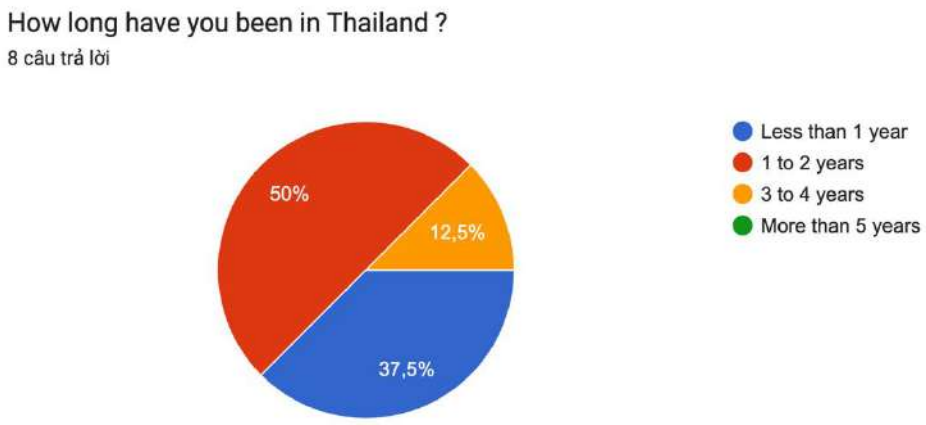



Eight postgraduate learners came from several nations, namely China, Korea, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Most of them came from Vietnam, which stood at 50%; China was the second-highest number at 25%. Korea and Myanmar shared the same percentage of data 12.5%

*The amount of time living in Thailand.*

The pie chart shows that 12.5% was the proportion of postgraduate learners living in Thailand from 3 to 40 years, while half of them had lived in Thailand from 1 to 2 years. The percentage of postgraduate students residing in Thailand for less than a year was 37.5%.

Figure 4.
Times to Thailand




*Reasons to study in Thailand.*

All of the interviewees have a good impression of Thailand. One of the students said “Thailand has several universities ranked under 1000 in the world and I am here on a scholarship” (student 5). This means that this student chooses Thailand because of its university rank and reputation. Another student agrees that the quality of education is also one of the important factors (student 2). Meanwhile, students 2 and 3 said that the reason for choosing Thailand as an ideal educational environment was Thai culture. Lastly, students 7 and 8 agreed that Thailand could help them have "a better future" and "gain more about life experience."

*Feelings before going to Thailand*

Four international students expressed their lack of concern about living in Thailand and their enthusiasm for residing there (excited feelings). Except for student number 2, those four students lack interest or consideration for food, people, and the environment. In addition, student number 5 anticipates his new academic path and looks forward to interacting with his classmates and lecturers. However, students numbers 3 and 6 showed that they were concerned about the weather being hot and student number 6 worried about the polluted environment. In detail, only one student, number 6 worried about food and people negatively "The people would not speak English well and the food will be too spicy and exotic". In contrast, student number 7 believed that "Thai people are friendly, open-minded, inclusive, and colorful and full of artistic vibe".

*First few months of living and studying in Thailand (Honeymoon stage)*

All of the students experienced excited feelings, and three of them especially felt very excited (student numbers 3, 5, and 8). Student number 5 shared that "I was mostly excited about new experiences such as new food, new places, and new friends "which means he had a positive feeling toward local food, places, and friends in Thailand. Specifically, student number 2 said, "Excited of new things happening both in life and in academics," showing his interest in the learning environment. However, only one student said that she also felt excited and lonely.

### *Cultural Differences and Culture Shock (Crisis Stage)*

Several problems related to their daily lives and learning in terms of stress on the study, early morning, food, language barrier, left traffic system, the study, and Thai people. First of all, three students from the interview mentioned the language barrier in studying and daily communication; student number 4 said "Language Barrier as well when not all Thai can speak English and their accent is quite distinctive to me when I first listened to" and others shared that language is also an important factor which affects their daily life. Due to the fact that Thai people speak different English, their accents are not clear because of their mother tongue. Additionally, student number 2 showed that the language barrier also makes his study feel stressful and leads to a situation where he does not pay attention to work and assignments. As a result, student number 6 also demonstrated her effort to learn Thai faster so that she could adapt easily and more conveniently. Student number 1 considered Thai people to prevail because, in some situations, she found that Thai people are quite overwhelming; however, student number 3 had an opposite viewpoint about Thai people, saying that she found them friendly. When it comes to daily life routine, student number 5 mentioned the "early morning," which was significantly different from his homeland and led to several detrimental effects on his daily life, such as breakfast or shopping. Because he was originally from Vietnam, he had a habit of waking up early and having breakfast every day at around 7 to 8 in the morning, a practice that is not common in Thai culture. Regarding traffic, student number 5 expressed his fear of the left-hand traffic system in Thailand, citing it as a significant difference from his home country of Myanmar. However, he has since overcome this fear. Lastly, the last student emphasized the food, which is quite spicy, and he was the only one who showed his difficulty with local cuisine.

### *Adjusting to Thai culture (Adjustment stage)*

The participants were asked about the approach they employed to acclimatize to Thai culture. All seven international students expressed their assimilation efforts by emulating the behavior and customs of Thai individuals, with the exception of student number eight, who believed he could easily adapt to Thai culture because food was the only issue he needed to manage. Most of them agreed that they should try their best to adapt themselves to Thai culture and people in numerous ways. To illustrate, student number 6 said, "I observe the people and ask a lot from my Thai friends. It was difficult because I had many questions, but it was fun and memorable." Thanks to asking and observing his peers, he could easily strengthen his bonds with his friends and get used to the new culture. Similarly, student number 3 also had the same idea as student number 6 about an effective solution to get along with Thai people in order to overcome cultural shock challenges. In an academic environment, student number 2 is supposed to talk to his close lecturers and peers and hang out with them after class so as to improve his understanding of Thai culture and level up their mood. In addition, both students, number 1 and 5, had the same idea about their behavior and belief that they should be nice, friendly, and open-minded about everything, which could easily help them gain in-depth knowledge about Thai culture and people. Moreover, student number 4 shared that he would learn how to cook to avoid dining out, and he would make an effort to learn the Thai language, such as several common phrases and words, to communicate effectively.

### *The international students' attitude towards Thailand (Recovery stage)*

After the adjustment stage, international students often overcome various challenges from their previous stages by implementing effective methods. Students unanimously agreed that Thailand boasts a rich culture, and they held positive attitudes toward Thai people and food. However, after a few days in Thailand, they encountered numerous challenges in their daily lives and studies, including issues related to food, traffic, weather, and interactions with Thai people. Fortunately, they discovered a diverse range of solutions to their problems while studying in Thailand. They considered every factor leading to these difficulties and applied several remedies, such as asking Thai people for help, confiding them in their situations, and trying their best to adopt the cultural aspects of Thailand. Finally, international students explored these issues in various ways to determine the most effective solution to their problems. After the challenging period, they expressed a significant improvement in their attitude towards Thai culture and the development of positive beliefs in it.

The findings substantially enhance the theoretical framework derived from Oberg's model of the four primary stages of culture shock, with major consequences for educational institutions, legislators, and parents. Many international students opt to study abroad or under immigration in some specific nations like Thai Land, with the primary purpose of pursuing advanced education in a particular discipline. The behavior displays the audacity to embrace risks and investigate diverse civilizations. The reasons for culture shock are intricate and varied, with differing perspectives in the academic community regarding its origins. These participants hold specific perspectives regarding the new culture, resulting in uneasiness that then intensifies into culture shock. Upon entering a new cultural milieu, individuals frequently experience initial intrigue; nevertheless, after several months, they may succumb to feelings of despondency owing to the culture's foreign elements. Fortunately, they would progressively recuperate after completely acclimating to the new cultural milieu. From an individual standpoint, the factors contributing to culture shock encompass age, educational setting, language proficiency relevant to the destination country, and psychological resilience, among others. This research elucidated the diverse causes of culture shock and offered an in-depth comprehension of the elevated expectations of international learners. The biggest cause of cultural shock among international students is the language communication barrier. The intersection of several cultures will result in learners experiencing psychological distress over time, ultimately manifesting as cultural shock. Lifestyle disparities are considered the secondary source of cultural shock. Numerous international learners are unaccustomed to novel dietary practices, transit systems, legal frameworks, schedules, healthcare provisions, culinary traditions, and similar aspects.

After identifying several factors that contribute to culture shock among a diverse range of international learners, cultural adaptation is a dynamic and continuous process of transmission, in contrast to culture shock. Adaptation can be categorized into short-term acculturation, which is mostly individual-focused, and long-term acculturation, which predominantly pertains to immigrants and ethnic groups. Numerous international students frequently encounter varying levels of cultural shock due to shifts in their roles, lifestyle disparities, language communication obstacles, and other factors. Yan posits that individuals often perceive their cross-cultural maladjustment as a form of illness, believing they can only fully engage in other endeavors

until the adverse effects of this cyclical condition diminish (Yan, 2008). On the other hand, the majority of participants in this research expressed a positive attitude towards this process, as it provided them with valuable experience in overcoming culture shock. International learners in this research shared that they could also discover various effective solutions to overcome this phenomenon by themselves and then give useful advice to other learners.

However, educators, policymakers, and parents should consider specific courses and activities for their students to prepare for before moving to another country. This research provides educational institutions and policymakers with various opinions from particular international learners in Asia. Paul identified communication and social skills as universal challenges faced by students abroad (Paul, 1988). Prior to traveling overseas, learners should focus on acquiring an understanding of the target language's culture and explore different cultures through diverse media, including films, television, and the Internet, as this can effectively mitigate culture shock. By assimilating the culture of the target language, international students can more successfully identify cultural distinctions, enabling them to navigate various situations, temporal settings, and cultural artifacts of the target language, hence minimizing cultural interference in cross-cultural interactions. Cross-cultural communication facilitates the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of one's own culture through the exchange and collaboration of diverse cultural content. Cognitive competence and behavioral competence are the primary categories of intercultural communication competency. Cognitive aptitude in a cross-cultural context primarily pertains to the thorough comprehension and nuanced appreciation of the complexities and diversities inherent in the communication processes among various nations and ethnic groups. Behavioral competence denotes "the capacity to address diverse communication challenges, encompassing the ability to initiate and sustain reciprocal relationships and to effectively execute communication tasks (Bradford, 2003). To enhance cross-cultural communication skills, students should undergo cross-cultural training in physics prior to studying abroad, simulating real-world scenarios to develop their problem-solving abilities and experience the cultural differences of a foreign nation. TED talks were known as one of the most effective ways for EFL learners to improve their speaking skills and enhance their cultural understanding. Students have a chance to understand many subjects and acquire insights into other cultures and traditions, as well as the usage of the English language in different nations (Tran Ngoc Kim Cuong & Nguyen Thi Thu Hang, 2024). Simultaneously, psychological therapy should be provided to overseas students to ensure they comprehend the potential adverse consequences of culture shock and to assist them in preparing for their psychological responses in advance.

Students newly arrived in distant countries must maintain communication with their families, discuss their academic and living circumstances, and share local customs and traditions to mitigate homesickness. A positive self-concept aids pupils in mitigating self-doubt and enables them to engage in new experiences with reduced stress (Carley, 2006). Generally, individuals who exhibit optimism possess a distinct advantage in managing interpersonal issues and demonstrate superior academic success. International students ought to engage with cultural groups in the target language, including teachers, classmates, and host families, with a pleasant and optimistic demeanor, while addressing cultural shock, even if it occurs subconsciously. A positive mental state is essential to mitigate the adverse consequences of culture shock. Students

should endeavor to eschew native cultural consciousness that emphasizes national culture, ethics, and the value systems of language and culture, among other aspects deemed superior to those of other nations, particularly when engaging in conversations with strangers during their time abroad, in order to maintain a certain distance (Jin, 1980). This behavior will have significant negative consequences on an individual's life and may lead to a challenging assimilation into the target language culture. Students ought to approach the cultural disparities across various nations or ethnic groups in cross-cultural communication with an open and inclusive mindset while eliminating internal biases against unfamiliar cultures. International students and native speakers should maintain an open and inclusive mindset to recognize, comprehend, and accept one another's cultural concepts and differences. Cultural conflict and fusion are objective and interdependent phenomena akin to the diversity of global cultures that foster exchanges among many nations. They must acknowledge and adjust to the variances in cross-cultural communication to mitigate shock effects. When in a foreign nation, adhere to the customs of the local populace. It is essential to methodically enhance our cultural literacy and acclimatize to the host country's culture, while simultaneously refining our communication abilities for effective cross-cultural interaction, thereby mitigating culture shock.

## Discussion

The aim of this study is to provide education advisers and international students interested in studying in Thailand with valuable insights into the experiences of international students who encounter Culture Shock when adapting to Thai culture. Before traveling to Thailand, the education adviser should actively promote the development of cultural awareness among their students about Thai culture. This will provide students with a more distinct understanding of the disparities between Thai culture and the cultures of their respective nations. Additionally, it is advisable to motivate students to acquire extensive knowledge about the culture of Thailand before their visit. This will enhance their understanding, thereby reducing the likelihood or magnitude of culture shock. It is crucial to acquire fundamental knowledge of the Thai language, as it cannot be assumed that every individual will communicate in English with the learner. Acquiring this fundamental language proficiency will be advantageous in everyday situations and minimize misunderstandings between Thai students or individuals and overseas students. During the Honeymoon stage, learners continue to derive pleasure and feel enthusiastic about their new surroundings. As a result, it is imperative for education advisers to closely monitor learners' behaviors in the midst of a crisis. They may have challenges in their daily lives, experience significant stress, feel isolated, and long for their home. Hence, it is recommended that counseling services be offered to students and that they be aware of having a dependable source of support, both in terms of their physical and mental well-being. Thus, they could additionally assist students by promoting a favorable mindset and adaptability. During the adjustment stage, students may find it helpful to investigate cultural differences on their own. Academic advisers can facilitate independent learning and encourage students to take risks while also emphasizing the availability of counseling services at all times. This means that international learners should increase their autonomy in learning a language by significantly taking control of their learning process and avoiding over-reliance on native teachers or peers

(Hanh et al., 2024). In order to train learners to become independent, it is necessary to consider them in all of their dimensions. If students begin to depend less on the academic advisor, it indicates that they have reached the recovery stage. The student can fully assimilate into Thai culture.

The findings essentially conform to the previous research publications concerning experiences in an overseas culture. Similarly, Anita Safitri identified that culture shock and communication adaptations caused foreign students to experience these things, such as differences in language, customs, culture, weather, and the mindset of local people (Anita Safitri et al., 2024). However, foreign students at Sumbawa University of Technology need quite a long time to be able to deal with culture shock and adapt to a new environment, compared to international learners at King Mongkut's University, which is one of the biggest impacts felt by foreign students at Sumbawa University of Technology when they want to communicate or adapt to local society or local students. Moreover, Hassan Radwan Jamal and Saodah Wok described four stages of culture shock based on Oberg and found that the cultural stage of adaptation had a positive relationship with the cultural stage of honeymoon and the cultural stage of adjustment (Hassan & Wok, 2020). These findings are also related to this research about the way international learners overcome culture shock after the first period. Additionally, this research shared a similar perspective that culture shock and adaptation exhibited a tenuous, although notable correlation, which aligns with other studies that emphasize the difficulties faced by overseas students. Culture shock frequently elicits many feelings, including anger, irritation, and homesickness, when individuals acclimate to their new environment. Moreover, both participants from these researches also adapted themselves significantly between stage adjustment and adaptation by the time international learners started acclimatizing to their new environment. Lastly, Chatchawan Chaiyasat also emphasized the most important factor of culture shock: barriers leading to several misunderstandings for overseas learners at school and home (Chaiyasat, 2020). Many French respondents in this work noted that the inadequate English language proficiency of Thai students and teachers posed significant challenges, especially in the classroom setting where English was primarily utilized for learning, instruction, and assessment. Both researchers shared the same results about the limit of the English language of certain local students as a detrimental factor to the classroom environment.

Due to the limited sample size of students from King Mongkut's University, the study's findings may not be applicable to international students in other towns and universities in Thailand, as their experiences may vary. The manifestation of culture shock varies among individuals, as it is contingent upon their unique experiences. Thus, a more extensive sample size or quantitative research on this topic would enable us to better comprehend culture shock among overseas students. This topic can be further explored in the post-adjustment or post-graduation phase of students' lives, just before returning to their native country. They have already undergone a shift.

## Conclusion

The research framework investigates the phenomenon of culture shock experienced by eight international students studying in Thailand and examines their strategies for adapting to Thai culture. This is achieved through interviews with current master's degree students at King Mongkut's University in Thailand. The study framework incorporates Kalervo Oberg's four stages of culture shock as the underlying hypothesis. In summary, all of them experienced excitement before moving to Thailand, and this feeling persisted even after the first few months, with the exception of one student who also experienced loneliness. In terms of cultural shocks or crisis stages, most of them shared the same thoughts about language barriers, food, and daily routines. However, they also learned how to adapt to this new life in Thailand in several ways, such as learning new Thai language words or phrases, adapting to the new daily life, and learning how to cook by themselves. Thanks to friendly Thai people and students, these participants could overcome their difficulties effectively and easily.

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## Biodata

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# The Impact of Online Resources via Personal Devices on English-Majored Students' Learning Practices

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of online resources accessed through personal technological devices in the learning practice of English-majored students. Eighty students were involved in this investigation; the author used a qualitative approach to analyze students' weekly news reports and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicate that the students have consistently used their smartphones and laptops for reading practice due to their leveled news content. Students perceived this practice positively, acknowledging its benefits for learning vocabulary, developing reading skills, and enhancing background knowledge. They reported improved vocabulary acquisition through word family and collocation learning, enhanced reading speed through skimming, and increased knowledge of current affairs. The study highlights the advantages of this practice, such as portability, convenience, and resource availability, while acknowledging minor drawbacks like note-taking difficulties. Other recommendations are class discussions, bonus marks to motivate the students, discipline, reading of specific topics, and construction of online learning platforms. Generally, this paper indicates that online resources and PTDs shall be helpful in enhancing the actual practice of reading in English-majored students.

**Keywords**: Online resources, personal technological devices, reading practice, perception, effects/impacts

## Introduction

Rapid technological evolution and overall access to the Internet brought great changes in education, especially in EFL learning. In modern times, personal technological devices like smartphones and laptops have been part of every individual's life, allowing for unparalleled access to language learning beyond a traditional classroom setting.

This paper discusses profound changes functioned by the integration of online resources (voanews.com, english.vietnamnet.vn, bbc.com/news, foxnews.com, tuoitrenews.vn, etc.), particularly online news platforms through PTDs on the reading practice of English-majored students at a university in Central Vietnam where English language education has grown in

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importance, despite the fact that greater class sizes and a lack of resources frequently make it difficult to teach the language effectively. Although traditional methods have been the mainstay of English education in the past, there has been a steady change in recent years towards the integration of internet resources to improve students' vocabulary, listening comprehension, and exposure to different cultures. Based on a qualitative approach, this research explores how this innovative approach influences students' learning of vocabulary, developing reading skills, and acquiring background knowledge. The study analyzed the weekly news reports submitted by first-year students enrolled in one language course, complemented by in-depth interviews with them to understand their perceptions and experiences. By closely examining how the students use online resources (i.e. British Council: Learn English, BBC Learning English, and DyNED) on their PTDs, this paper attempts to highlight the pros and cons and the general effect that the practice has on EFL reading comprehension. The findings will be of importance in giving insights into how the transformative potential of technology for improving language learning outcomes can be harnessed by learners and educators alike.

## Literature Review

### *M-learning*

In the 21st century, students have become so integrated with the online world that they can only ever be imagined with a mobile device in their hands. Dwivedi et al. (2021) explain that among a set of devices, mobile technologies include varieties such as mobile phones, electronic dictionaries, PDAs, and tablet computers. These devices have recently been considered effective tools for developing educational practices since they allow unique functionalities for learning. According to Zang and Shen (2024), m-learning is a new learning model that enables learners to access any learning material at any time and from any location, thus depending on wireless networks and the Internet. Tools that support m-learning are basically all types of mobile technologies applied to laptops, tablets, and smartphones. Quan et al. (2024) describe m-learning as an idea where learners are not constrained to one place and thus can exploit some learning opportunities afforded by portable technologies. This mode of learning is characterized by spontaneity, personalization, informality, contextual relevance, portability, and ubiquity. With these features, the application of m-learning has been greatly utilized in educational settings and some instructors have even called for the inclusion of mobile phones in pedagogy as well (Nguyễn Văn Long & Nguyễn Nữ Thùy Uyên, 2021; Ngo & Doan, 2023).

### *Extensive and intensive reading approaches*

Sun (2023) recommends that for optimal reading benefit, students should do some extensive and intensive reading. The former allows students to choose texts for pleasure and language improvement, while the latter is teacher-directed reading to develop certain receptive skills. Online resources support this dual approach by promoting comprehension of the content in written form, which allows communication across time and distance (Alobaid, 2020). The essence of reading encompasses the capability of the reader to make meaning out of texts using interpretive and critical thinking. The schemata theory itself points to the necessity of background knowledge. This interplay between linguistic knowledge and world knowledge is

essential for successful reading. It is reinforced by Kaefer (2020), who expresses that reading is not totally a visual activity but relies mostly on the readers' prior knowledge and experience. Özgür Küfi (2023) then distinguishes between content schemata, which concern knowledge about people, cultures, and concepts, and formal schemata, or knowledge about discourse structure. The understanding herein presumes the importance of extensive reading; hence, it is a practice that advances linguistic competence and vocabulary and is also important to comprehensive reading ability development. The different genres of the written texts, as posited by Özgür Küfi (2023), inform the expectations and purposes of the readers, which again direct their choices for short- and long-term retention.

### *Strategies for vocabulary and reading comprehension development*

The suggested strategies draw on bottom-up and top-down processes following Özgür Küfi (2023) and involve identifying reading purposes, phonemic rules, skimming to get the main idea, and semantic mapping techniques.

The "SQ3R" sequence is one effective method for deeply engaging with a body of text, as it entails surveying, questioning, reading, reciting, and reviewing (Nabilla & Asmara, 2022). Vocabulary acquisition is also a fundamental process in language learning, serving as the bridge between the four core language skills (Kazu & Kuvvetli, 2023; Thach, 2022). According to Zhang (2022), there is listening comprehension and fluency with proper vocabulary knowledge. Effective vocabulary instruction should combine explicit teaching with incidental learning, as Sok and Han (2020) propose, by allowing the learners to encounter new vocabulary in various contexts. Zhang (2022) added that aside from receptive and productive vocabulary, although receptive skills involve recognizing and recalling word meanings, productive skills regard active use of those words in speech or writing. Ultimately, vocabulary provides the grounds for a realistic base in effective language learning since it allows learners to understand and be understood. Finally, even though the significance of the use of the target language is acknowledged in language learning and teaching, learners' L1 also plays an important role, especially for young EFL learners.

Wijnands et al. (2021) maintain that L1 facilitates learning since the student can express his ideas clearly and understand new vocabulary and grammatical structures more appropriately. According to Nazari et al. (2023), the basic roles of L1 in the classroom are instructional, managerial, and affective. Indeed, research has shown that using L1 while learning new vocabulary can help learners retain and learn the items better, especially at lower levels of proficiency. Hence, a balanced approach that uses both L1 and L2 strategies is going to optimize vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency.

### *Research Questions*

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do English-major students utilize online resources for reading practice?
2. What are the perceptions of these students regarding the use of online resources?
3. What impact does the use of online resources have on these English majors?

## Methods

### *Pedagogical Setting & Participants*

This study has adopted a qualitative research design since Indhiarti and Sudarwati (2021) observed that the strength of qualitative data lies in its ability to focus on real ordinary events in natural settings. The method allows data collection in proximity to the event(s) of interest; this has been of great assistance in obtaining a better understanding of events over a considerable period. As such, the findings from the students' weekly reports and semi-structured interviews were organized into descriptive interpretations of the case under study, rather than in merely numerical format.

The research was carried out at a university in Central Vietnam, which annually recruits about 1,000 new undergraduates. In such circumstances, classes are usually quite large; most courses for all four skills have between 35 and 45 students in one class. The total number of the focus group replied to 80 students (69 female and 11 male) enrolled in "English B1.2" course when they were between 17-19 years old. The participants are at a lower intermediate level of English proficiency. The students at this level can generally handle routine tasks related to familiar topics in English but are still struggling with using more complicated or abstract language.

### *Data collection methods*

Data collection included the students' weekly reports and semi-structured interviews. In the two "English B1.2" classes, students were required to engage with weekly readings from different news, about which they reported in a format that was provided. Due to flexible dialog, semi-structured interviews allowed for more in-depth information about the experiences and practices of the students out of the classroom setting. The interviews were conducted both in English and Vietnamese, catering to the differential proficiency levels of the participants, and included questions designed to probe the content of their weekly reports.

### *Data analysis methodologies*

Two qualitative sets of data, namely students' reports, and interview data, were analyzed. These are labeled from S1 to S80 for efficient management. Thematic analysis, informed by Caskurlu et al. (2021), was de rigueur and followed several steps: familiarization with the data, development of a coding framework based on the content of data, and theoretical insights that had been developed. Coding reliability was also checked by a colleague with extensive experience, reaching an inter-coder reliability index of 89.3%. Further steps included identifying and refining the themes, selecting representative excerpts, and synpapering the findings into a coherent report. Students' voices were represented accurately in all parts of the analysis.

## Results/Findings

### *How do English-major students utilize online resources for reading practice?*

The researcher pointed out several online reading practice sources at the beginning of the semester, encouraging students to access them with the use of personal technological devices.

At the end of the course, students summarized their reading experiences in final reports. The most visited sites for this purpose are British Council: Learn English, BBC Learning English, and DyNED, where news items are presented at three levels of proficiency, and students can select texts according to their current level of English. Indeed, this feature was especially welcomed by many respondents. Thus, S11 reported reading at Level 1 first because she found other texts too difficult, whereas S13 said that switching between levels helped her enhance her reading skills. Similarly, S21, who comes from a remote area where there is limited access to English learning materials, thanked these resources that allowed her to practice reading effectively.

A related finding was that the students independently searched for other resources besides what was suggested by the teacher-researcher. The use of websites offering bookmarking services became one of the strategies for accessing convenience to news. S28 reported saving links and browsing through the news during discretionary moments; S21 reported convenience in the reception of automatic news updates via the BBC app. Another important source of news was Facebook. S55 explained: “By subscribing to various pertinent pages, the feed will offer a constant flow of articles, including those shared by friends.”

Regarding the devices, students preferred smartphones and laptops for carrying out reading practice. Some students preferred mobile devices as they are portable and 'Wi-Fi is available' anytime. For example, S21 said that her smartphone enabled her to read news anytime and anywhere. Other participants shared the same opinion. Overall, a set of resources recommended by teachers with the emergence of mobile apps and social network sites supported students' at-home reading practices.

*What are the perceptions of these students regarding the use of online resources?*

In the "English B1.2" course, 80 English-majored students were assigned a weekly news report as part of their formative assessment, which accounted for 30% of the students' evaluation. Students are encouraged to read news articles outside of the classroom and submit one report every week uploaded onto the class's LMS account. The teacher-researcher analyzed data over this semester and noted several key findings:

The number of submitted reports varied considerably. More than half of the participants submitted 9 or 10 reports, the highest number expected to submit for this course. About 95% of the students were on time, submitting their report on time, monitored through the history feature of LMS. The rest, 5%, were usually one day late but because of usually acceptable reasons. The PTDs were used not only to access news articles but also to submit and report the analysis. It is also an added value when S42 identified that sending and reading reports on the smartphone facilitates the reporting activity with much ease.

However, more than 10% submitted less than five, suggesting that not all students found this reading practice to be as useful as others. This could be a point for further investigation into these differences in the perception of using online resources among students, and the discussion of reasons for this will be continued later on in the report.

*What impact does the use of online resources have on these English majors?*

In the experiment, students used different online resources to enhance their reading practice, mainly in vocabulary acquisition, reading ability, and background knowledge.

Vocabulary learning: The students learned word families to understand word forms and to develop their skills in using words in various contexts. S21 reported that learning the word families helped in writing, especially in understanding word placement in sentences in English. In addition, participants also used new words in sentences to improve their receptive and productive skills. S19 reported that the practice of new vocabulary improved the retention and performance of other language tasks such as listening. This was the opportunity to learn about collocations for many students, who realized how words combine in particular contexts. Several learners favored translation as their strategy for comprehension of vocabulary because, with the use of a bilingual dictionary, learning new words was easier.

Reading skills: The "3Rs" approach, reading, reciting, and reviewing as a practice of reading news articles, helped students increase their reading speed and improve comprehension. For instance, S66 reported that she could read more quickly and paraphrase the piece of news after reading it effectively. Other students also liked to read longer articles and enjoyed doing extensive reading, especially with the flexibility provided by PTDs, thus allowing them to read news from different genres.

General knowledge: Students reported that reading online news extended their general knowledge. S46 continued to say that news items brought them in contact with aspects of the world they were unfamiliar with, which was useful at university and significant for their future professions.

In general, online resources have been found to impact positively on vocabulary, reading skills, and broader knowledge building.

Specific suggestions that participants have to improve the use of online resources for reading include class and group discussions to share viewpoints, teacher-led news analysis, and giving bonus marks to encourage the best reports. They suggested discipline in submission could be developed through reading weekly topics to build engagement and collaborative learning. The teacher-researcher suggested that online interaction could be sustained through online interaction tools such as Facebook and Edmodo for discussions and the sharing of news. With the consideration of the time factor, it was recommended that peer review complement the teacher's marking of the weekly report. Besides, strict discipline with timely feedback should be undertaken to improve reading practice with online resources on personal devices.

## Conclusion

The reading practices of the participants in this study were regular, using PTDs like smartphones and laptops, supplemented by mobile apps and Wi-Fi. Their favorite resources were British Council: Learn English and DyNED because they offered texts according to the learners' English proficiency level. Evidence from data analysis also suggests that the integration of online resources significantly enhanced learners' development in three key areas:

vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, and contextual understanding. While participants suggested group discussions, reading tasks on a weekly basis, and bonus marks as motivations, teachers suggested ideas such as using online tools within the classroom and online platforms. These would include implications for educators: motivating learners to continue reading with the support of PTDs, providing ample reading, and promoting collaborative learning. The limitations of the study included the lack of control groups, problems in paraphrasing tasks for students with lower proficiency, and challenges in qualitative data management. These challenges do give motivation for future studies, though. Other recommendations for future research include matching experimental and control groups, reworking the design of tasks to cover more skills, and exploring the impact of online resources on additional language skills. Such results and recommendations may support further and more in-depth research into the use of PTDs during language learning.

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# Exploring the Influence of Social Media and Online Communities on Affordances in ELT

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## ABSTRACT

In modern times, the popularity of social media and online communities play an important role in both daily life and language learning. Social media and online communities have become integral to modern life, offering unique opportunities to transform English Language Teaching (ELT). This literature review examines how the affordances provided by these platforms are reshaping the current landscape of ELT through an ecological perspective. Specifically, the study investigates their influence on teaching and learning practices, focusing on how these affordances foster authentic language use, collaboration, and personalized learning experiences. Additionally, the review explores the implications of these affordances for teachers' strategies in designing dynamic, multimodal learning environments that extend beyond traditional classrooms. By synthesizing findings from recent research (2014–2024), the study highlights the transformative role of social media and online communities in creating enriched affordance environments. These platforms enable greater learner autonomy, cultural awareness, and engagement. The study also identifies practical recommendations for educators to integrate these tools effectively while addressing challenges such as digital literacy and privacy concerns. This review provides a comprehensive understanding of how digital affordances are shaping ELT and suggests strategies for leveraging them in innovative and sustainable teaching practices.

**Keywords**: social media, online communities, English Language Teaching, affordances, ecological perspectives

## Introduction

More and more research studies are being done on how people use social media to learn languages outside of school and institutions (Barrot, 2022). The tools used for this kind of learning are usually more geared toward social and fun activities than official schooling. Some of the interest-based communities that have been studied look at creative ways that massive multiple online players (Reinhardt, 2022), fanfiction groups (Black, 2008), social networking sites like Facebook (Özdemir, 2017) and Twitter (Taskıran et al., 2018), and photo- and video-sharing websites like Flickr (Barton, 2015) and YouTube (Benson, 2016) can be used for

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informal learning. These sites go beyond the standard classroom and give students a lot of freedom in communicating and sharing resources. They offer many benefits that help with language learning, such as real-life language use, chances to connect with others, and access to different cultural points of view (Nasution, 2022).

Thanks to the application of these digital platforms and networks in educational settings, modern instructional methodologies in ELT have undergone great changes. Indeed, utilizing these technologies' capabilities in instruction means that teachers' main responsibility is to design educational activities that optimize students' learning experience to the fullest. According to Pegrum (2014), integrating digitalized instruction into the curriculum provides learning settings that encourage participation and active participation via the use of technology. As to Reinhardt (2022), both conventional teaching strategies and cutting-edge strategies that may meet the many demands of students in this digital era have been reevaluated.

However, despite the rising body of research on the use of social media and online communities in the context of ELT, there is still a substantial gap in our overall grasp of the subject matter. While numerous studies have emphasized the potential benefits of these platforms, there is still a lack of a holistically insightful understanding of the potential affordances they offer on the state-of-the-art picture of instructional approaches (Reinhardt, 2024). Besides, the existing research tends to focus on individual platforms or specific case studies, rather than providing a holistic view of the broader implications. Furthermore, the dynamic and ever-changing nature of social media and online communities demands ongoing research and analysis to guarantee that our knowledge is current (Abdullah et al., 2023; Heil et al., 2016; Tang & Hew, 2017). Moreover, it is noteworthy that despite the promising scenarios these digital forms offer, few studies have investigated their possible practical concerns, such as privacy infringement, students' digital literacy disparities, and teachers' digitized teaching skills (Chen & Tsai, 2021). As a result, additional in-depth study into these elements is critical for providing a broad picture of social media's and online communities' role in contemporary ELT.

The goal of this study is to shed light on how the affordances offered by social media and online communities reshape the current landscape of ELT by evaluating recent relevant research on the aforementioned topics. Furthermore, another purpose of this study is to equip English language instructors who want to include social media and online communities into their teaching practice with practical pedagogical implications. To fulfill these purposes, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

> What affordances do social media and online communities offer in ELT?
>
> How can these affordances inform teachers' strategies for creating enriched learning environments?

## Literature Review

### *Definitions of key concepts*

### *Social Media*

Many scholars have defined the concept of "social media" in various ways (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) mentioned "Web 2.0" as a technological foundation on which social media, a group of Internet-based applications, was built to allow users to create and exchange content. From their viewpoint, social media is an umbrella term with six different categories, including blogs, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, virtual social worlds, communities of content, and collaborative projects. On the other hand, Davis et al. (2014) emphasized the communicative

nature of social media when stating that "social media" included all web-based and mobile applications that assisted users in creating, engaging, and sharing digital content through various communication forms. Maca's description of the concept was slightly different. According to Manca (2020), social media refers to Internet-based applications that serve a wide range of functions, such as sharing photos (e.g., Instagram), searching and organizing information (e.g., Pinterest), sending instant messages (e.g., WhatsApp, Messenger), expressing personal viewpoints (e.g., Twitter), or a mixture of those purposes mentioned above (e.g., Facebook). However, the rapidly changing nature of today's technological environment means that approaches to defining social media still rely solely on functions and communicative forms, which may result in outdated descriptions of the concept and overlook some aspects of the technological influences on modern educational activities. O'Reilly and his colleagues (2018) made valuable additions to the "social media" concept. These include "user participation", which highlights the active involvement of users in interacting with content, "openness", which encourages users to utilize flexible development models and social media tools by opening up technological architectures, and "network effects", which involve showcasing one's activities and accomplishments to a large audience (Zourou, 2019).

### *Online Communities*

One of the concepts that is directly associated with “social media” is online community. According to Preece (2000), an online community is composed of different elements. Firstly, the *individuals* engage in social interaction to fulfill their needs or take on specific roles, such as leading or moderating. Secondly, there should be a *common goal*, which can be a shared interest, mutual need for information exchange, or service, to maintain social interaction among individuals. Thirdly, the community is often operated by agreed *policies* that govern the way people interact, although these policies may not always be explicitly stated. The last element is the *computer systems* that are used to facilitate communication and interactions among the community members.

A number of scholars and educators have realized the limitless potential of online communities for educational purposes in the twenty-first century. Online communities in educational settings can have either a formal or informal character. A formal community is defined by its explicit goals, and the success of an online formal community is measured by its capacity to accomplish these goals and cultivate an environment of collaboration and confidence (Booth, 2012; Bourhis & Dubé, 2010). An informal online community creates a learning ecology (Barrot, 2022). This learning ecosystem encompasses informal environments where collaborative learning occurs. The primary differentiation resides in a shared goal or objective defining a formal community, whereas individual members of an informal society pursue their own unique interests.

### *Affordances and Ecological Perspectives in Social Network-Based ELT*

The employment of social networks in ELT settings is primarily based on the theoretical Concept of Affordances and the Ecological Perspective on Language Learning, which provide insights into how learners utilize and engage with social networks for language acquisition.

### *Affordance*

The concept of affordances was first coined by the psychologist Gibson in 1979, it is defined as the potential actions or interactions that an environment offers to an individual. Later, in the field of education, affordance is expanded to indicate a paradigm shift in our knowledge of language learning (van Lier, 2004). In the process of language acquisition, it is necessary for learners to get exposure to the rich affordance environment. In this sense, social networks, as digital environments, can present a rich source of affordances through the digital environment

that can connect worldwide users as well as authentic sources of materials for several reasons. Firstly, learners can communicate authentically with native speakers and peers worldwide, fostering communicative competence and sociolinguistic awareness (Lyu & Lai, 2024). Secondly, forums and group chats, among other features, encourage community formation and cooperation, which promotes language learning (Godwin-Jones, 2021). In addition, text, pictures, movies, and audio are among the many multimodal resources that have the potential to satisfy a wide range of different learning styles and accelerate the process of language acquisition (Kern et al., 2004). By actively choosing learning materials, interactive modes, and adaptive tools that suit their personal needs and interests, students may be able to customize their learning experiences, which triggers learning motivation and autonomy (Chapelle, 2009).

### *The Ecological Perspective on Language Learning*

The ecological perspective views language learning as a complex, dynamic system influenced by learners' characteristics, social interactions, and the broader socio-cultural context (Larsen-Freeman, 1997; van Lier, 2004). According to Tudor (2003, p. 10), the ecological approach "involves exploring the deep script of human interaction with the learning process, not in isolation, but within the broader context of students' concerns, attitudes, and perceptions." This is an explanation of what the ecological perspective entails. This viewpoint has elaborated on how students' individual traits, interpersonal relationships, and socio-cultural environment affect language learning. In the context of social networks, this perspective emphasizes the interplay between learners and their digital environment. Learners actively navigate and utilize the affordances offered by social networks to achieve their language learning goals within a dynamic social and cultural context. This viewpoint emphasizes the dynamic interaction between students and their changing digital environment (Lyu & Lai, 2024). The platform features, the kind of social interactions, and the individual peculiarities of the learners are considered to be related and mutually beneficial to the learning process (Lai et al., 2016). Importantly, learners actively exercise agency in selecting how to make use of social network opportunities to accomplish their language learning objectives (Godwin-Jones, 2021).

## Methods

### *Design of the Study*

This research review investigates the influence that online communities and social media have on the affordances of ELT and suggests the implications for teacher’s strategies. The decision to focus on this topic stems from the growing recognition of social media and online communities as transformative tools in modern language education. These platforms provide unique affordances that foster authentic communication, collaboration, and personalized learning, reshaping traditional instructional methodologies. By synthesizing findings from prior studies through an ecological perspective, this research aims to provide educators with practical insights for leveraging these affordances effectively.

The need to capture a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon guided the choice of a literature review as the research method. A full literature evaluation was conducted to synthesize knowledge from diverse studies, ensuring that findings reflect a broad range of perspectives and contexts. This approach allows for a holistic examination of the affordances provided by social media and online communities and their implications for ELT.

### *Data collection & analysis*

To collect the data, researchers selected a sizable number of published articles from prestigious academic databases, such as Google Scholar, ProQuest, JSTOR, Web of Science, and ERIC (Education Resources Information Center). Criteria for this first stage of the screening process are the following keywords: “Social media", “Online communities”, “ELT”, “English Language Teaching”, “Affordances”, “Technology in education”, “Teacher professional development”, “Learner engagement”. Moreover, to capture the recent research trends and state-of-the-art influential findings of development, only studies that were published within the last ten years (2014-2024) were chosen.

The second phase involves skimming the abstracts of the selected papers. During this stage, specific requirements were strictly adhered to guarantee that the chosen studies were relevant to the research questions and of high quality. Qualified papers should meet the following requirements. Firstly, they must specifically discuss the role of social media and online communities in ELT, with a focus on affordances. Secondly, they must be based on a peer-reviewed journal article, book chapter, conference proceedings, or credible report from an established educational organization. Seminal works and foundational studies were also included to provide a comprehensive historical context. Lastly, all included studies had to be published in English to ensure accessibility for analysis and to maintain relevance to the focus on English Language Teaching.

Table 1

Key Themes in Social Media and Online Communities for ELT.

| **Theme** | **Description** | **Key References** |
|---|---|---|
| Enhanced Communication and Interaction | Explores how social media and online communities facilitate communication and interaction in ELT. | Abdullah et al. (2023); Gao et al. (2017); Godwin-Jones (2018); Greenhow & Askari (2017); Naghdipour & Manca (2023); Tang & Hew (2017); Thomas (2020). |
| Collaborative Learning and Peer Feedback | Investigates how digital platforms support collaborative learning and peer feedback processes. | Barton (2015); Dellatola et al. (2020); Gao et al. (2017); Oh et al. (2020); Wang & Chen (2020); Yeh & Mitric (2019); Yuan et al. (2021). |
| Authentic Materials and Richer Multimodal Environment | Examines the role of social media in providing authentic materials and creating a multimodal environment for language learning. | Allsop (2016); Benson (2016); Godwin-Jones (2018); Otajonova (2024); Purnama (2017); Thomas (2020). |
| Personalized Learning | Delves into how these platforms enable personalized learning experiences and promote learner autonomy. | Allsop (2016), Benson (2016), Heil et al. (2016), Lai et al. (2016), and Yadav (2021). |

After this process, the selected papers were put through a multi-stage theme analysis. Part of this method was carefully reviewing each study to find the most important results and see how they connected to the research goals. It was very hard to keep track of all the themes, trends, and findings that kept coming up about how online groups and social media affect teaching English. The focus was on their unique benefits to teachers and students. The study questions guided the categorization of the detected themes into larger thematic areas, which allowed for

a thorough synthesis of the data to derive broad insights and conclusions on the impact of various digital platforms on ELT.

Thematic analysis of studies published between 2014 and 2024 identified several key sub-themes, each reflecting distinct aspects of how social media and online communities influence English Language Teaching (ELT). These sub-themes and their descriptions are summarized in the Table 1 above.

## Findings

### *Reshaping of affordances in ELT through social media and online communities*

Many studies have already been done that show how online and social media sites have completely changed how English language learners and teachers use the language. These tools help both students and teachers in many ways, such as by letting them communicate, work together, and access real language materials. When students have no other way to learn the language or see how well they're doing, it's much harder to teach them a second language (Siddig, 2020). Using social media in school in a smart way that encourages student participation and communication could help them learn more. The idea behind this is that students can judge their English skills by interacting with others on social media sites. Also, kids can improve their language skills on social media by working together, sharing their work, and getting helpful feedback (Godwin-Jones, 2021). Altogether, the data showed that online groups and social media can help people learn languages in a lot of different ways.

### *Enhanced Communication and Interaction*

The main benefit of social networks is that they make it easier to talk to each other and share information. This is something that regular classes can't do. For example, social media sites like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook allow students to talk to their peers in real-time and later on. Researchers have found that having these kinds of talks in real life can help people improve their speaking skills (Abdullah et al., 2023; Thomas, 2020). In particular, talking to people from around the world is an important part of learning a language because it exposes students to authentic language materials, such as everyday words, phrases, and colloquial expressions (Godwin-Jones, 2018). In addition, students can add videos to their talks on social networking sites (Siddig, 2020). Because of this, social networks and online groups can provide a more complete setting for students to experience real conversation and work together with people from around the world. As for the potential of mobile social media, Gao et al. (2017) and Naghdipour and Manca, (2023) claimed that it can create a stimulating learning environment that encourages active participation and remarkably fosters learners' attention and autonomy. In the same vein, another study by Greenhow and Askari (2017) strengthened this idea by stating that mobile social media promotes engagement between teachers and students. Overall, it can be concluded from the above findings that the use of social media in ELT aligns with ecological approaches, as it provides diverse and dynamic opportunities for language acquisition (Tang & Hew, 2017).

### *Collaborative Learning and Peer Feedback*

Collaborative learning and peer feedback that are believed to contribute to language acquisition could also be conducted effectively by online communities and social media. Edmodo, Google Docs, and Padlet are just a few examples of online platforms that provide limitless opportunities for students to collaborate on writing, editing, and mutual feedback (Yeh & Mitric, 2019; Yuan et al., 2021). Regarding social media, recent findings have shown that mobile platforms may

efficiently provide a stimulating learning environment that encourages active participation. In other words, these social media platforms may offer a stimulating learning environment that triggers learners' interest and autonomy (Gao et al., 2017). It can also promote engagement for teachers and students (Dellatola et al., 2020). Indeed, Barton (2015) found that allowing interactive comments in 'comment' sections has generated handy conversational places combining social networking with media-sharing functionalities on YouTube and Flickr. In the work of Wang and Chen (2020), 'Liking' and 'sharing' videos with friends for conversations is a common way for Thai university students to learn the language on YouTube. In light of these results, it seems that the features of these types of media-sharing websites facilitate multimodal social interactions centered on certain content or activities. As a result, these platforms' multimedia sharing can provide the affordances that help enhance the learning experiences. These affordances are not limited to the boundaries of conventional classrooms, but they are expanded to digital sites, which can offer better flexibility and a larger range of participants. From an ecological perspective, the use of mobile social media enhances language learning by facilitating collaborative learning and fostering a sense of community (Tang & Hew, 2017).

### *Authentic Materials and Richer Multimodal Environment*

Thirdly, a plethora of credible resources, including films, articles, podcasts, and live news updates, are readily available via online forums and social media. According to Godwin-Jones (2018) and Otajonova (2024), students exposed to real-world information improve their listening and reading comprehension abilities and gain cultural awareness. Besides the wide range of authentic materials, social media and online forums also offer a richer multimodal environment for the users. Allsop (2016), Purnama (2017), Thomas (2020) as well as Abdullah et al. (2023) found that users of Instagram and TikTok, respectively, take advantage of these new capabilities to create and share language learning material. Benson (2016) uses YouTube to demonstrate how multimodal digital texts are becoming. He explains that multimodal textual creation occurs when individuals remix written texts in new digital environments using visual media and other semiotic resources. Purnama (2017) examined an Instagram account to discover how Indonesian students use memes. Nguyen (2024) demonstrates how online resources accessed through personal devices enrich learners' reading practices by providing leveled content and exposure to diverse perspectives. This approach enhances vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, and cultural understanding, making it a valuable strategy for creating authentic learning experiences. In short, the multimodal textual creation and sharing facilitated by social media platforms contribute to a more dynamic and engaging language learning experience.

### *Personalized Learning*

Fourthly, social networking sites also provide customized educational opportunities catered to the needs of each learner and promote self-directed learning. Self-direction is essential for effective learning. Self-direction is vital in language instruction (Lai et al., 2016). This may be done using technology and collaborative learning. Learners of English as a second language may work together to achieve their objectives. This applies particularly when learners share a mother tongue and want to acquire the same foreign language. Collaboration improves self-directed learning and social media may help English learners by offering a common platform (Benson, 2016; Lai et al., 2016). Learners may cooperate and produce ideas using social media platforms like Facebook pages and groups, WhatsApp chat groups, etc. By doing so, students may recognize and fix their mistakes, improving their learning. Social media in second language instruction is similar to group debates in science, where collaborative engagement improves learning. Group learning improves performance because students may interact more

freely with peers than instructors (Allsop, 2016; Lai et al., 2016). Thus, social media in ESL training might improve student performance.

Besides, online discussion boards and language learning applications (like Duolingo and Memrise) let students choose their own subjects, study at their own speed, and get feedback right away (Heil et al., 2016). In addition, motive and self-directed learning are increased by this autonomy (Benson, 2016). Learning results may be better when students feel more responsible and in charge of their education in personalized learning settings (Yadav, 2021). Social media lets students take charge of their education and control the learning process, which is one of the most effective ways to learn languages (Benson, 2016). Do et al. (2024) emphasize the critical role of technology self-efficacy in fostering learner autonomy. Their findings reveal that higher self-efficacy correlates with increased engagement and better utilization of online tools, underscoring the importance of confidence-building strategies in technology-mediated environments. Consequently, personalized learning is a special affordance offered by social networks to the language learning process to fulfill learners' needs.

### *Implications for teachers*

In terms of the second research question, there are some key points for teachers' teaching practice to promote affordances through social networks and online communities. The integration of social media and online communities into ELT presents a transformative opportunity for language educators. Teachers need to adopt a proactive and informed approach to harness the affordances of these platforms effectively.

### *Teacher Awareness and Preparedness*

First and foremost, teachers must recognize the potential of social media and online platforms as rich affordance environments that offer unique learning experiences beyond the traditional classroom (Siddig, 2020). This necessitates a shift in mindset, acknowledging the value of these tools for enhancing listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills. These platforms create rich affordance environments, enabling unique learning experiences beyond the traditional classroom setting (Siddig, 2020). This recognition involves understanding their value for enhancing key language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

However, recognition alone is insufficient. Teachers need comprehensive preparation to integrate these platforms effectively. This includes developing a strong grasp of the technical aspects as well as pedagogical strategies that align with the affordances of social media (Naghdipour & Manca, 2023). For instance, teachers can leverage social media to facilitate online communities, curate authentic materials, and design collaborative activities that connect formal instruction with informal communication. Despite these opportunities, research indicates a gap between awareness and implementation due to factors such as skepticism and perceived curricular constraints (Allsop, 2016; Siddig, 2020). Vo and Le (2023) identified key challenges that teachers face in online learning environments, including technological constraints and maintaining student motivation. Their findings highlight the need for professional development programs that equip educators with the technical and pedagogical skills to effectively leverage digital platforms. Overcoming these barriers through professional development and institutional support is essential for widespread adoption.

### *Transformational Potential and Pedagogical Adaptation*

Social media's true transformational potential lies in its ability to redefine language acquisition through dynamic affordances such as community building, resource sharing, and collaborative learning (Nasution, 2022). These affordances support the creation of engaging, learner-centered environments that transcend traditional teaching boundaries.

To capitalize on this potential, teachers must adapt their pedagogical approaches to align with the evolving demands of digital learning environments. For example, blended learning strategies that incorporate multimedia resources, interactive communication tools, and collaborative activities are key. Social media platforms also serve as adaptive tools, enabling personalized learning experiences tailored to individual needs and fostering sustained student engagement (Siddig, 2020). Teachers can create innovative and inclusive learning ecosystems that empower learners by strategically leveraging these affordances.

### *Clear Guidelines and Student Training*

Effective integration of social media necessitates clear guidelines, well-defined learning goals, and expectations for student behavior and participation (Abdullah et al., 2023). Teachers should provide students with guidance and training on utilizing these platforms for language learning purposes, including finding and evaluating reliable sources, engaging in respectful online discussions, and maintaining a focus on language practice (Godwin-Jones, 2021; Greenhow & Askari, 2017).

### *Student Engagement and Constructivist Approaches*

Research indicates that interactive activities like group projects, online chats, and peer feedback exercises can significantly enhance student engagement (Dellatola et al., 2020). However, it's crucial to move beyond teacher-centered approaches and embrace constructivist pedagogies that empower students to actively construct knowledge through technology (Allsop, 2016). Constructivist pedagogies offer an alternative framework by positioning students as active participants in their learning journey. These approaches empower students to construct knowledge by engaging directly with content, peers, and technology (Allsop, 2016). For example, tools such as collaborative document editing platforms or discussion boards allow students to co-create knowledge, reflect on their learning, and develop critical thinking skills in authentic contexts. Adopting constructivist methods also involves designing tasks that integrate real-world applications of language learning, enabling students to see the relevance of their efforts. This approach fosters deeper engagement as students take ownership of their learning process and contribute to shared learning outcomes. Educators can create dynamic, student-centered environments that promote autonomy, collaboration, and sustained engagement by combining interactive activities with constructivist strategies.

### *Professional Development and Digital Literacy*

To fully realize social media's potential in ELT, teachers require ongoing professional development that focuses not only on technical skills but also on pedagogical understanding and technology integration (Bostancıoğlu, 2016; Chen & Tsai, 2021). Additionally, incorporating digital literacy skills into the curriculum is essential to equipping students with the ability to navigate digital spaces safely and critically (Pegrum, 2014).

## Discussion

This literature review underscores the significant role of social media and online communities in reshaping the affordances of ELT). By facilitating authentic communication, collaborative learning, and personalized experiences, these digital platforms offer a dynamic and engaging environment for language acquisition. Similar findings have been noted by Barrot (2022), who systematically reviewed studies on social media's role in informal language learning and emphasized its potential for promoting authentic language use and cultural exchange. Godwin-Jones (2018) also highlighted the transformative capabilities of mobile devices in language

classrooms, particularly in fostering multimodal communication. The findings highlight the potential of these tools to extend learning beyond the traditional classroom, fostering learner autonomy and motivation.

The findings in this study align with previous research, such as Gao et al. (2017) and Dellatola et al. (2020), which observed that social media platforms provide opportunities for collaborative learning and peer feedback that are difficult to achieve in traditional classrooms. For example, Dellatola et al. demonstrated that platforms like Google Docs and Edmodo foster collaborative writing activities that encourage interaction and mutual feedback. Similarly, Gao et al. (2017) emphasized the role of mobile social media in creating stimulating environments that boost learner autonomy and engagement. Moreover, the role of social media in providing personalized learning experiences echoes the work of Benson (2016), who examined the affordances of platforms like Facebook and YouTube in enabling learners to take ownership of their language learning journeys. Benson found that these platforms allowed learners to customize their learning experiences through access to diverse multimodal resources, which is consistent with this review's findings on social media's capacity to provide a rich and flexible learning environment.

Despite these parallels, this review contributes a more holistic perspective by synthesizing findings across a broader range of studies, moving beyond single-platform analyses. While studies like those of Abdullah et al. (2023) and Otajonova (2024) explored specific tools like TikTok and Instagram, this review contextualizes their findings within the broader landscape of digital affordances. This synthesis highlights the collective impact of social media on ELT, emphasizing the interplay between authentic materials, multimodal environments, and learner autonomy.

The implications for teachers are clear: embracing these technologies and strategically integrating them into pedagogical practices is essential. However, successful implementation requires careful planning, teacher training, and ongoing evaluation. Vo and Le (2023) identified barriers such as technological constraints and digital literacy gaps, which align with this review's findings on the challenges faced by educators in leveraging social media effectively. By navigating the challenges and harnessing the opportunities presented by social media and online communities, educators can create transformative learning experiences that empower learners to thrive in the digital age.

This study contributes to the existing literature by offering a holistic understanding of the specific affordances provided by social media and online communities in ELT, and how these affordances can reshape instructional approaches. While previous research has often focused on individual platforms or specific case studies, this review synthesizes findings across various studies to provide a broader perspective on the impact of these technologies.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes the dynamic and evolving nature of social media and online communities, highlighting the need for continuous research and analysis to ensure our understanding remains current and relevant. By addressing the gaps in the literature and offering insights into effective implementation strategies, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the role of social media and online communities in shaping the future of ELT. It provides a valuable resource for educators seeking to leverage these powerful tools to create more engaging, effective, and learner-centered language learning experiences.

## Conclusion

In today's society, communicating on social media and online communities has become essential due to the increasing number of individuals engaging with others outside their immediate social circle. In order to acquire a new language proficiently, it is crucial to use social media as a means of practice without being limited by temporal, geographical, or spatial constraints. The significance of recent research on the use of social media platforms in language teaching lies in its ability to establish future practices.

As a result, this literature study aims to investigate how social media and online groups are contributing to the development of ELT with distinguished affordances and the pedagogical implications for teachers to help create a rich affordance environment for their students outside the traditional classroom. Students and instructors should utilize social media as a tool for experiential, contextual learning as well as social behaviors worthy of critical attention since it is growing in popularity. It is necessary to continue researching how certain media and situational factors might intensify, activate, lessen, or negate the effects of technology-agnostic social media dynamics. Affordances arise from the interaction of instructional ecologies, learner styles, and cultures of use. Mobility and the influence of anytime, anywhere (or always, everywhere) access on learning—and how this genuinely blurs the increasingly antiquated and maybe obsolete barriers between formal and informal learning—are important dynamics that have not been explored in any of the studied literature. There may be opportunities for multimodal, visual, location-based, and other socio-collaborative learning on other social media platforms that have not been thoroughly investigated.

Finally, this study concludes that social media plays an important role in improving language instruction and student performance. The current study offers a more comprehensive picture of how social media and online groups create a rich affordance environment for students outside the traditional classroom and suggests implications for teachers' strategies. This study hopes to contribute to the literature of the field and future research. The research reviewed in this study only scratches the surface of the possibilities for social media tools in language classrooms; language teachers will need to try out different approaches to find what works best for their students and their own situations. In addition, academics, educators, and students will keep looking to social media as a potential new language-learning platform in the years to come. As long as social media keeps influencing our daily lives, including the way we acquire new languages, more studies will be necessary.

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## Biodata

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# Impacts of EMI Courses on English Language Proficiency: Students' Voices

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) courses in fostering the development of English language skills among students majoring in tourism and hospitality at a Vietnamese higher education institution. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 154 EMI students majoring in tourism and hospitality through a questionnaire. The results demonstrate that students perceive the greatest improvement in their specialized English vocabulary knowledge after taking EMI courses. However, writing skills and the ability to use English grammar in daily conversation are perceived to improve the least. Compared to second-year students, third-year students evaluate the effectiveness of EMI courses in improving English language proficiency higher. In addition, EMI students report that in-class activities such as listening to EMI lectures, studying class materials, participating in oral presentations, and making English presentations help enhance students' English.

**Keywords**: EMI, improvement, specialized vocabulary acquisition, tourism and hospitality education, language skills

## Introduction

English-medium instruction (EMI) is becoming more prominent in higher education globally with an increasing number of universities adopting English as a teaching language in specialized content classes. The growing demand for English proficiency and the need for universities to adapt to English as the dominant academic language has resulted from this shift. As educational institutions worldwide aim for what is called "internationalization", EMI programs have become a signficant factor that brings about novel language learning experiences (Villares, 2019). In the past two decades, there has been an exponential increase in the number of EMI programs that are offered by higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide (Macaro et al., 2018). In European higher education, EMI programs have witnessed a dramatic rise in the number, growing more than tenfold from around 700 to over 8000 by 2014 (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014). Following global trends, Asian regions have also expanded their EMI programs considerably, influenced by globalization and the prominence of English as a global

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lingua franca (Hamid et al., 2013).

The globalization of higher education drives the growth of EMI, the spread of English as a global lingua franca as well as the improvement of foreign language skills and employability prospects of local students (Dang et al., 2023). In Vietnam, the emphasis on foreign language education, highlighted in the National Foreign Language 2020 project, has sparked a surge in interest in EMI programs. Phan and Doan (2020, p. 260) refer to EMI as the "flavour of the day" in Vietnam's higher education institutions (HEIs). The recent increase in EMI in Vietnam addresses but reflects the rising enthusiasm for English education that has spread throughout the country's higher education landscape over the last ten years.

Several research have been conducted on Vietnamese EMI students who have reported several improvements in their English competency due to frequent contact with English through EMI courses (Le, 2016; Truong et al., 2020). They reported becoming more confident about their English communication skills, and better at understanding English lectures and reading academic materials. However, there is limited research on how EMI courses influence the English competency of EMI students in this research context. Therefore, this study addresses this research gap by conducting an investigation into the perception of EMI students towards the impact of EMI courses on English language proficiency.

The research aims to examine the impact of EMI courses on students' English proficiency in a Vietnamese higher education institution. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To determine the role of EMI programs in fostering the development of English language skills among students.
- To explore any differences in perceptions between second-year and third-year students regarding the improvement of their English proficiency through EMI courses.
- To investigate students' self-perceptions regarding how classroom activities in EMI classes enhance learners' English language proficiency.

## Literature Review

### *English as a Medium of Instruction*

EMI is a worldwide phenomenon that is expanding in all facets of education and the educational environment (Dearden, 2014). It has significantly increased in universities all over the world (Macaro et al., 2018). The term "medium of instruction" refers to a language other than the language studied as an object itself that is used to deliver the content of nonlanguage subjects (such as mathematics, science, and history in secondary schools and specialized subjects like medicine, architecture, and engineering in tertiary education). The pupils' first language (L1) is frequently the default medium of teaching in schools. Alternatively, the pupils may use the second language (L2) (Ho & Ho, 2004). A variety of terms, including Content-Based Instruction in North America, Immersion in Canada, Content and Language Integrated Learning in Europe, and EMI in post-secondary education in Europe and Asia, have been used to describe the use of an L2 to substitute an L1 for teaching discipline subject. Despite using L2 as the primary language of teaching, these approaches differ from one another in terms of pedagogical

practices, social context, and the linguistic status of the L2 (Lo & Macaro, 2012).

### *Reasons for the Growth of EMI in HEIs*

Several factors drive the growth of EMI in higher education and it is critical to comprehend the factors behind the global acceleration of EMI in HEIs. Primarily, English's status as the international language of science and technology motivates its adoption (Ducker, 2019). EMI is seen as a response to globalization, with universities implementing it for academic, political, social, and economic reasons (Rahman & Mehar Singh, 2020).

According to Galloway and Rose (2015), HEIs may choose to deliver content in English for the following reasons:

- assessing the lastest advancements and boosting global competitiveness to raise the profile internationally
- boosting income (and making up for the shortage at the domestic level)
- improving lecturer and student mobility to help attract talented students
- fostering intercultural competences in graduates
- boosting employability in both domestic and international markets
- enhancing English proficiency
- demonstrating the innovations in English language teaching
- using English in multilingual settings, including those in East and Southern Africa

### *Benefits of EMI*

As a result of EMI's worldwide spread, researchers have explored the benefits of implementing EMI in different academic contexts, notably higher education contexts (Derakhshan et al., 2022; Su & Kong, 2023; Sahan & Şahan, 2024). Derakhshan et al. (2022) has explored the benefits and opportunities of offering EMI courses in Iran. To gather data, 24 EMI instructors and students from different nationalities participated in an open-ended questionnaire. Their responses were examined through content analysis, which revealed several key themes such as 'greater access to specialized resources,' 'increased opportunities to enhance English proficiency,' and 'improved prospects for pursuing education abroad.' Su and Kong (2023) also investigated the positive impacts of implementing EMI in Chinese music classes. Through convenience sampling methods, they surveyed 74 students from different classes and identified six key themes, including the improvement of students' English literacy, the enhancement of academic interest, the familiarization with other cultures, the expansion of English vocabulary, the advancement of musical knowledge, and the increase in students' energy levels. Similarly, Sahan and Şahan (2024) have emphasized the effectiveness the value of EMI in improving English language skills, facilitating the acquisition of technical terms, and providing access to English resources, all of which contribute to academic and professional growth.

### *Challenges Facing EMI Practices*

The adoption of EMI in HEIs has encountered significant challenges despite its benefits. A primary concern is the language proficiency of both students and administrators. Students' and

lecturers' limited English skills can impede academic performance and effective teaching. Research has demonstrated that students with insufficient English proficiency struggle with content understanding, and are prone to longer course completion times, higher dropout rates, and difficulties in communicating disciplinary content (Chapple, 2015; Doiz et al., 2013). According to a study conducted by Le (2016), Vietnamese students commonly struggle with fundamental English academic skills such as taking notes, writing academically, and communicating orally. These students also reported a lack of resources to support the development of these skills within their EMI programs. In addition, the English language courses provided appear to fall short of meeting the educational demands of students in the EMI context (Dang et al., 2023). Several students shared that they were overwhelmed by the changes in teaching and learning methods when transitioning from high school to university (Nguyen et al., 2017). The additional pressure of studying in English heightens their anxiety, while limited access to the latest, high-quality English materials remains another significant challenge for EMI students (T. T. N. Le, 2016).

As students deal with these challenges, educators are also facing their own difficulties in implementing EMI. Content lecturers in higher education institutions encounter various issues that affect both their teaching practices and professional development. EMI instructors frequently report similar issues, such as the need for increased preparation time, difficulties in teaching in a foreign language, and struggles in facilitating students' discussion in English (Beckett & Li, 2012; Birgün, 2023; Do & Le, 2017). Many have reported a lack of confidence among educators when delivering lectures in English, primarily due to limited exposure to the language and insufficient communication skills (T. T. N. Le, 2016; Vu & Burns, 2014). Ultimately, the absence of professional development programs tailored to EMI further hinders teachers' efforts to improve their EMI teaching methods. While some EMI lecturers have the chance to attend training courses (T. T. N. Le, 2016; H. T. Nguyen et al., 2017), these opportunities remain infrequent and lack a structured approach. In conclusion, while EMI brings potential benefits for higher education, both students and lecturers continue to encounter major linguistic and pedagogical challenges that require extensive support and well-organized development programs.

### *EMI Practices in Vietnamese HEIs*

EMI has been becoming increasingly significant in Vietnamese university curricula in recent years. The implementation of EMI has significantly impacted Vietnamese higher education, bringing a new wave of educational reform and internationalization. EMI addresses the demand for internationalized and higher-quality education from Vietnam's fast-growing middle-class population (Bharadwaj et al., 2013). It also contributes to the broader governmental goal of internationalizing the sector by aligning university curricula with international standards, fostering foreign investment, and attracting international students (Dinh & Nguyen, 2019; Rizvi, 2020; L. Tran & Marginson, 2018; Trinh & Conner, 2019; Vinuniversity, 2023). EMI facilitates collaborations with over 200 international institutions at the institutional level, enhancing teaching, learning, and staff and student mobility (MOET-International Cooperation Department., 2023). This has led to notable international exchanges, boosting the professional experiences of both staff and students (Nguyen et al., 2016). A study conducted by Nguyen et.

al. (2024) to analyze factors affecting learner autonomy in EMI learning found that factors such as motivation, learning attitudes, and strategies have the greatest influence on the learner autonomy of English-major students in EMI programs. Moreover. EMI students report improved English proficiency, better disciplinary knowledge, and more active learning styles (Ngo, 2019; N. Tran et al., 2019). Additionally, EMI is seen as a stepping stone for further studies abroad and enhances graduates' employability (Tran et al., 2019; Truong et al., 2020). EMI lecturers gain professional development through exposure to English, international collaboration, and financial incentives (Le, 2016; Truong, 2017). These benefits demonstrate the significant role of EMI in advancing the internationalization and development of Vietnamese higher education (Curle et al., 2020).

Several challenges were also reported in earlier studies in Vietnamese HEIs contexts (M. Le, 2012; H. T. Nguyen et al., 2016, 2017; Vu & Burns, 2014). Using Kaplan and Baldauf's (1997) language-in-education planning framework, Nguyen et al. (2016) explored how a Vietnamese public university employed EMI to adapt to the government's new policy of institutional autonomy. Their case study, which relied on interviews for data collection, examined policies concerning EMI access, teaching staff, EMI evaluation, and resources. The research explored that the EMI programs failed to meet essential conditions such as lecturers' English proficiency, adequate materials and resources, teacher training, and the creation of social and pedagogical environments necessary for ensuring content and language learning outcomes.

Nguyen et al. (2017), also using the language-in-education planning framework, investigated the implementation of EMI in a Vietnamese university. They observed that the national guidelines for EMI did not allow sufficient time and preparation for institutions. Challenges included English entry requirements, the implementation of imported curricula, students' and lecturers' poor English proficiency, and lecturers' unfamiliarity with EMI-focused pedagogy. In addition, Vu and Burns (2014) conducted a study using questionnaires and interviews to examine the challenges faced by university lecturers. Their findings revealed difficulties related to lecturers' language abilities, students' language competence and learning styles, pedagogical issues, and resource availability. They suggested improvements in lecturers' English proficiency, pedagogical support, institutional investment in English materials and technology, and reconsideration of student recruitment procedures for EMI programs. These recommendations align with those proposed by Nguyen et al. (2017). Additionally, Nguyen (2022) conducted a secondary study to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of translanguaging as a pedagogical approach and explored that the majority of teachers expressed the need for training in designing and implementing translanguaging practices within EMI classroom environments.

### *Impacts of EMI Courses on Students' English Proficiency*

Research on the impact of EMI on students' English proficiency has produced conflicting results, suggesting that additional research is needed (Galloway et al., 2017; Macaro et al., 2018). Some researchers have found that EMI positively influences students' language skills (Chung & Lo, 2023; Sánchez-Pérez, 2023; Vidal & Jarvis, 2020), while others suggest it has no beneficial effect (Bälter et al., 2023; Sah & Li, 2018; Wang & Yu, 2023). The research by Vidal and Jarvis (2020) highlighted the positive effects of EMI in higher education, including

significant gains in students' second language proficiency and a modest improvement in essay quality. However, no substantial changes were observed in lexical diversity. These findings suggested that while EMI may boost language and writing skills, further research is required to fully understand its impact on language development. EMI courses have also been shown to positively impact specific areas of language proficiency, particularly in English writing (Sánchez-Pérez, 2023). This study found that EMI enhanced students' lexical accuracy and vocabulary range, helping them use more accurate and diverse words. However, Sánchez-Pérez (2023) reported that other key writing skills, such as syntax, grammar, organization, and fluency, showed no significant improvement. This suggests that while EMI promotes vocabulary development, it does not fully address broader language proficiency without additional language support. Similarly, EMI was shown to enhance English language skills (Chung & Lo, 2023). Through pre- and post-assessments of two groups – one taking EMI courses and the other participating in Chinese-medium instruction (CMI) courses, the study noted considerable improvement in English listening skills, though reading skills declined. Nevertheless, the EMI group noticeably outperformed the CMI group in both listening and reading tests. Therefore, while both studies have indicated the positive influence of EMI on English language competence, the specific areas of improvement, such as vocabulary, listening, and writing, are influenced by the specific context and implementation of EMI.

While EMI is becoming more widespread worldwide, research into its effectiveness for content and language learning remains inconsistent. One study conducted by Bälter et al. (2023) examined the impact of EMI on students' academic performance in an online setting. By comparing test performance and drop-out rates between students enrolled in an English-medium course and a Swedish-medium course, the study revealed that students in the English-medium course had lower test scores and higher dropout rates compared to those in the Swedish-medium course. The results suggested that EMI may negatively impact students' academic performance under certain conditions. In a qualitative study at a Macau University, Wang and Yu (2023) pointed out that using broad terms like 'content learning' and 'language proficiency' is too vague to assess students' learning outcomes, such as knowledge mastery, access to information, and bilingual proficiency. The study noted that while EMI enhanced some aspects of student learning, it was less effective in enhancing knowledge mastery and bilingual academic proficiency. The researchers also argued that simply raising admission requirements for English proficiency may not be sufficient to address these issues and calls for further research and initiatives to better support students in EMI contexts.

In summary, existing research on the impact of EMI on students' content learning and English proficiency has presented mixed and contradictory results, calling for more in-depth studies. While some studies suggest that EMI boosts English proficiency, others report minimal or no significant gains, highlighting ongoing debate in the field. In the context of Vietnamese HEIs, there is a striking gap in research on the effectiveness of EMI programs, with very few studies investigating long-term language development among EMI students. The lack of comprehensive data on how these programs affect English proficiency after years of participation further emphasizes the need for targeted research. This study addresses to fill this gap by examining the specific impact of EMI courses on students' English proficiency, providing critical insights into whether these courses genuinely contribute to language

development.

### *Research Questions*

To achieve the aim of the study, the survey sought to address the following research questions:

Research question 1: What are the students' perceptions of their English language ability after taking EMI courses?
Research question 2: How do students perceive the impact of different activities in EMI classes on their English language skills?

## Methods

### *Pedagogical Setting & Participants*

This study was conducted at a public institution in northern Vietnam, examining its EMI program, which has been running for two years. The program focuses on tourism and hospitality, offering a four-year degree aimed at preparing students for careers in these fields. In addition to their EMI coursework, students complete six semesters of English for Occupational Purposes to strengthen their professional language skills. The teaching staff consists primarily of lecturers with double degrees who have graduated from top overseas institutions or leading universities in Vietnam, providing students with both industry knowledge and advanced English proficiency. This study aims to evaluate the impact of EMI programs on students' English language skills, explore students' confidence and usage of English before and after EMI courses, identify specific EMI activities that contribute to English language improvement, and provide recommendations for improving the effectiveness of EMI programs in promoting English proficiency in Vietnamese higher education. By examining this relatively new EMI program, the study offers valuable insights into how tourism and hospitality education through English can be optimized to support language development and address the challenges and opportunities within the context of northern Vietnam.

The participants of this study are 154 second- and third-year undergraduate students enrolled in EMI programs at a university in Vietnam. They are majoring in Tourism, Management of Travel Services and Tourism, and Hotel Management at a university in Vietnam. All participants have been pursuing EMI programs for at least one year in the case of second-year students and at least two years for third-year students. During each semester, the students have between four and six subjects which use English as a medium of instruction.

These participants were selected for several reasons. First, their participation in EMI programs was largely voluntary, reflecting a genuine interest in improving their English skills alongside their subject knowledge. Second, most of the students entered these programs with a relatively low level of English proficiency, making them ideal candidates to assess the extent that EMI programs contribute to their language development. By focusing on this group, the research seeks to determine if their language skills had improved after one or more years of studying in an EMI environment.

### *Design of the Questionnaire*

The questionnaire is designed to collect data on students' perspectives regarding the impact of EMI on their English language skills. It consists of five sections, focusing on various aspects of the participants' experiences with EMI. In the first part, the researcher collects basic demographic information from the participants. It includes questions about their year of study (second or third year) and their major, with options for Tourism, Hotel Management, or Management of Travel Services and Tourism. In the second section, students are asked to assess their perceived improvement in English language skills after participating in EMI courses. They rate the improvement in different language skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking, grammar use in daily communication, general vocabulary, and tourism-specific vocabulary) on a 6-point scale ranging from "No improvement" (1) to "Very much improved" (6). In the third part, there are questions to explore students' confidence and usage of English before and after attending EMI courses. Students are asked to reflect on their confidence and fear of making mistakes before starting EMI, as well as how confident and active they feel after engaging in EMI courses. Responses are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 means "Strongly disagree" and 5 means "Strongly agree." In the next part, participants evaluate the impact of specific EMI activities on their English skills. They rate various activities, such as using online resources, attending EMI lectures, group discussions, presentations, and extracurricular activities, in terms of their contribution to vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, communication, and writing skills. The scale ranges from "Very untrue of me" (1) to "Very true of me" (5). In the last section, students evaluate their English proficiency before and after participating in EMI courses using Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale. CEFR scale, ranging from A1 (Basic user) to C2 (Proficient user), is used due to its popularity worldwide and its great contributions to language standards, curricula and revision reform (North, 2014). To accommodate students who may be less familiar with the CEFR framework, the researcher also includes corresponding IELTS band scores as by 2021, more than 60 training centers in Vietnam required international certifications like IELTS, TOEFL, or SAT for student admissions, with IELTS being the most commonly used certification (Vietnamnet, January 2022). Overall, the questionnaire aims to gather detailed insights into how students perceive the role of EMI in improving their English skills and confidence, as well as the effectiveness of specific EMI activities in promoting language development.

### *Data Collection*

In this phase, a draft version of the questionnaire was first sent to the supervisor to feedback. After that, additions, adjustments and other modifications to the wording of certain statements were made to enhance the questionnaire items, remove ambiguity, and prevent any misunderstanding from the participants. The questionnaire was also translated into Vietnamese to ensure that even respondents with limited English proficiency had no difficulties in completing it. After that, approval was obtained to pilot the questionnaire.

After piloting the questionnaire with 19 students, minor modifications were made to improve clarity and consistency in both English and Vietnamese versions. A Cronbach alpha coefficient analysis was conducted using SPSS in order to assess the reliability of the questionnaire items.

The results indicated adequate internal reliability for the constructs measuring perceived English improvement (0.879) and the effectiveness of EMI learning activities (0.918). The researcher then proceeded to collect data for the main study.

The study involved both online and face-to-face data collection. For face-to-face distribution, the researcher was present at the location where the participants were asked to complete the questionnaires. Before participants started, the researcher provided a brief introduction to the study, ensuring that participants understand the research more clearly and enabling the researcher to offer immediate assistance or clarification as needed.

For participants unable to attend in person, the questionnaire was distributed online. For these online versions, the introduction at the beginning of the questionnaire included the research title, its purpose, and the importance of the study, ensuring that participants received the necessary context before proceeding with the survey.

### *Data Analysis*

Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed to interpret the collected quantitative data. The responses from the questionnaires were converted into numerical form for analysis. SPSS 20 was utilized to analyze the survey data. Paired sample tests were conducted to assess students' self-evaluations of their English language proficiency before and after participating in EMI courses. Crosstabulation was used to examine students' self-assessments of their improvement in specific skills—listening, speaking, reading, writing—and language components such as grammar and vocabulary. Mean and standard deviation analyses were applied to evaluate how various EMI class activities contributed to improving English proficiency. The data were presented in graphs and tables for each research question to facilitate synthesis, comparison, and generalization.

## Results

### *Students' Self-Assessment of English Improvement after Participating in EMI Courses*

This section presents students' self-assessment of their English skill improvement after participating in EMI courses, comparing responses from second-year and third-year students. In the first place, the figures for students' self-perception of English listening skills improvement are presented in Table 1. Both data collected from second- and third-year students are shown in the table.

As can be seen from Table 1, in the total results, 50% of students reported moderate improvement in their English listening skills, 20.1% reported 'quite a lot,' and 5.2% felt they had improved 'a very great deal.' Only 0.6% of students reported no improvement at all. Both second-year and third-year students demonstrated consistent responses in the 'moderate' category. Specifically, 51.2% of second-year students and 48.5% of third-year students reported that their English listening skills improved moderately. This suggests that students from both year groups shared a similar perception of their improvement in this middle category. A larger proportion of third-year students (8.8%) compared to second-year students (2.3%) reported that after participating in EMI courses their listening skills improved 'a very great deal.' This

indicates that third-year students were more likely to feel that they had significantly improved their English listening skills than second-year students. A slightly higher percentage of third-year students (86.7%) compared to second-year students (66.3%) reported that their listening skills improved to a moderate extent or higher (combining the categories of 'moderate,' 'quite a lot,' and 'a very great deal'). This shows that third-year students were more likely to perceive a greater degree of improvement in their listening skills overall, whereas a larger portion of second-year students felt their improvement was only 'a little' or less.

**Table 1**

Students' self-assessment of English listening skills improvement

| To what extent have your English listening skills improved? * Crosstabulation | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | To what extent have your English listening skills improved? | | | | | | Total |
| | | Not at all | Very little | A little | Moderate | Quite a lot | A very great deal | |
| Second year | Count | 1 | 7 | 21 | 44 | 11 | 2 | 86 |
| | % within Year of study | 1.2% | 8.1% | 24.4% | 51.2% | 12.8% | 2.3% | 100.0% |
| Third year | Count | 0 | 0 | 9 | 33 | 20 | 6 | 68 |
| | % within Year of study | 0.0% | 0.0% | 13.2% | 48.5% | 29.4% | 8.8% | 100.0% |
| Total | Count | 1 | 7 | 30 | 77 | 31 | 8 | 154 |
| | % within Year of study | 0.6% | 4.5% | 19.5% | 50.0% | 20.1% | 5.2% | 100.0% |

Table 2 presents responses to the question regarding the level of improvement in students' English reading skills.

**Table 2**

Students' self-assessment of English reading skills improvement

| To what extent have your English reading skills improved? * Crosstabulation | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | To what extent have your English reading skills improved? | | | | | Total |
| | | | Very little | A little | Moderate | Quite a lot | A very great deal | |
| | Second year | Count | 5 | 13 | 40 | 24 | 4 | 86 |
| | | % within Year of study | 5.8% | 15.1% | 46.5% | 27.9% | 4.7% | 100.0% |
| | Third year | Count | 0 | 5 | 26 | 28 | 9 | 68 |
| | | % within Year of study | 0.0% | 7.4% | 38.2% | 41.2% | 13.2% | 100.0% |
| Total | | Count | 5 | 18 | 66 | 52 | 13 | 154 |
| | | % within Year of study | 3.2% | 11.7% | 42.9% | 33.8% | 8.4% | 100.0% |

Table 2 indicates that 42.9% of students reported moderate improvement in their English reading skills, while 33.8% experienced 'quite a lot' of improvement, and 8.4% reported 'a very great deal' of improvement. Only 3.2% of students reported 'very little' improvement. The

overall pattern of responses between the two-year groups was similar, as both groups showed a strong trend toward reporting improvement in the 'moderate' and 'quite a lot' categories. However, third-year students reported more improvement in the 'a very great deal' and 'quite a lot' categories, while second-year students had a larger share in the 'a little' category.

Table 3 shows the responses to the question about the extent of improvement in students' English writing skills.

**Table 3**

Students' self-assessment of English writing skills improvement

| To what extent have your English writing skills improved? * Crosstabulation | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | To what extent have your English writing skills improved? | | | | | | Total |
| | | Not at all | Very little | A little | Moderate | Quite a lot | A very great deal | |
| Second year | Count | 3 | 6 | 36 | 31 | 9 | 1 | 86 |
| | % within Year of study | 3.5% | 7.0% | 41.9% | 36.0% | 10.5% | 1.2% | 100.0% |
| Third year | Count | 0 | 5 | 11 | 34 | 13 | 5 | 68 |
| | % within Year of study | 0.0% | 7.4% | 16.2% | 50.0% | 19.1% | 7.4% | 100.0% |
| Total | Count | 3 | 11 | 47 | 65 | 22 | 6 | 154 |
| | % within Year of study | 1.9% | 7.1% | 30.5% | 42.2% | 14.3% | 3.9% | 100% |

Overall, data from Table 3 indicate that 42.2% of students reported moderate improvement in their English writing skills, while 14.3% experienced 'quite a lot' of improvement, and 3.9% indicated 'a very great deal' of improvement. Only 1.9% reported no improvement at all. More specifically, in the 'quite a lot' category, 10.5% of second-year students and 19.1% of third-year students felt significant progress. Regarding 'a very great deal' of improvement, 1.2% of second-year students and 7.4% of third-year students indicated this enhancement level. These figures highlight that third-year students reported a higher level of improvement in writing skills across all categories.

Table 4 showcases the responses to the question about the degree of improvement in students' English speaking skills.

**Table 4**

Students' self-assessment of English speaking skills improvement

| To what extent have your English speaking skills improved? * Crosstabulation | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | To what extent have your English speaking skills improved? | | | | | Total |
| | | Very little | A little | Moderate | Quite a lot | A very great deal | |
| Second year | Count | 3 | 22 | 30 | 26 | 5 | 86 |
| | % within Year of study | 3.5% | 25.6% | 34.9% | 30.2% | 5.8% | 100.0% |
| Third year | Count | 3 | 4 | 21 | 29 | 11 | 68 |
| | % within Year of study | 4.4% | 5.9% | 30.9% | 42.6% | 16.2% | 100.0% |
| Total | Count | 6 | 26 | 51 | 55 | 16 | 154 |
| | % within Year of study | 3.9% | 16.9% | 33.1% | 35.7% | 10.4% | 100.0% |

Regarding speaking skills, 33.1% of students reported moderate improvement in their English-speaking skills, while 35.7% experienced 'quite a lot' of improvement, and 10.4% indicated 'a very great deal' of improvement. Only 3.9% of students reported very little improvement. Overall, 89.7% of third-year students and 70.9% of second-year students reported moderate or higher improvement, showing that third-year students perceived greater overall progress in terms of speaking skills.

Table 5 highlights the responses regarding students' ability to use English grammar in daily communication after completing EMI courses.

**Table 5**

Students' self-assessment of their ability to apply English grammar in everyday communication after taking EMI courses

To what extent has your ability to apply English grammar in everyday communication improved? * Crosstabulation

| | | | To what extent has your ability to apply English grammar in everyday communication improved? | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Not at all | Very little | A little | Moderate | Quite a lot | A very great deal | Total |
| | Second year | Count | 1 | 9 | 25 | 38 | 12 | 1 | 86 |
| | | % within Year of study | 1.2% | 10.5% | 29.1% | 44.2% | 14.0% | 1.2% | 100.0% |
| | Third year | Count | 0 | 2 | 9 | 25 | 24 | 8 | 68 |
| | | % within Year of study | 0.0% | 2.9% | 13.2% | 36.8% | 35.3% | 11.8% | 100.0% |
| Total | | Count | 1 | 11 | 34 | 63 | 36 | 9 | 154 |
| | | % within Year of study | 0.6% | 7.1% | 22.1% | 40.9% | 23.4% | 5.8% | 100.0% |

As can be seen from Table 5, a larger proportion of third-year students (11.8%) compared to second-year students (1.2%) reported that their grammar skills improved 'a very great deal.' Additionally, a higher percentage of third-year students (83.8%) compared to second-year students (59.4%) reported that their grammar skills improved to a moderate extent or higher.

Table 6 and 7 display students' responses regarding general English vocabulary and specialized English vocabulary acquired during EMI courses.

**Table 6**

Students' self-assessment of their general English vocabulary after taking EMI courses

To what extent has your general English vocabulary improved? * Crosstabulation

| | | | To what extent has your general English vocabulary improved? | | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Very little | A little | Moderate | Quite a lot | A very great deal | |
| | Second year | Count | 2 | 22 | 40 | 20 | 2 | 86 |
| | | % within Year of study | 2.3% | 25.6% | 46.5% | 23.3% | 2.3% | 100.0 % |
| | Third year | Count | 2 | 2 | 28 | 26 | 10 | 68 |
| | | % within Year of study | 2.9% | 2.9% | 41.2% | 38.2% | 14.7% | 100.0 % |
| Total | | Count | 4 | 24 | 68 | 46 | 12 | 154 |
| | | % within Year of study | 2.6% | 15.6% | 44.2% | 29.9% | 7.8% | 100.0 % |

**Table 7**

Students' self-assessment of their specialized vocabulary after taking EMI courses

| To what extent has your vocabulary in the field of tourism and hospitality improved? * Crosstabulation | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | To what extent has your specialized English vocabulary improved? | | | | | Total |
| | | Very little | A little | Moderate | Quite a lot | A very great deal | |
| Second year | Count | 1 | 15 | 32 | 36 | 2 | 86 |
| | % within Year of study | 1.2% | 17.4% | 37.2% | 41.9% | 2.3% | 100.0% |
| Third year | Count | 0 | 5 | 16 | 31 | 16 | 68 |
| | % within Year of study | 0.0% | 7.4% | 23.5% | 45.6% | 23.5% | 100.0% |
| Total | Count | 1 | 20 | 48 | 67 | 18 | 154 |
| | % within Year of study | 0.6% | 13.0% | 31.2% | 43.5% | 11.7% | 100.0% |

The data from Tables 6 and 7 reveal that students generally reported more improvement in their specialized English vocabulary for tourism and hospitality compared to their general English vocabulary. In the 'quite a lot' category, 43.5% of students indicated significant improvement in specialized vocabulary, compared to 29.9% for general vocabulary. Similarly, 11.7% of students reported 'a very great deal' of improvement in specialized vocabulary, while only 7.8% felt the same for general vocabulary. Although both second- and third-year students showed progress, third-year students consistently reported higher levels of improvement across both categories, particularly in the specialized field. The 'moderate' improvement category was comparable for both, with 44.2% for general vocabulary and 31% for specialized. These results suggest that students experienced greater advancement in field-specific vocabulary, particularly those in their third year.

### *Comparison of Perceived Improvement in English Skills between Second and Third-year EMI Students*

This part evaluates whether the differences in self-reported progress across multiple language skills between the two academic groups are statistically significant, providing insights into how students' year of study influences their perceived language development in the EMI program. The independent samples t-test results show significant differences between the two groups of participants in their perceived improvement across all English skills after participating in the EMI program. The level of improvement in all assessed language skills and language components—listening, reading, writing, speaking, grammar, general vocabulary, and specialized vocabulary in tourism and hospitality – had p-values below 0.05 ($p<0.05$), indicating statistically significant differences between second year and third year students.

**Table 8**

Differences between the two groups of participants in their perceived improvement

| Independent Samples Test | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
| | | F | Sig. | Sig. (2-tailed) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Listening | Equal variances assumed | .060 | .807 | .000 | -.886 | -.326 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .000 | -.882 | -.329 |
| Reading | Equal variances assumed | .057 | .812 | .001 | -.779 | -.218 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .000 | -.775 | -.222 |
| Writing | Equal variances assumed | 1.073 | .302 | .000 | -.871 | -.257 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .000 | -.873 | -.256 |
| Speaking | Equal variances assumed | .049 | .826 | .001 | -.821 | -.198 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .002 | -.822 | -.198 |
| English grammar | Equal variances assumed | .177 | .675 | .000 | -1.073 | -.465 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .000 | -1.074 | -.464 |
| General vocabulary | Equal variances assumed | 2.510 | .115 | .000 | -.885 | -.338 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .000 | -.887 | -.336 |
| Specialized vocabulary | Equal variances assumed | .066 | .798 | .000 | -.855 | -.316 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .000 | -.857 | -.314 |

To be more specific, the statistics in Table 9 show that, compared to second-year students, third-year EMI students consistently reported higher mean scores across all English skills and surveyed language components. These higher means for third-year students reflect the significant differences found in the t-test, highlighting greater perceived improvement in English skills among third-year students.

**Table 9.**

Comparison of Perceived Improvement in English Skills and Language Components

| Improvement in … | Which year are you in? | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening | Second year | 86 | 3.73 | .913 |
| | Third year | 68 | 4.34 | .822 |
| Reading | Second year | 86 | 4.10 | .921 |
| | Third year | 68 | 4.60 | .813 |
| Writing | Second year | 86 | 3.47 | .942 |
| | Third year | 68 | 4.03 | .977 |
| Speaking | Second year | 86 | 4.09 | .966 |
| | Third year | 68 | 4.60 | .979 |
| English grammar | Second year | 86 | 3.63 | .934 |
| | Third year | 68 | 4.40 | .964 |
| General English vocabulary | Second year | 86 | 3.98 | .826 |
| | Third year | 68 | 4.59 | .885 |
| Specialized English vocabulary | Second year | 86 | 4.27 | .818 |
| | Third year | 68 | 4.85 | .868 |

For second-year students, the lowest mean was 3.47 in writing skills, while their highest mean was 4.27 in specialized vocabulary items. In contrast, third-year students had a higher range, with the lowest mean of 4.03 in writing skills and the highest mean of 4.85 in specialized vocabulary. Overall, both groups had their highest mean scores in specialized English vocabulary, reflecting notable progress in mastering industry-specific terms.

### *EMI Students' Perceptions of the Impact of EMI Courses on English Language Proficiency*

Table 10 presents the findings from a paired samples t-test that evaluates the impact of EMI courses on students' perceptions of their English language proficiency. The analysis compares students' self-assessments before and after participating in EMI courses, using data from paired differences to determine whether the change is statistically significant. The results offer insight into the effectiveness of EMI courses in enhancing students' language skills.

**Table 10**

Students' perceptions of the impact of EMI courses on English language proficiency before and after taking EMI courses

| Paired Samples Test | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Paired Differences | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pair 1 | Before – After taking EMI courses | -1.106 | -.894 | -18.615 | 153 | .000 |

The p-value (Sig. = .000) in Table 10 indicates a highly significant result, as it is well below the commonly accepted threshold of .05. This suggests that the difference observed in EMI students' perceptions of their English language proficiency, before and after EMI courses, is statistically significant. A p-value of .000 implies that the probability of the result occurring by random chance is extremely low, essentially confirming that EMI courses have a substantial and reliable impact on improving English proficiency. The significance of this p-value demonstrates that there is strong evidence to support the effectiveness of EMI courses in enhancing students' language skills, reinforcing the importance of EMI instruction in academic settings.

The two figures below compare students' self-assessed English proficiency before (D1) and after (D2) participating in EMI program.

**Figure 1**

Students' self-perceptions of their English language proficiency before taking EMI courses

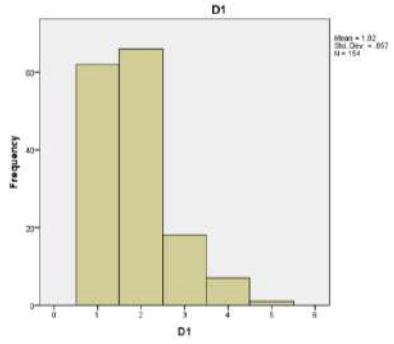
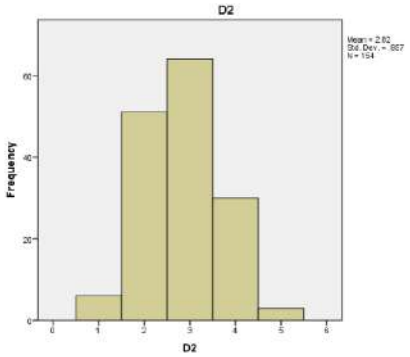


**Figure 2**

Students' self-perceptions of their English language proficiency after taking EMI courses




In the first chart, the distribution shows that most students rated their proficiency at the lower levels, with the highest frequencies at 1 (Basic) and 2 (Elementary), indicating lower self-confidence in their English skills. The mean proficiency score is 1.82, with a standard deviation of 0.857, suggesting a concentration around the lower levels of proficiency.

In contrast, the second chart shows a noticeable shift upwards. The highest frequencies are now at level 3 (Intermediate), with fewer students rating themselves at the Basic level. The mean proficiency score increased to 2.82, indicating overall improvement. However, the standard deviation remains the same, suggesting the distribution of students' proficiency still varies but has shifted towards higher levels. Overall, the charts illustrate that after participating in the EMI program, students generally perceive an improvement in their English proficiency.

### *EMI Students' Self-Evaluation of How Various Activities Impact their English Abilities*

The data from Table 11 reveals distinct patterns in how various activities in EMI classes contribute to students' English language development in an EMI context.

For vocabulary enhancement, *listening and participating in EMI presentations* (C4) yielded the highest mean score of 4.18 (SD = .745), indicating that this activity had the most significant impact, while *studying online EOP materials* (C1) had the lowest mean at 3.90 (SD = .785). In terms of listening comprehension, *attending EMI lectures* (C6) was rated most beneficial with a mean of 4.01 (SD = .695), whereas *studying online EOP materials* (C5) received the lowest score of 3.62 and exhibited the highest standard deviation (.901), suggesting greater variation in student perceptions. Reading comprehension was reported to improve most through *reading EMI course materials* (C10), with a mean of 3.93 (SD = .724), closely followed by *reading online EOP materials* (C9) at 3.90 (SD = .756). Regarding communication skills, *giving presentations in EMI programs* (C13) stood out as the most impactful, with the highest mean score of 4.30 (SD = .668), while *participating in extracurricular activities* (C14) was rated lowest at 3.45 and had the highest variability (SD = 1.004).

**Table 11**

EMI students' evaluation of how various activities in EMI classes impact their English abilities

| Descriptive Statistics | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| C1 | 154 | 3.90 | .785 |
| C2 | 154 | 3.94 | .663 |
| C3 | 154 | 4.06 | .729 |
| C4 | 154 | 4.18 | .745 |
| C5 | 154 | 3.62 | .901 |
| C6 | 154 | 4.01 | .695 |
| C7 | 154 | 3.94 | .756 |
| C8 | 154 | 3.88 | .855 |
| C9 | 154 | 3.90 | .756 |
| C10 | 154 | 3.93 | .724 |
| C11 | 154 | 3.98 | .859 |
| C12 | 154 | 4.03 | .828 |
| C13 | 154 | 4.30 | .668 |
| C14 | 154 | 3.45 | 1.004 |
| C15 | 154 | 3.47 | .818 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 154 | | |

Finally, for writing skills, *writing reports and essays for EMI courses* (C15) resulted in a moderate mean score of 3.47 (SD = .818). These findings highlight different activities' varying degrees of influence on students' English proficiency development across multiple skill areas.

## Discussion

***Research question 1:*** *What are the students' perceptions of their English language ability after taking EMI courses?*

The findings indicate that students experienced the most significant improvement in their specialized English vocabulary knowledge after completing EMI courses. This suggests that EMI courses enhance students' ability to understand and use terminology related to their field of study. The immersion in subject-specific content delivered in English likely facilitated their acquisition of specialized vocabulary, helping them to better grasp complex concepts and communicate more effectively in their academic and professional environments.

The finding that students perceive improvements in their English language ability after attending EMI courses aligns with existing literature, which generally supports the positive impact of EMI on language skills. Several studies have examined the potential benefits of EMI on students' English language proficiency, offering differing views on the nature of these improvements. For example, Van Der Worp (2017) argues that EMI courses offer students

significant exposure to English, which naturally promotes language development. This exposure is particularly effective over time, with students often reporting increased confidence and improved language proficiency after one to two years of study. Moreover, students who experience EMI report higher English skills and feel more comfortable using English in future jobs.

Similarly, Yu-Ying Chang (2010) reveals that overall, although the students generally did not think that they had a high level of comprehension of their EMI lectures, most of them did not show negative attitudes towards the courses. Additionally, most surveyed students reported that English instruction positively affected their English language proficiency, especially in listening comprehension. Other studies also suggest that EMI in higher education can substantially improve students' English proficiency over time. Research has demonstrated notable language proficiency gains among students of different levels after one year of EMI (Lestari, 2020) and over a four-year period (Yuksel et al., 2023).

The findings also reveal that writing skills and the ability to use English grammar in daily conversation showed the least improvement among students after taking EMI courses. This suggests that while EMI courses effectively enhance specialized vocabulary, they may not focus enough on practical language skills such as writing and grammar. The emphasis in EMI courses is often on academic content and subject-specific terminology, which might leave limited room for students to practice grammar knowledge and refine writing skills.

In contrast, Lestari (2020) indicates that the extent of improvement can be affected by students' initial proficiency levels. Their study suggests that students with higher proficiency may benefit more from EMI courses, as they are better prepared to handle the academic demands. On the other hand, those with lower proficiency may struggle at the beginning, which could hinder the perceived language process. This suggests that additional language support may be necessary for lower-proficiency students to fully reap the benefits of EMI.

Furthermore, Macaro et al. (2018) emphasize that the design of the course and the pedagogical approaches used in EMI programs play a crucial role in language development. They argue that the effectiveness of EMI in improving language proficiency depends on the teaching methods applied. For instance, courses incorporating more interactive and student-centered approaches may foster quicker language acquisition than compared to traditional teacher-centered approaches. This is consistent with other findings, such as those by Soruç and Griffiths (2018), who note that active participation in discussions and group work in EMI courses promotes language learning.

In conclusion, while the positive impact of EMI on language ability is generally recognized, factors such as initial proficiency, course structure, and pedagogical strategies play crucial roles in determining the extent of improvement. While most students perceive improvements in their English skills after attending EMI courses, the pace and degree of these improvements can vary based on individual and contextual factors.

***Research question 2:*** *How do students perceive the impact of different activities in EMI classes on their English language skills?*

The self-assessments provided by students regarding the impact of different activities in EMI

classes on their English proficiency highlight the diverse ways in which academic engagement contributes to language development. Specifically, the finding that students perceive vocabulary enhancement most effectively through listening and participating in EMI presentations aligns with research indicating the importance of active engagement in language learning. According to Airey (2012), exposure to disciplinary-specific vocabulary in oral academic contexts, such as presentations, significantly aids vocabulary acquisition because students must actively process and use new terms in real-time discussions.

Furthermore, the benefit of attending EMI lectures for listening comprehension corroborates previous findings by Flowerdew and Miller (1992), who noted that lectures in a second language provide learners with structured exposure to academic language and discourse, facilitating improvements in listening skills. The structured format of lectures, coupled with the rich input of academic language, allows students to build listening comprehension in ways that more informal or unstructured interactions may not.

In terms of reading comprehension, the high ratings associated with reading EMI course materials mirror the conclusions drawn by Hyland (2006), who emphasized the value of subject-specific texts in enhancing students' reading abilities. Academic materials offer consistent exposure to both technical language and complex grammatical structures, enabling learners to improve their comprehension skills. Interestingly, the minimal difference between the effectiveness of reading EMI course materials and reading online EOP materials suggests that both resources play a similar role in enhancing reading comprehension. Gartner and Krasna (2015) pointed out that online materials, while sometimes perceived as less interactive, could still provide valuable input, especially when well-structured and relevant to the learner's field.

Regarding communication skills, giving presentations in EMI programs was identified as the most impactful activity. This result aligns with the findings of Evans and Green (2007), who argued that presenting in a foreign language requires students to practice essential communication skills, including organization, language use, and audience interaction. These factors are essential in fostering speaking and communication abilities. In contrast, extracurricular activities, which received the lowest rating, may be viewed as less beneficial due to their informal and unstructured nature. Although Soruç and Griffiths (2018) suggest that extracurricular activities can improve language use, their impact can vary based on factors like students engagement and the availability of opportunities for authentic language practice. In this study, it is not compulsory for students to take part in extracurricular activities, which may explain the lower rating. Many students are often passive in their involvement, limiting their chances to practice their language skills in real-world settings.

Finally, for writing skills, students rated writing reports and essays in EMI courses as having a moderate impact. This finding supports Hyland's (2013) view that academic writing assignments provide valuable practice in organizing genre conventions and refining language precision. However, the moderate mean score may reflect the challenges students face when writing in a second language, a task that is often more challenging than listening or speaking skills.

The variations in how students perceived the impact of different activities indicate that while

there is general agreement on the effectiveness of certain activities – such as giving presentations and attending lectures – in enhancing specific language skills, others, like extracurricular activities and writing assignments, may not be seen as equally beneficial. These findings suggest that structured, interactive, and subject-focused activities within EMI environments foster language development more effectively than more informal or passive learning activities.

## Conclusion

### *Summary of the Findings*

Students perceived significant improvements in their English proficiency after attending EMI courses, with specialized English vocabulary showing the most notable gains. However, writing skills and the ability to use grammar in daily communication were perceived as the least improved. Third-year students consistently reported greater progress across all skills compared to second-year students, with notable differences in listening, speaking, grammar, and specialized vocabulary acquisition. These year-based differences were statistically significant, highlighting that longer exposure to EMI courses may lead to higher perceived improvements.

Moreover, students identified specific EMI activities that contributed differently to their English language development. Listening and participating in EMI presentations were rated as most effective for vocabulary enhancement, while attending lectures improved listening comprehension, and reading course materials was key for reading skills. Speaking skills benefited most from giving presentations, whereas writing assignments showed only moderate effects. Extracurricular activities were rated as least effective, likely due to their informal and optional nature.

### *Implications of the Study*

Based on the findings of the research, several improvements can be made to enhance EMI teaching and learning. Firstly, there is a need to strengthen teacher training programs, particularly those that focus on both language proficiency and subject-specific EMI strategies. Teachers should be provided with continuous professional development opportunities, including workshops and peer mentoring, to improve their ability to teach in English effectively. It is also important to establish clear assessment criteria that evaluate both content knowledge and language proficiency. Providing bilingual learning materials and language support programs would also benefit students, enabling them to better understand complex concepts while enhancing their English skills.

Promoting more interactive and student-centered teaching methods is essential to further improve EMI teaching. This includes using strategies like flipped classrooms, group discussions, and collaborative projects to increase student engagement and foster active learning. Integrating digital tools and platforms can enhance the learning experience by making content more accessible and encouraging collaboration outside the classroom. Regular monitoring and evaluation of EMI programs through feedback from both students and teachers will provide valuable insights into areas for improvement and help align the programs with the

needs of the learners.

### *Limitations of the Study*

Despite these findings, the study has certain limitations. First, it relies exclusively on self-reported data, which may be influenced by individual biases and differences in self-perception. Additionally, the study does not consider the students' initial English proficiency levels, which could have offered a more detailed understanding of how different activities affect students at various stages of language proficiency.

### *Future Directions for Further Studies*

Future research should aim to include more objective measures of language process, such as pre- and post-tests, to supplement self-reported data and provide a more accurate view of language development. It is also recommended to explore how initial proficiency levels relate to the perceived effectiveness of different EMI activities to determine whether certain activities benefit students with varying proficiency. Finally, incorporating explicit language support into EMI courses could help improve writing skills, offering students the targeted assistance in this area.

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