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Grammatical Errors in French Writing among Beginner Students at the University of Dhaka

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Error Analysis, French Language, Grammatical Errors, Bengali Learners

Despite the expansion of French-language teaching in Bangladesh, error-analysis research on Bangladeshi learners remains underexplored. This mixed-methods study investigates this area by identifying common grammatical errors among 47 Bengali-speaking French beginners at the University of Dhaka. A written corpus of 53 essays, comprising 425 sentences, was analyzed using Corder's (1974) Error Analysis framework and Dulay et al.'s (1982) Surface Strategy Taxonomy, with focus group discussions involving 25 participants. Results revealed 136 grammatical errors (averaging 32 errors per 100 sentences), with noun-related errors the most frequent (36.76%), closely followed by verb-related errors (33.82%). Misinformation and omissions dominated, and participants reported negative transfer from English (L2), overgeneralization, and simplification strategies as reasons for errors. The study showed how a cross-linguistic background shapes interlanguage, indicating that teaching should include contrastive, form-focused instruction to reduce errors.

Introduction

French-language teaching in Bangladesh formally began at the University of Dhaka in 1948. At that time, the Department of International Relations included French in its curriculum alongside other languages. In 1974, the University of Dhaka established the Institute of Modern Languages (IML). Since then, foreign language teaching in Bangladesh has entered a new phase. Over the years, IML has offered several French-language programs, including a 60-hour Short Course, an Elementary Program, a Pre-Intermediate Certificate Program, a Diploma, and a Higher Diploma. In the 2015–2016 undergraduate admission cycle, the University of Dhaka also introduced a Bachelor of Arts program in French Language and Culture, followed later by a Master of Arts program in the same field. This growing expansion of the French-language field in Bangladesh highlights the need for new research areas, particularly to understand the difficulties beginner learners face in French grammar and writing. Such research can contribute

to the development of more effective teaching methods and learning materials for Bangladeshi learners.

In Bangladesh, French is considered a foreign language (L3). While English is the second language (L2), the mother tongue is Bengali. This cross-linguistic context heavily influences the French-language learning process, especially in French grammar. Ringbom (2006) emphasized the importance of learners' prior language knowledge, stating, "When you learn something new, such as a foreign language, you try to connect the new elements to whatever linguistic and other knowledge you may have." He also pointed out that if a learner is acquiring a new language closely related to their prior language, that prior knowledge will be consistently useful. However, if the languages are very distant from each other, not much of the prior language will be relevant.

In this context, beginner-level students in Bangladesh often seem to rely more on English (L2) than on Bengali (L1) when learning French; perhaps this is because English and French share historical and grammatical similarities. Ringbom (2006) supported this statement, noting that "many previous studies, especially of Asian or African learners learning English or French, have shown that learners rely on their knowledge of an L2 related to the TL much more than on their unrelated L1".

Many Bengali learners often find French grammar challenging due to their English background. When they learn new French rules, they tend to compare them with English, which can be beneficial but can also lead to errors due to grammatical differences. Additionally, errors are not solely due to English influence; learners may also overapply French rules, leading to further errors. Moreover, there are other reasons behind grammatical errors in French.

Grammar is an essential part of language that shows how different units are organized and work together to create meaning. As Wang (2010) stated, "Grammar, as a set of rules for choosing words and putting words together to make sense, plays a significant role in language teaching. Without grammar, language does not exist." Rao (2019) notes that "grammar is needed for all languages in order to frame correct sentences. When grammar is proper, the sentences of the language make sense." Therefore, by examining grammatical skill, a learner's progress can be understood, and the barriers or obstacles can also be identified.

In the context of Bengali-French learners, Sarker & Islam (2020) stated that Bengali and English influence French learners' learning processes: English influences learners' morphology (word form), while Bengali influences learners' syntax (sentence structure). They also highlight that analyzing learners' errors and understanding their interlanguage can be a useful tool for improving teaching and learning methods for Bengali-French learners.

Although several studies have examined learners' errors in French across different countries, no studies on Bangladeshi learners have been found. This gap is important because Bangladeshi learners acquire French in a multilingual context where Bengali (L1) and English (L2) may influence learning in different ways. As a result, their grammatical error patterns may differ from those reported in other learning contexts.

The goal of this study is to identify the most common grammatical errors among two groups of students at the Institute of Modern Languages of the University of Dhaka. The results are expected to help teachers identify students' main challenges and support learners in improving their French grammar skills. The study analyzes these errors from a grammatical perspective to ensure the findings remain accessible to teachers and learners without extensive linguistic knowledge.

Literature review

Error analysis

In the field of language teaching, error analysis refers to the examination of learners' errors. This type of study aims to identify learners' misconceptions in writing and speaking. It helps teachers predict learners' errors and adjust teaching methods and materials accordingly. Corder (1982) provides two justifications for error analysis. The theoretical justification discusses how learners process the target language in their minds. The pedagogical justification focuses on adjusting teaching strategies, including methods, techniques, and syllabus design. Error analysis is also defined by Richards & Schmidt (2013) as the study of errors made by second-language learners and serves several purposes. Including (a) identifying the strategies learners use in language learning, (b) determining the causes of learner errors, and (c) obtaining information about common difficulties to improve teaching and prepare teaching materials. According to Brown (2007), error analysis involves observing, analyzing, and classifying learners' errors to understand their learning development. James (2001, as cited in Dinh, 2023) marked error analysis as the study of linguistic ignorance, examining what learners do not know and how they deal with it. Error analysis is the study of unacceptable forms produced by learners (Crystal, 2008).

Corder's Error Analysis Framework

Corder (1974), also cited in Ellis (1994), proposed a five-step framework for analyzing learners' errors.

1. **Collection of a sample of learner language:** In this step, data are collected for the study. First, researchers must determine what type of learner language data to collect and how to gather it. The sample size can be large, specific, or incidental. Researchers must also consider several factors during data collection. Language-centered factors include the learner's medium of production (oral or written), the genre of the sample (e.g., conversation, lecture, essay, or letter), and the topic the learner is discussing. Learner-centered factors include the learner's proficiency level in the target language, which can be elementary, intermediate, or advanced. Another learner-centered factor is the learner's mother tongue and language learning experience. Where language learning experience refers to language learning in the classroom, in naturalistic environments, or both.
2. **Identification of Errors:** After collecting data, researchers analyze the collected data to identify inappropriate forms of production. Here, researchers must distinguish between mistakes and errors. In error analysis, errors and mistakes are treated as two distinct phenomena. An error occurs due to a lack of knowledge or misconceptions about the target language's rules. Because an error indicates learners' incompetence, it cannot be corrected on its own without proper instruction. By contrast, a mistake concerns performance rather than competence. It is usually caused by inattention, fatigue, or a slip of the tongue, and it can be self-corrected when the learner pays attention.
3. **Description of Errors:** Errors are classified into various categories, such as a linguistic taxonomy based on morphology, syntax, or vocabulary, or a surface strategy taxonomy based on omissions, additions, misinformation, or misordering.
4. **Explanation of Errors:** In this step, researchers try to determine why the errors occur. These errors are usually linked to two main sources: interlingual transfer and intralingual or developmental factors. Interlingual transfer refers to the influence of a learner's previous languages, which can lead to errors in the new language. Intralingual or developmental

errors occur when learners overapply the rules of the target language or fail to fully learn the correct rules.

5. **Evaluation of Errors:** The final step is to evaluate the significance of errors. This involves examining how much a produced error interferes with the listener's or reader's comprehension and how serious it is (i.e., whether it is a global or local error). This evaluation can directly contribute to improving language teaching pedagogy.

Surface Strategy Taxonomy

To categorize learner errors effectively, Dulay et al. (1982), also cited in Ellis (1994), proposed the Surface Strategy Taxonomy. This taxonomy focuses on how the learner altered the target language's surface structures. It is an alternative to a linguistic classification of errors. Ellis (1994) states that, according to Dulay et al. (1982), this approach is promising because it provides insight into the cognitive processes underlying the learner's reconstruction of the target language. In this taxonomy, learner errors are classified into four primary descriptive categories based on how surface structures are altered. Addition happens when an extra, unnecessary grammatical element appears in a sentence. Omission occurs when a required grammatical component is missing. Misordering takes place when sentence elements are arranged incorrectly. Misinformation occurs when an incorrect form of a morpheme or grammatical structure is used.

The reasons resulted in language errors.

Various reasons contribute to learners' errors in language acquisition. According to major scholars, including Brown (2007), James (1998), Ellis (2015) and Richards (1971) and Keshavarz (2023) some main causes include: (a) interlanguage transfer, which happens when learners apply rules from their first language to the target language; (b) intralingual transfer, errors caused by misunderstanding or incomplete learning of the target language itself; (c) learning context, errors resulting from classroom instruction, teaching materials, or learning environment; (d) overgeneralization, when learners apply a rule of the language too broadly; (e) simplification, when learners reduce complex language structures to make communication easier; (f) false concepts hypothesized, when learners misunderstand certain distinctions or meanings in the target language; (g) lack of knowledge of the rules, when learners do not know the correct grammatical rules; (h) interference, when elements of one language disrupt the correct use of another; (i) fossilization, when incorrect language forms become permanent despite further learning; and (j) underuse, when learners avoid using certain forms or structures due to uncertainty or lack of confidence.

Previous studies on grammatical errors in French

Abdul Karim et al. (2024) carried out an error analysis of simple French sentence writing among 50 students at Universiti Kuala Lumpur Malaysia France Institute (UniKL MFI). Using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay et al. (1982), the study identified and classified 110 grammatical errors in descriptive essays from the final examination into four categories: addition, omission, misordering, and misinformation. The quantitative results showed that most errors occurred with prepositions (50%), followed by verbs (28%), nouns (19%), and adjectives (3%). According to the authors, many errors result from learners' prior languages, including English and Malay.

In a long-term study, Adebayo (2022) examined how writing errors developed among 14 English-speaking learners of French. The participants, who were students at Obafemi Awolowo University, participated over three years, from 2015 to 2018. The study finds that students had difficulties with spelling, determiners, prepositions, and word choice. Adebayo explained the

possible reasons for these errors. Many errors stemmed from overgeneralizing and the misuse of grammatical rules. Most of the other errors resulted from interlingual interference.

In another study, Chachu (2016) examined the influence of English on students' French language skills at the University of Ghana. The participants were first- and second-year French students. The study focused on both oral and written French. It found a strong influence of English on the students' French. Many errors resulted from transpositions and transliterations. Participants tend to translate expressions word-for-word from English. The author explains the errors as a common problem in language learning and considers them part of the natural process of interlanguage development.

Pramesti et al. (2019) conducted a study on grammatical errors in translation work. The study used a qualitative descriptive approach. Translating news articles from Indonesian into French was its tool. The researchers analyzed 87 texts translated by seventh-semester students at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. They found that the most common errors involved verb conjugation, tenses, and moods. The study also identified many errors in the use of articles and prepositions. Additionally, errors in noun–adjective agreement, especially regarding gender and number, were frequent. The authors state that weak grammatical skills cause these errors. They also point out that structural differences between Indonesian and French are another major source of errors.

Another descriptive qualitative study was carried out by Samudra & Mutiarsih (2022). The study investigated grammatical errors students made when translating a short story. The story was titled *Moi et la danse de Semarang*, a French translation from Indonesian. The researchers used the Error Analysis method. The most common error type was misinformation, meaning students used an incorrect form of a grammatical structure. The study finds that learners often struggle to use verbs, nouns, adjectives, and prepositions correctly. The authors explained that these errors mainly result from a lack of knowledge of the rules.

The lack of error-analysis studies on Bangladeshi learners highlights a notable gap that warrants further research.

Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following questions.

1. What are the common features of grammatical errors in learners' French writing?
2. What kind of grammatical errors are most frequently made by students?
3. According to learners, what are the possible reasons behind these errors?

Methods

Participants

This study was conducted at the Institute of Modern Languages (IML) at the University of Dhaka. It involved 47 French learners, all native Bengali speakers who also spoke English as a second language. Participants comprised two groups: students enrolled in the Pre-Intermediate French course and first-year, second-semester students pursuing a Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in French Language and Culture. The sample included 29 students from the Pre-Intermediate French course and 18 from the BA program.

The participation of learners was based on their availability in two groups. The researchers selected these two groups due to their comparable proficiency levels. Students from both the

BA (Honors) and Pre-Intermediate programs were included to provide a comprehensive overview of grammatical errors among students at the Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka, thereby ensuring representation from both Honors and other certificate programs.

Their current curriculum indicates that they are operating at the elementary or beginning proficiency level, corresponding to the A1–A2 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Both groups utilized *Vite et Bien A1–A2* by Claire Miquel as their primary textbook for grammar and language practice at their respective levels. After reviewing their instructional materials, the researchers determined that the students had acquired fundamental grammatical structures.

These included nouns (gender distinctions and the use of definite articles *le, la, les* and indefinite articles *un, une, des*), verbs (present tense of regular and irregular verbs such as *faire, aller, prendre, comprendre, mettre, partir, venir, voir*; semi-auxiliary verbs *pouvoir, vouloir, devoir*; reflexive verbs; the near future *futur proche*; imperative forms; and the basic past tense *passé composé*, including agreement of past participles), adjectives (agreement rules, placement, and some irregular forms), tenses (the present *le présent*, the past *le passé composé*, the near future *le futur proche*, and conditional structures such as *si + présent / présent*), the formation of simple questions, and prepositions (common locative and relational forms such as *chez, en/au, and sur*, including prepositions used with cities and countries).

Research Design

In this study, the researchers followed the first three stages of Corder's (1974) error analysis framework, namely: the collection of a learner language sample, the identification of errors, and the description of errors. The fourth stage, which involves explaining errors, was partially implemented through a focus group discussion with the participants to explore possible causes of the identified errors. The fifth stage, error evaluation, was not incorporated because the study's primary objective was to identify and classify grammatical errors, whereas evaluating their effects on communication was of secondary importance. Therefore, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches, utilizing a written task and a focus group discussion.

Data Collection

To collect language samples, the researchers asked participants to write a short essay in French on topics such as “myself,” “my friend,” “my country,” and “my daily routine.” Although different topics may have influenced the distribution of grammatical features, the researchers allowed a range of topics to ensure inclusivity and accommodate participants' varying writing abilities.

Participants were instructed to use simple sentences and basic grammatical structures to facilitate the identification of common grammatical errors. This approach aligned with the study's objective of detecting grammatical errors among beginner-level learners. Participants were encouraged to produce at least ten sentences.

Participants were given 20 minutes to complete the writing task in a classroom environment. The two groups participated on different days. The researchers were present and provided minimal supervision during the task. Participants were instructed not to use external resources such as books or translation tools.

Upon completion, the researchers collected all scripts. A total of 53 essays were obtained from the 47 participants. Most participants wrote about themselves, while two described their daily

routines and one wrote about a friend. Two participants submitted four essays each, and all essays were included in the analysis. Since the primary objective of the study was to identify and catalog grammatical errors rather than to compare individual student performance, the total volume of learner language data was prioritized over maintaining an equal number of essays per participant.

Data Analysis

All scripts were analyzed for grammatical errors using token-based identification. Because errors were counted on a token basis, repeated occurrences of the same error type were included, and multiple errors within a single sentence were counted separately.

Table 1

Quantitative Overview of the Corpus and Error Identification

Metrics	Count
Total Number of Participants	47
Total Number of Essays Collected	53
Total Number of Sentences Analyzed	425
Total Errors Identified by Coder 1	133 (C_1)
Total Errors Identified by Coder 2	139 (C_2)
Agreed Errors	130 (M)
Inter-Coder Agreement Rate	95.59 % (Agreement Rate = $\frac{2 \times M}{C_1 + C_2} \times 100$)
Final Reconciled Errors for Analysis	136

To ensure the reliability of the error identification process, two authors of this study independently analyzed the collected scripts. As shown in Table 1, the dataset comprised 425 sentences extracted from 53 essays written by 47 participants.

In the initial coding phase, Coder 1 identified 133 grammatical errors, while Coder 2 identified 139 errors. An initial review of their coding found 130 errors that were common to both coders, indicating strong agreement. Inter-coder agreement was calculated at 95.59%.

Following the independent coding phase, the two coders engaged in a thorough reconciliation discussion to resolve borderline and discrepant cases. During this process, cases that were previously ambiguous or classified differently were reviewed together using the coding criteria. This led to a refined, mutually agreed final dataset of 136 grammatical errors, which was then used for further qualitative and quantitative analyses. In the final dataset, each error is recorded using an Error ID.

No ambiguous sentences were identified in the scripts, but nine sentences were excluded for incompleteness. Errors were then quantified and categorized in Microsoft Excel by both the targeted grammatical unit and the Surface Strategy Taxonomy.

Table 2

Example of errors coding

Error ID	Error Sentence	Correct Sentence	Error in Grammar Unit	Class of Error
1001	J'aime lire des livre différents.	J'aime lire des livres différents.	Noun	Misinformation
1005	J'aime photographie.	J'aime la photographie.	Noun	Omission
1059	Je suis bavarde avec des amis.	Je bavarde avec des amis.	Verb	Addition

Focus Group Discussion

After all errors were coded, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with 25 participants who had taken the written test. The discussion was held in a classroom setting, and participants attended voluntarily based on their availability. During the session, the learners shared their views on the possible causes of the grammatical errors they had made on the written test.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical compliance, several procedures were followed throughout the study. Permission to collect data was obtained from the University of Dhaka's Institute of Modern Languages (IML). Before the writing tasks and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), participants were informed of the study's purpose and nature. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all students. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. To ensure confidentiality, no personal identifiers, such as names or registration numbers, were collected. Instead, each script was assigned a unique code for analysis. All data were used strictly for research purposes.

Findings

This section presents the main findings of the study. It shows the total number of grammatical errors found in students' essays and their normalized rates. The errors are grouped using grammatical units and surface strategy taxonomy. It also includes information from the focus group discussion (FGD) to explain possible reasons for the errors as reported by learners.

As shown in Table 3, these normalized error rates indicate that Noun Errors are the most common error, occurring at 11.76 per 100 sentences and accounting for 36.76% of all errors. Verb Errors are the second most common, with a rate of 10.82 errors per 100 sentences (33.82%). Together, nouns and verbs account for more than 70% of the total errors, showing that these two areas are the hardest for beginner Bengali students learning French.

In contrast, other parts of grammar show much lower error rates. Preposition Errors stand at 4.00 errors per 100 sentences, while Adjective (2.12), Adverb (1.88), and Pronoun (1.41) errors are the least frequent.

Table 3

Normalized Error Rates by Grammatical Units (Total Sentences = 425)

Grammatical Unit	Raw Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Normalized Error Rate (per 100 Sentences) $\left(\frac{\text{Number of Errors in a Category}}{\text{Total Sentences in the Corpus (425)}} \right) \times 100$
Noun	50	36.76	11.76
Verb	46	33.82	10.82
Preposition	17	12.50	4.00
Adjective	9	6.62	2.12
Adverb	8	5.88	1.88
Pronoun	6	4.41	1.41
Total	136	100	32

Overall, the total normalized error rate is 32.00 errors per 100 sentences. This means that, on average, for every 100 sentences written by the students, about 32 grammatical errors were made.

Figure 1

Error Frequency by Surface Strategy Taxonomy Category

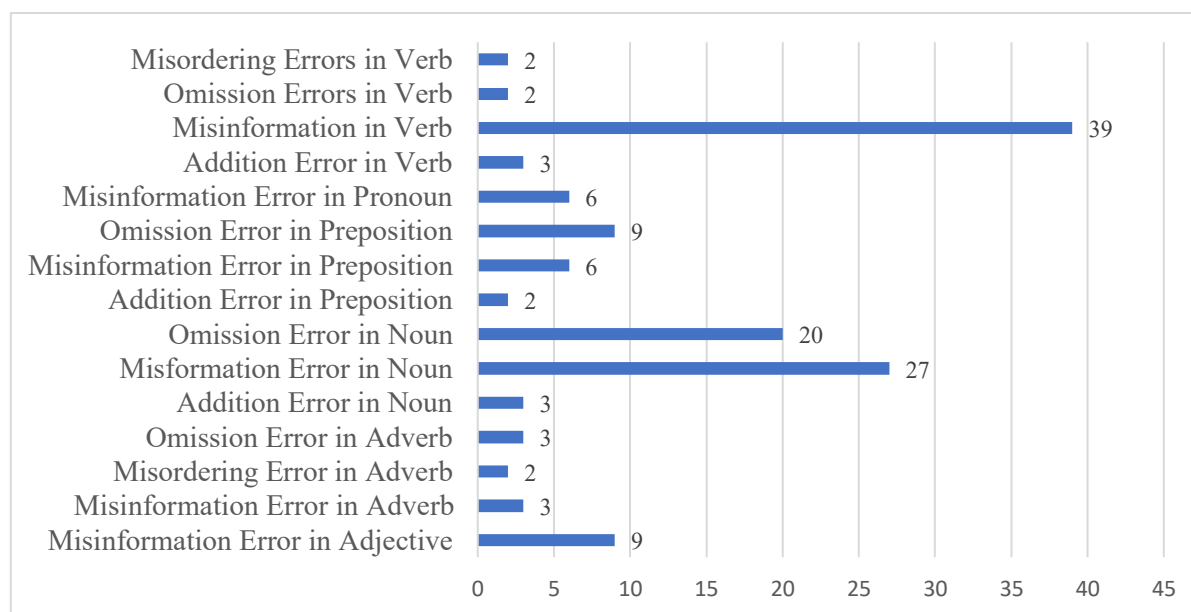


Figure 1 shows that, out of 136 errors, misinformation errors in verbs are the most frequent category in the surface strategy taxonomy, with 39, followed by misinformation errors in nouns with 27, and omission errors in nouns with 20.

Table 4

Representative Errors

No	Grammar Unit	Class of Error	Erroneous Form	Corrected Form
1.	Noun	Addition	J'ai âge 20 ans.	J'ai 20 ans.
2.	Noun	Addition	Je parle un peu le français.	Je parle un peu français.
3.	Noun	Omission	Il aime football.	Il aime le football.
4.	Noun	Omission	Je lis livre.	Je lis un livre.
5.	Noun	Omission	Je regarde television.	Je regarde la television.
6.	Noun	Misinformation	J'aime écouter le musique.	J'aime écouter la musique.
7.	Noun	Misinformation	J'aime la danser.	J'aime la danse.
8.	Noun	Misinformation	J'aime lire des livre différents.	J'aime lire des livres différents.
9.	Noun	Misinformation	La capitale de pays est Dhaka.	La capitale du pays est Dhaka.
10.	Noun	Misinformation	Nous allons ensemble de le café.	Nous allons ensemble au café.
11.	Verb	Addition	Je suis bavarde avec des amis.	Je bavarde avec des amis.
12.	Verb	Omission	Mon amie Suriya.	Mon amie s'appelle Suriya.
13.	Verb	Misordering	Je ne pas joue au football.	Je ne joue pas au football.
14.	Verb	Misinformation	Elle est les cheveux noirs.	Elle a les cheveux noirs.
15.	Verb	Misinformation	Je ne sais pas nage.	Je ne sais pas nager.
16.	Verb	Misinformation	Je vais de Gazipur.	Je viens de Gazipur.
17.	Verb	Misinformation	Mon père a journaliste.	Mon père est journaliste.
18.	Verb	Misinformation	Nous parlez longtemps	Nous parlons longtemps.
19.	Preposition	Addition	J'ai à 20 ans.	J'ai 20 ans.
20.	Preposition	Omission	J'ai beaucoup amies.	J'ai beaucoup d'amies.
21.	Preposition	Omission	Je joue le football.	Je joue au football.
22.	Preposition	Omission	J'étudie l'Université de Dhaka.	J'étudie à l'Université de Dhaka.
23.	Preposition	Addition	J'aime de la café.	J'aime le café.
24.	Noun	Misinformation	J'aime de la café.	J'aime le café.
25.	Preposition	Misinformation	Je fais de vélo.	Je fais du vélo.
26.	Preposition	Misinformation	Je n'ai pas une question.	Je n'ai pas de question.
27.	Preposition	Misinformation	Je me suis engagé dans la police de 2017.	Je me suis engagé dans la police en 2017.
28.	Adjective	Misinformation	Elle est bangladeshe.	Elle est bangladaise.
29.	Adjective	Misinformation	J'adore mon amis.	J'adore mes amis.
30.	Adjective	Misinformation	Nous sommes de bon amis.	Nous sommes de bons amis.
31.	Adjective	Misinformation	J'aime lire des livres différence.	J'aime lire des livres différents.
32.	Adverb	Misordering	Je parle français un peu.	Je parle un peu français.
33.	Adverb	Misinformation	Je parle à peu français.	Je parle un peu français.
34.	Adverb	Misinformation	Nous bavardons a peu.	Nous bavardons un peu.

35.	Pronoun	Misinformation	Cette est un beau pays.	C'est un beau pays.
36.	Pronoun	Misinformation	Je adore les beaux vêtements.	J'adore les beaux vêtements.
37.	Pronoun	Misinformation	Le week-end, Je sors avec mes amis.	Le week-end, je sors avec mes amis.

Learners' Perspectives on the Causes of Grammatical Errors

In Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), participants discuss several perspectives that may have contributed to their errors in French grammar.

The most frequently reported cause was the influence of English. Learners often reported relying on English sentence structures when writing in French. This negative transfer led to errors such as *J'ai âge 20 ans* instead of *J'ai 20 ans* and *Je suis bavarde avec des amis* instead of *Je bavarde avec des amis*. Participants also reported difficulties with grammatical features that are absent or less prominent in English, particularly articles and contractions. Errors such as *Il aime football* instead of *Il aime le football*, *Je lis livre* instead of *Je lis un livre*, and *La capitale de pays est Dhaka* instead of *La capitale du pays est Dhaka* illustrate these difficulties.

Learners also believed that some errors stemmed from overgeneralizing French grammatical rules. For instance, some said *Je ne sais pas nage* instead of *Je ne sais pas nager*, showing uncertainty about using infinitives after specific expressions. Similarly, some learners occasionally used familiar grammatical patterns even when different structures were appropriate.

Another factor identified by participants was confusion about French prepositions and contracted forms. Many learners had difficulty remembering combinations such as *à + le = au* and *de + le = du*. This difficulty appeared in errors such as *Je joue le football* instead of *Je joue au football*, *Je fais de vélo* instead of *Je fais du vélo*, and *Nous allons ensemble de le café* instead of *Nous allons ensemble au café*.

Participants also acknowledged that limited vocabulary and insufficient grammatical knowledge contributed to several errors. For example, some learners used *Je vais de Gazipur* instead of *Je viens de Gazipur* and *Mon père a journaliste* instead of *Mon père est journaliste*, indicating uncertainty about verb selection and usage. Similarly, errors like *Je n'ai pas une question* instead of *Je n'ai pas de question* indicate a limited understanding of French negative structures.

Regarding adjective agreement, learners often simplify grammatical forms when unsure of the correct agreement rules. This tendency led to errors such as *Nous sommes de bon amis* instead of *Nous sommes de bons amis* and *Elle est bangladeshe* instead of *Elle est bangladaise*. Participants mentioned that they occasionally focus on conveying meaning rather than using every grammatical marker correctly.

Finally, learners reported that insufficient practice and limited exposure to French outside the classroom made it difficult to internalize grammatical structures. As a result, they frequently misplaced adverbs and omitted required grammatical elements, producing sentences such as *Je parle français un peu* instead of *Je parle un peu français* and *J'étudie l'Université de Dhaka* instead of *J'étudie à l'Université de Dhaka*.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed a clear, structured pattern in the grammatical errors made by beginner students in the Institute of Modern Languages at the University of Dhaka.

Regarding grammatical unit errors, the study found errors in nouns, verbs, prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns. Nouns were the most frequent, followed by verbs. According to the surface strategy taxonomy, misinformation errors in verbs were the most frequent category, followed by misinformation errors in nouns, while omission errors in nouns were the third highest.

The main features of these errors include using wrong word forms, missing articles, and failing to contract prepositions.

The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) show that the errors are not random. They occur because students transfer English rules to French, overgeneralize French grammar, and try to simplify complex structures, among other reasons.

Dominating Noun Errors

Noun-related errors are the most common in essay writing, accounting for 36.76% of errors, at 11.76 per 100 sentences. Below are some probable reasons discussed.

Grammatical Gender Confusion: The French language assigns an arbitrary masculine or feminine gender to every noun, including inanimate objects such as tables, chairs, cars, and pens. FGD feedback showed that students face a heavy cognitive load when trying to guess the gender of words like *la musique* or *la capitale* because they cannot find any equivalent structural baseline in English. This confusion leads directly to misinformation, such as writing *le musique* instead of *la musique*.

Noun-Article Relationship: In French, every noun must be used together with a gendered article (such as *un*, *une*, *le*, or *la*), and this combination functions as a fixed grammatical unit. Beginner learners often take time to fully understand this rule. As a result, they sometimes omit articles and treat French nouns like English bare nouns, for example, writing *Je lis livre* instead of *Je lis un/le livre*.

Failure to Contract Articles: In French, prepositions like *à* (to) and *de* (of/from) combine with the definite articles *le* and *les* to form contracted words such as *au* (*à* + *le*) and *du* (*de* + *le*). Many learners find this rule difficult. Instead of using the correct contracted forms, they often write the words separately, for example, *de le café* instead of *au café*. This happens because they translate directly from English and use a word-for-word approach, which prevents them from using the correct French contractions.

Partitive Article Confusions: Partitive articles (*du*, *de la*, *de l'*, *des*) are used in French to talk about an unspecified amount of something, especially uncountable nouns. In English, this idea is often shown without an article or with words like “some” (e.g., “I drink water” or “I want some bread”). Beginner learners often make errors when using partitive articles in French. They either leave them out completely or confuse them with definite articles.

Adjective-Noun Agreement: In French, adjectives must agree with the nouns they describe in both gender and number. Beginner learners often struggle with this rule and instead apply English patterns. As a result, they may omit the plural -s on adjectives, producing errors such as *de bon amis* instead of *de bons amis*.

Understanding Verb Errors Patterns

Verb-related errors were the second most frequent category. These errors occurred for three main reasons. First, learners had difficulty using auxiliaries correctly. For example, they used *être* instead of *avoir* when expressing age (e.g., *Je suis 20 ans*). Second, in two-verb constructions, students often simplified the rule and failed to use the infinitive form correctly, producing errors such as *Je ne sais pas nager* instead of *nager*. Third, learners sometimes struggled with subject–verb agreement in present-tense conjugation, leading to errors such as *Nous parlez longtemps* instead of *Nous parlons longtemps*.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study differ from previous research on French learner errors. For example, Abdul Karim et al. (2024) found that Malaysian learners made the most errors with prepositions (50%), while noun errors were much lower (19%). Similarly, Pramesti et al. (2019) and Samudra & Mutiarsih (2022) reported that verb errors, especially in conjugation, tense, and mood, were the most common among their learners. However, this study found that noun errors were the most frequent, followed by verb errors and then preposition errors. This difference may reflect the specific language background and proficiency level of Bangladeshi university students.

Although the learners were at the beginner level (A1–A2) and mainly used simple present-tense patterns such as *Je parle* and *Je sors*, they still struggled with basic French verb rules. Their errors were not about complex grammar, such as the subjunctive or conditional forms, but about simpler issues such as subject-verb agreement, irregular verbs, and spelling rules like elision (e.g., *Je adore*).

While noun-article rules took most of their attention, verb conjugation was the next major difficulty. Finally, differences between English and French also caused problems with prepositions. Students often wrote full forms like *de le café* instead of the correct contracted form *au café*, because they translated step by step from English expressions like “of the”.

Pedagogical Implications

This study suggests the following practical strategies for French classrooms in Bangladesh:

Vocabulary with Articles: Teachers should never introduce French nouns in isolation. Nouns must always be taught with their articles (e.g., teaching *la capitale* rather than *capitale*) to help students internalize the correct grammatical gender from day one.

Verb-and-Article Structural Drills: Teachers should design targeted worksheets to practice specific verbs that change sentence structure. For example: *Aimer / Adorer* + Definite Article (*le, la, les*) to fix errors like *Il aime football*. *Parler* + Language Name directly (e.g., *Je parle français*) to avoid adding extra articles. *Jouer au* (for sports) versus *Faire du* (for activities) to clear up preposition confusion.

Visual Math for Contractions and Elisions: Since students struggle with combined forms, teachers can use simple visual formulas on the board, such as: (*à + le = au*), (*de + le = du*), (*Je + verb with vowel = J'*). This gives beginning students a clear rule for checking their work before writing.

Infinitive Use: The findings showed that students often struggled with two-verb constructions. Errors such as *Je ne sais pas nager* indicate that learners were not familiar with the use of infinitive verbs in French. To address this problem, teachers should provide explicit instruction on verb + infinitive structures. Students should learn that in constructions with verbs such as

vouloir, pouvoir, savoir, and aimer, only the first verb is conjugated, while the second remains in the infinitive (*Je ne sais pas nager, Je veux apprendre le français*). Regular practice with these structures can help learners develop a better understanding of French sentence structure and reduce verb-sequencing errors.

Cross-Linguistic Contrastive Awareness: The findings suggest that many observed errors are strongly influenced by negative transfer from English (L2). To address this issue, teachers should implement Contrastive Awareness Tasks in the classroom. Rather than avoiding English entirely, instructors can use structured activities that compare English and French sentence patterns. Through guided translation and comparison exercises, students can clearly identify differences between the two languages.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the written grammatical errors of beginner French learners at the University of Dhaka. It revealed that errors in nouns, verbs, and prepositions were the most common. The main features of these errors include using incorrect word forms, omitting articles, and failing to contract prepositions. The findings highlight that traditional communicative teaching methods in Bangladesh should be combined with targeted, contrastive form-focused instruction.

Limitation

There are some limitations in the study, such as a small, localized sample, a single writing task, limited topic variation, and a lack of learner process data. The study involved only 47 participants from a single institution, meaning the findings may reflect local teaching styles and cannot represent all French learners in Bangladesh. The data consisted of short essays on four predictable descriptive topics (myself, my friend, my country, and my daily routine). Error patterns might change with different writing or tasks. Limitations also include a lack of statistical reliability metrics. The two authors of the study coded the data; including additional outside experts as coders would make the coding more reliable.

Future Directions: Future research should expand the sample size by including multiple institutes across Bangladesh to establish a broader baseline. Longitudinal studies are needed to track how errors change over multiple semesters.

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Students' Voices on the Use of YouTube in Enhancing Lexical Competence among EFL Learners at Le Hoang Chieu High School

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: YouTube lexical competence, high school students, perception

This study investigates how EFL (English as a Foreign Language) high school students in Vietnam perceive the use of YouTube to enhance their lexical competence. Using a mixed-methods approach to address the research questions, the study was conducted with the participation of 60 students at Le Hoang Chieu High School in Vinh Long Province. The results gained from a detailed analysis of a survey and eight semi-structured interviews indicated that high school students found YouTube to be an effective tool for vocabulary learning. Moreover, the students emphasized that teacher guidance for valuable videos and brief videos with subtitles was critical for effective use of YouTube. The study encourages high school teachers to integrate YouTube into their instruction and suggests future research on high school teachers' perspectives on the use of YouTube in their teaching and the effectiveness of other social media in language learning.

Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition plays a vital role in learning a foreign language. Nation (2011) emphasized that lexical learning is a prerequisite for understanding written and spoken texts as well as for communicating. In the same vein, Schmitt and Schmitt (2020) posited that second language acquisition and communicative competence depended greatly on lexical knowledge. Jannah et al. (2022) supplemented the idea with the notion that limited vocabulary mastery affects learners' proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Indeed, "vocabulary is essential for successful second language use, because without sufficient vocabulary, people cannot communicate and express their feelings in the form of spoken and written language effectively" (Rivers, as cited in Nunan, 1991, p. 117).

High school students often struggle with vocabulary acquisition. AG et al. (2024) stated that students faced diverse difficulties in learning vocabulary, mainly in meaning and grammar, followed by pronunciation and spelling. Reportedly, the study suggested implementing media to facilitate lexical learning and enhance students' motivation. Supporting this recommendation,

a subsequent synthesis indicated that multimedia and multimodal learning resources effectively promote vocabulary acquisition by fostering learner engagement and providing repeated opportunities to encounter lexical items, thereby strengthening vocabulary retention and long-term learning (Nguyen, 2026). Similarly, other researchers noted that lexical learning remains a challenge for high school students, who often struggle with pronunciation, spelling, word usage, and idiomatic expressions (Susanto, 2021). Furthermore, Machfudi and Afidah (2022) highlighted that high school students faced difficulties with vocabulary mastery due to challenges in translating words with multiple meanings, understanding word meanings, handling pronunciation variations, misspelling, and retaining vocabulary due to a lack of practice. These challenges highlight the need for innovative learning tools to enhance lexical knowledge in engaging and accessible ways.

Among the various digital learning resources available, YouTube has emerged as a promising platform for addressing these vocabulary-learning challenges. As a global educational platform, it offers both formal and informal learning opportunities (Shoufan & Mohamed, 2022). Its wide availability and multimedia features support vocabulary development, especially among EFL learners, by providing exposure to diverse content, pronunciation models, and contextual language use (Muzdalifah et al., 2023; Kusumariana, 2022). Indeed, the platform's interactive features, such as the comment section, encourage learners to use newly acquired vocabulary in authentic communication, thereby fostering engagement, a sense of community, and sustained motivation (Alkathiri, 2019). Furthermore, most of its content is freely accessible, making it a convenient and cost-effective learning resource for students with internet access (Kim & Kim, 2021). Given these advantages, YouTube has considerable potential to support vocabulary acquisition and address many of the lexical challenges faced by high school EFL learners.

Furthermore, students' perceptions of YouTube's usefulness and ease of use significantly impact their acceptance and adoption of the platform for learning purposes (Kalburgi et al., 2023). Research also indicates that both instructors and students prioritize factors like accuracy and content creator expertise, reflecting their views on the platform's educational value (Greeves & Oz, 2023). Since students are the key end users of any pedagogical innovation, it is pivotal to examine their voices regarding the use of YouTube for vocabulary acquisition.

In essence, the review of previous studies demonstrates that there have been some studies on the use of YouTube in foreign language learning. Conversely, research on the effectiveness of this platform in lexical learning remains scarce. In Vietnam, there is a lack of research investigating high school students' perspectives on using YouTube for vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, this study is conducted to bridge the research gap by exploring how high school students in Vietnam utilize YouTube to enhance their lexical resources and examining their perceptions of its effectiveness as a learning tool.

Literature review

Definition of Perception

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), perception is “a belief or opinion, often shared by many individuals, based on the appearance of things.” In the context of student learning, the term “students' perceptions” refers to how learners interpret and understand their educational experiences. Weimer (2013) claimed that these perceptions encompassed students' thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions regarding various components of their learning environment, including the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and the support provided by the institution. In the same way, in their research, Ly et al. (2024) claimed that these statements reflected how

students assess the quality, relevance, fairness, and effectiveness of their educational experiences, informed by their individual perspectives and unique contexts. Understanding these perceptions is essential for enhancing educational outcomes and fostering a more supportive learning environment.

YouTube

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.), YouTube is a video-sharing website that enables users to upload, view, and comment on videos. The platform was founded in February 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim and has since become one of the most widely used video-sharing platforms worldwide (YouTube, n.d.). As a global hub for content creation, YouTube provides instructional videos and tutorials that support learning and language acquisition. According to Snelson (2018, p. 300), “Free video hosting, basic video editing, and online captioning tools are available for video creators.” This enhances cross-cultural sensitivity and develops skills in second language content while improving global communication understanding (Kim & Kim, 2021).

The role of vocabulary in language acquisition

Lexical resources are essential in language learning, as they provide learners with the vocabulary and phrases needed for effective communication (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020). These resources include a variety of lexical items, such as single words, collocations, idiomatic expressions, and fixed phrases, all of which are vital for achieving fluency and comprehension (Debabi & Guerroudj, 2018). According to Lewis (1997), by concentrating on these lexical patterns, learners can enhance their ability to produce and understand language in context, resulting in more natural and effective communication. Additionally, exposure to authentic language through lexical resources enables learners to recognize and utilize common collocations, thereby improving their overall language proficiency and boosting their confidence. Correspondingly, AG et al. (2024) claimed that to communicate well in a second language, learners should build a broad lexical repertoire and practice accurate usage.

Challenges in learning vocabulary

The contemporary literature review has demonstrated that students encounter several challenges when learning vocabulary. A study conducted by Surmanov and Azimova (2020) highlighted that students had difficulty pronouncing words and becoming familiar with a variety of word forms. Salawazo et al. (2020) posited that students found it challenging to remember and retain the vocabulary that they have learned due to limited learning time and a lack of practice. Therefore, vocabulary acquisition is a continuous process that requires repeated exposure to new words within relevant and understandable contexts (Okyar & Çakır, 2019). Susanto (2021) supplemented the notion with the idea that the discrepancy between English and the students’ native language led to challenges in understanding and pronouncing the words. Similarly, Thornbury (2006) affirmed that students were misled and confused by words or phrases similar to those of their first language. Another reason for students’ difficulties in acquiring vocabulary is the traditional learning method, which often lacks engagement and, thus, reduces learners’ motivation (Afzal, 2019). These issues underscore the need for more innovative approaches to support vocabulary acquisition and enhance lexical competence.

The merits of using YouTube in language learning

YouTube has significantly transformed the landscape of language learning by providing learners with a diverse range of authentic content produced by native speakers (Wahidah et al., 2026). This exposure allows learners to immerse themselves in real-life conversations, helping them understand cultural nuances, slang, and the natural rhythm of the language elements that

are often absent from traditional textbooks. According to Kusumariana (2022), learners encounter vocabulary in context via educational videos, enhancing understanding and retention. Another key advantage of using YouTube for language learning is its interactive and engaging format. Learners can actively participate by pausing, replaying, and practicing along with the videos, which enhances both retention and comprehension (Daeli & Santosa, 2025). The ability to access content anytime and anywhere encourages self-paced learning, allowing individuals to customize their study schedules to fit their circumstances (Kim & Kim, 2021). In addition, YouTube cultivates a sense of community among language learners, as many channels feature vibrant comment sections where users can ask questions, share experiences, and connect, creating a supportive environment for practice and motivation (Perry, 2026). Generally, YouTube is a valuable resource for EFL learners seeking to expand their vocabulary in an accessible way (Oddone, 2011). Similarly, Listiani et al. (2021) affirmed that YouTube helped students understand word meanings and usage more deeply by presenting them in different communicative situations, thereby improving their retention. Indeed, the platform hosts channels in various languages and proficiency levels, ensuring that learners can find tailored materials suited to their specific needs, whether they are beginners or advanced speakers (Tran et al., 2026). Overall, the existing literature highlights the potential of YouTube as an innovative, engaging, and accessible tool to support vocabulary acquisition.

Students' perceptions toward the use of YouTube in language learning

Several studies have investigated students' perceptions of using YouTube in English language learning. Truong and Le (2022) conducted research with 106 EFL university students to discover their voices on the use of YouTube in enhancing speaking skills. The results obtained through a mixed-methods approach using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews demonstrated that students had positive attitudes towards the use of YouTube for English learning. Specifically, students view YouTube as a valuable tool for enhancing their speaking skills, with increased vocabulary, grammar knowledge, and confidence in communication.

Another detailed study collecting both quantitative and qualitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions of the use of YouTube in learning English was conducted by Tahmina (2023). The study, which involved sixty-six undergraduates from Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh, revealed that students voiced agreement on the efficiency of YouTube in facilitating language acquisition. Specifically, the participants reported that YouTube was beneficial in improving their speaking and listening skills and enhancing their lexical resources.

Ly et al. (2024) undertook a study with over 300 students to discover EFL students' perspectives on the use of YouTube to learn English. The findings indicated that a significant majority of students perceived YouTube as a valuable educational tool that helped to enhance speaking and listening skills. Moreover, the students appreciated YouTube's efficacy in boosting their learning autonomy and motivation through authentic, varied, and enjoyable English learning materials. However, the participants expressed concerns about distractions and a lack of interaction through excessive use of YouTube.

Another study conducted by Novawan et al. (2021) with the participation of 159 tertiary students enrolled in English Language Courses across several Indonesian universities investigated students' perceptions, experiences, and expectations regarding the use of YouTube in online English learning. Findings from an online questionnaire and video call interviews showed that students perceived YouTube as an innovative learning tool that effectively improved their language skills and vocabulary competence. The research also discussed students' difficulties in selecting suitable videos due to variability in video quality. Internet

connectivity was also a challenge that affected students' engagement and learning motivation.

In fact, a detailed review of the existing literature shows that several rigorous studies have examined language learners' perceptions of using YouTube in educational contexts. Most of these studies report positive attitudes toward YouTube as a tool for learning English. However, they have primarily focused on university students and have paid limited attention to high school learners. Compared with university students, high school students generally have lower English proficiency, fewer opportunities for autonomous learning, and greater dependence on teacher guidance. Their cognitive maturity, digital literacy, and learning autonomy are also still developing, which may influence how they use YouTube for vocabulary learning and how they perceive its effectiveness. Moreover, previous studies have rarely investigated high school students' perspectives on using YouTube as a supplementary tool for vocabulary acquisition or collected their suggestions for its effective pedagogical use, particularly in suburban schools where educational resources and learning opportunities may be more limited. These gaps highlight the need to investigate how this specific group of learners perceives and utilizes YouTube to support vocabulary development. Therefore, the present study was conducted with students at Le Hoang Chieu High School in the province of Vinh Long, Vietnam, to bridge the research gap. In light of the findings, high school teachers in rural areas gain deep insights into integrating media into their teaching instruction. In addition, the research may serve as a foundation for future studies on the effectiveness of various social media platforms in supporting language acquisition.

Research Questions

To fulfill the above purposes, the study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. How do high school students utilize YouTube to enhance their lexical competence?
2. What are high school students' opinions on using YouTube to enhance their lexical competence?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

This research was conducted in the second semester of the 2024- 2025 school year with the participation of 11th- and 12th-grade students who were non-English majors at Le Hoang Chieu High School in Vinh Long Province, which was established in 1997. The school places a strong emphasis on English language education and integrates information technology into its teaching methods. Equipped with computer labs dedicated to English learning, the school ensures that English remains a compulsory subject within the curriculum. The primary objective of English instruction is to equip students with the necessary linguistic skills to excel in examinations and effectively engage in a globalized world. Consequently, student performance in English is notably high, with survey results indicating that 90% of students achieved excellent scores in the graduation exam.

Convenience sampling was chosen as the sampling method for this study because it is easy, inexpensive, and less time-consuming (Acharya et al., 2013). Specifically, participants are selected based on practical criteria such as availability, ease of access, geographic distance, and willingness to participate. By applying this method, participants can easily participate in the research in any location and at any time that is most convenient for them. In this study, sixty students from Le Hoang Chieu High School were selected as participants, including 32 students

from grade 11 and 28 students from grade 12. Including 11th and 12th graders aimed to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the research findings, as English is a compulsory subject in their graduation examination. These students were considered to have a solid foundation of knowledge, a rich learning experience, and the ability to provide well-reasoned and insightful responses. Moreover, since they were already familiar with using YouTube as a learning tool, they felt confident and well-prepared to participate in the study. Subsequently, the researchers employed a purposive sampling method to select eight out of sixty participants for the semi-structured interviews. In fact, based on their first-semester English grades, eight students were chosen, of whom two got excellent grades (9–10 points), two with good grades (7–8 points), two with average grades (5–6 points), and two with poor grades (2–4 points).

Design of the Study

The study employed a mixed-method approach to collect comprehensive data to answer the research questions. A mixed-method approach integrates both quantitative and qualitative data within a single study, allowing for a deeper and more reliable understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Quantitative data were gathered through a paper-based questionnaire to identify patterns and ensure generalizability (Bhandari, 2023), while qualitative data were obtained via semi-structured interviews to provide deeper insights into students' experiences (Sofaer, 1999). The combination of both methods enhances the overall validity and richness of the research findings and allows the study to capture not only statistical trends but also the underlying reasons behind students' behaviors and preferences. It helps ensure a well-rounded understanding of how participants utilize YouTube to support vocabulary acquisition, including usage patterns, benefits, potential limitations, and their useful suggestions for effective use of this popular platform.

Data collection & analysis

Questionnaire

The survey was meticulously designed to align with the research objectives and ensure clarity and relevance for the participants. The questions were developed based on key aspects of the study, including students' frequency of YouTube use, learning methods, perceived benefits, challenges, and recommendations. The questionnaire was reviewed by teachers in the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Van Lang University to ensure content validity and appropriateness. Revisions were made based on feedback to enhance question clarity and relevance. Before final distribution, a small group of students (outside the main sample) completed the survey to test its effectiveness.

Reliability and validity are crucial for useful research that accurately communicates the rigor of the research process and the reliability of the results, while also avoiding misleading users (Roberts & Priest, 2006). The questionnaire is a crucial component of the research methods section as it defines the research objectives and clarifies the specific questions that need to be answered through data collection and analysis. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the questions were adapted from a previously validated study by Sakkir et al. (2020) and Ly et al. (2024). The questionnaire was carefully modified to fit the context of high school students using YouTube for vocabulary learning while maintaining its original structure and intent. Additionally, language education specialists reviewed the questionnaire to confirm content validity and appropriateness for the target participants.

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, the researchers employed Cronbach's Alpha as a statistical measure to assess internal consistency. According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), a Cronbach's Alpha value exceeding 0.7 is generally deemed acceptable, while a value above 0.8

signifies strong reliability. In fact, Cronbach's Alpha for the 17 Likert-scale questions in the questionnaire was 0.91, indicating strong interrelatedness among survey items and confirming consistent responses across the 17 questions.

The paper-based questionnaire was structured into two main sections. The first section consisted of two questions that collected participants' demographic information. The second section comprised 24 items, including 7 multiple-choice questions assessing students' YouTube usage patterns and 17 Likert-scale items measuring their perspectives on YouTube as a supporting learning tool. This section was further divided into four subsections according to the research objectives. The first subsection (items 1–7) explores students' experiences with using YouTube as a tool for learning vocabulary. The second subsection (items 8–15) examines students' perspectives on the effectiveness of YouTube in vocabulary acquisition. The third one (items 16 – 21) investigates difficulties that students encounter when using YouTube to enhance their lexical competence. Lastly, the fourth subsection (items 22–24) focuses on students' recommendations for optimizing YouTube in vocabulary learning. Overall, this structured approach ensures a comprehensive analysis of students' engagement with YouTube as an educational resource.

The questionnaire was printed on two sides of A4 sheets, and the survey was distributed to students offline, in a classroom setting, due to their busy timetable and to maintain uniform conditions. Each student received a printed questionnaire and was given clear instructions on how to complete it. The participants were allocated 10 minutes to complete the survey, ensuring they could respond thoughtfully while maintaining efficiency. Then, all completed surveys were collected immediately to prevent loss or misplacement.

The collected quantitative data were processed using the software called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 26 (SPSS 26), allowing for statistical analysis and the generation of output results.

Semi-structured interview

Given the study's mixed-methods design, the interview questions were carefully aligned with the questionnaire items to ensure consistency and complementarity. Specifically, this study employed semi-structured interviews to gain in-depth insight into students' perceptions of using YouTube for vocabulary learning (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). Eight students from Le Hoang Chieu High School were selected based on their first-semester English grades, ranging from excellent to poor, to ensure diverse perspectives. Interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, with responses later translated into English. Each session, lasting about five minutes, followed a semi-structured format covering YouTube usage, its benefits, learners' challenges, and students' recommendations. With participants' consent, the interviews were recorded. Subsequently, the recorded interviews were transcribed by carefully listening to the audio multiple times and converting the spoken content into text. The transcribed data were then systematically coded, and the responses were categorized into themes to identify key patterns, including experiences, effectiveness, challenges, and recommendations.

Results/Findings

Question 1: How do high school students utilize YouTube to enhance their lexical competence?

Demographic information

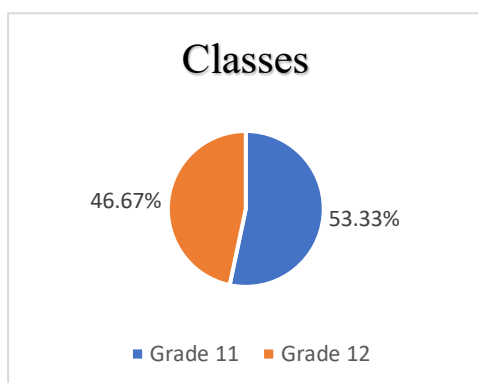


Figure 1. *The Participants' Classes*

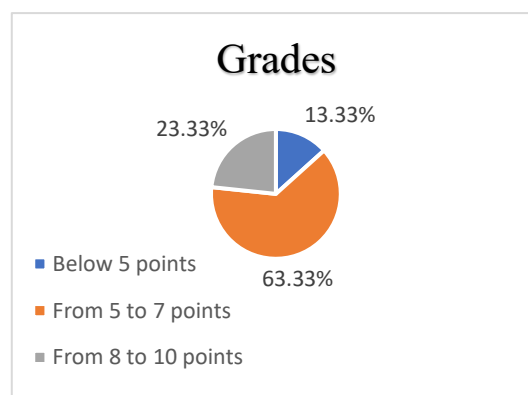


Figure 2. *The Participants' Grades*

The findings presented in Figures 1 and 2 display the participants' classes and their first-semester English grades. According to the statistics, the number of students in grade 11 was approximately equal to that of grade 12 participants. In fact, 32 were from grade 11, accounting for 53.33% of the sample (N=32), while 28 were from grade 12, composing 46.67% of the total. In terms of English proficiency, the majority of students had average performance in their first-semester academic results. Reportedly, more than 60% of the participants scored between 5 and 7, while nearly one-fourth had good grades ranging from 8 to 10 points. The number of participants whose grades were below 5 points was slightly more than 10%. The statistics reflected that most participants were at an average level of English performance.

Students' practices in using YouTube for Vocabulary Acquisition

Table 1

Frequency of Using YouTube in Learning English

Item	Questionnaire	Frequency of use	Percentages
1	How often do you use YouTube to learn English?	Daily	13.33%
		Once a week	55.0%
		Once a month	25.0%
		Never	6.67%

Table 1 presents descriptive data on the frequency of students' engagement with YouTube for English acquisition. As shown in the table, almost all participants used YouTube to learn English, accounting for nearly 95% of the sample. Specifically, more than half of the participants (55%) used YouTube weekly for learning, while nearly 15% (13.33%) used YouTube every day to learn English. The other one-fourth of the participants used YouTube for their learning on a monthly basis. Only a small minority (6.67%; N = 4) reported never using YouTube regularly for learning purposes.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Devices Used by Students to Watch Vocabulary Videos on YouTube

Item	Questionnaire	Devices	Percentages
2	What devices do you use to watch videos on YouTube? (Multiple answers allowed)	Mobile phone	58.70%
		Laptop or desktop computer	23.9%
		Tablet (iPad)	17.4%

According to Table 2, mobile phones were the most popular kind of device used by high school students to watch videos on YouTube. Fifty-four students (58.7%) reported that they used their mobile phones most when accessing YouTube videos. Laptops or desktop computers ranked second with 23.9% of the participants ($N = 22$), while tablets were the least preferred device, with only 16 students (17.4%) reporting using them to learn vocabulary through YouTube.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of the Frequency of Watching Vocabulary Videos on YouTube

Item	Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentages
3	How often do you watch YouTube videos to learn vocabulary?	Every day	46.7%
		Twice a week	31.7%
		Every week	21.6%
		Once a month	0.0%
		Once every two months	0.0%

The results in Table 3 show that most of the participants frequently incorporated YouTube into their English learning process. In particular, nearly half of the students (46.7%) reported using YouTube on a daily basis, and more than 30% of the participants ($N = 19$) watched YouTube twice a week to enrich their lexical resources. Meanwhile, the remaining 13 students (21.67%) accessed YouTube videos weekly for vocabulary-related learning activities. No participants reported using YouTube only once a month or once every two months for their vocabulary lessons.

The qualitative data corroborated the results of the paper-based questionnaire. The interviewees asserted that one of the notable benefits of YouTube was its diverse learning resources. They appreciated the wide variety of educational videos, including teacher-led lessons, songs with subtitles, and grammar and vocabulary exercises, which made learning more engaging and effective (Participants 2 and 3)

“YouTube supports me a lot in learning English vocabulary by diversifying learning materials and reliable sources of information with just one click.” (Participant 2)

More importantly, these resources are reliable since many of them are lectures that teach students “general and theoretical knowledge” (Participant 1). Specifically, by watching and listening to these videos, students learn how to pronounce words, what they mean, and how to use them in context (Participants 5 and 6). Another plus point of using YouTube is that it is easy to access videos because the platform is “user-friendly and allows users to access a variety of information sources” (Participant 4). In addition, the students believed that studying on YouTube for a short period each day helped them establish a consistent learning routine, develop self-discipline and concentration, and gradually improve their English proficiency (Participants 7 and 8).

“I often use YouTube to learn vocabulary by watching and listening to teachers pronounce, explain meanings, and categorize words. It’s also convenient because I can pause, rewind, or replay any part until I fully understand the word or usage.” (Participant 6)

Watching YouTube provides images, and everything is more accessible and easier to search for, making it more interesting and less boring. I find it saves time and money compared to going to extra classes at tutoring centers or hiring private tutors. I believe that I will form a habit of learning vocabulary daily thanks to a consistent learning routine. (Participant 7)

Table 4*Topics of YouTube Vocabulary Videos Watched by Students*

Item	Questionnaire	Topics	Percentages
4	What topics are covered in the vocabulary videos that you watch on YouTube?	Topics related to the school curriculum	40%
		Entertainment topics	10%
		Historical topics	20%
		Political topics	20%
		Other topics (please specify)	10%

As presented in Table 4, the most common type of vocabulary videos watched by students was those related to the school curriculum, representing 40% of the responses. Additionally, social topics, particularly history and politics, attracted students' attention, with 20% of the participants indicating that they frequently viewed videos related to these fields. Entertainment and other topics received equal attention, with 10% of the responses, suggesting that students still combine learning with diverse content. Overall, the findings demonstrate that students tended to focus on topics related to their lessons, indicating their determination to improve their academic results.

The interview findings further explained these preferences by revealing that most of the interviewed students reported intentionally searching for videos closely related to their academic needs. To be more specific, more than half of the participants affirmed that they preferred videos that matched the themes of classroom lessons (Participants 1 and 2). Participants 3 and 4 explained that YouTube videos provided vivid explanations, including both audio and visuals, making abstract vocabulary more comprehensible. Furthermore, they could replay the videos as many times as necessary until they fully understood the meanings, pronunciation, and contextual use of unfamiliar lexical items (Participant 5).

I don't really watch random vocabulary videos. I usually choose the ones that match what my teacher is teaching. They often show pictures, examples, and pronunciation together, so I can understand the words much faster. Sometimes when I only read the textbook, I still don't get the meaning, but after watching a video, it becomes much easier. (Participant 4)

If there's a word I don't understand, I don't have to move on immediately. I can pause the video, replay it, or even watch another video about the same word. After listening a few times, I usually know both the pronunciation and how to use it in a sentence. That's something I can't always do in class because the lesson has to continue. (Participant 5)

The interviewees also expressed their preference for YouTube videos discussing social topics, especially in history and politics (Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4). They claimed that these videos introduced "academic vocabulary and formal expressions" (Participant 1) that were useful for "reading articles or listening to authentic materials" (Participant 2).

I find videos about social issues interesting since they introduce a lot of useful vocabulary about society, government, and world events. When I read online newspapers or watch documentaries in English, I recognize many of the words that I learned from those videos. (Participant 3)

These videos teach me many formal words and expressions. They also explain difficult topics with pictures and examples, so I can remember the vocabulary better. I think they have improved both my reading and listening comprehension. (Participant 4)

Several students admitted that they were attracted to entertainment videos to learn vocabulary. The popular ones were cartoons (Participants 1 and 2), movies (Participants 3 and 4), and gaming videos from various streamers (Participant 5). Music videos were also a popular choice, with students specifically mentioning listening to artists while following the subtitles to learn new words (Participant 6).

I watch videos while turning on English subtitles to practice my reading and listening skills. This way, I can learn both the written form and how to pronounce and stress words. The channel I often watch is Khanh Vy's channel. This method also helps me improve my sentence structure and recognize collocations naturally. (Participant 5)

I usually listen to music by Taylor Swift and Selena to learn more vocabulary from the songs. In addition, I also watch some gaming videos from various streamers. It's more relaxing than traditional studying, so I tend to stay motivated and study more consistently. (Participant 6)

Table 5

Descriptive Analysis of the Time Students Spent on Watching YouTube Vocabulary Videos

Item	Questionnaire	Duration	Percentages
5	How long do you use YouTube to learn vocabulary each day?	10 minutes	23.3%
		15–30 minutes	60.0%
		1 hour	11.7%
		More than 2 hours	5.0%

According to Table 5, most participants (60%) were willing to spend 15 to 30 minutes each day learning vocabulary on YouTube, compared with the other 14 students (23.3%) who reported spending 10 minutes daily watching vocabulary videos on the platform. A smaller proportion, with 7 participants composing around 12% of the responses, spent an hour on vocabulary videos, while only 5% (N = 3) spent more than 2 hours each day on this activity. These figures indicate that most learners tend to spend a moderate amount of time using YouTube for their daily vocabulary learning.

The qualitative results demonstrated that the participants used YouTube for vocabulary learning regularly as part of their daily routine (Participants 1, 2, 3, and 5). Although their study time varied from 20 minutes to 2-3 hours per day, they emphasized that consistent practice helped them develop better study habits and improve their English.

I usually use YouTube to support my vocabulary learning for about 30 minutes each day. The repetition through maintaining a daily study schedule helps me develop discipline and establish better habits to improve my English. (Participant 1)

Furthermore, Participants 2, 3, 4, and 5 highlighted that daily practice and gradually increasing study time helped them maintain motivation and become more focused during online learning.

I usually use YouTube for about 30 minutes each day to listen to music, and then I watch the subtitles to learn vocabulary from the songs, or practice grammar and vocabulary exercises in English. This helps me develop a sense of study and concentration while learning online without being disturbed by other factors. (Participant 3)

I usually spend about 2 hours a day, and on some days, I can study for up to 3 hours. I find it helpful to suggest diverse sources as well as interesting videos that are suitable for the theme of each lesson and the exercises in class. (Participant 5)

Table 6*Types of English Vocabulary Noted by the Participants When Watching YouTube Videos*

Item	Questionnaire	Vocabulary type	Percentages
6	When learning English vocabulary from YouTube videos, what do you usually take notes on?	Difficult vocabulary	45.0%
		Interesting vocabulary	13.3%
		Vocabulary related to topics in the textbook	25.0%
		Vocabulary used in daily life	16.7%

The findings in Table 6 indicate that a majority of respondents reported using YouTube as a supplementary learning tool to support their formal English studies. Particularly, 45% of the students took note of difficult vocabulary, while one-fourth of them (25%) noticed words related to their textbook topics. Meanwhile, vocabulary learning based on practical use or personal interest was less common. Only 16.7% of learners noted down vocabulary used in daily life, and 13.3% paid attention to words simply because they found them interesting. These results suggest that most students approached the platform as an academic resource, prioritizing purposeful vocabulary development and alignment with their learning goals.

Table 7*Descriptive Statistics on Effective Note-Taking Techniques for Vocabulary Retention*

Item	Questionnaire	Techniques	Percentages
7	What note-taking technique do you use to remember the meaning of vocabulary? (You can choose multiple answers)	Images	48.3%
		Definitions	26.7%
		Mind maps	16.7%
		Examples	20%
		Creating your own sentences and translations	6.7%

The results in Table 7 reveal that students applied various note-taking techniques to retain vocabulary, with the most commonly preferred strategy being visual aids. In detail, nearly half of the responses (48.3%) selected images as a useful technique to support their vocabulary retention. Using definitions ranked second (26.7%), showing that many high school students relied on explicit explanations to remember new words. Moreover, 20% of the participants employed examples as an effective technique to support their memory, while a smaller portion (16.7%) utilized mind maps to organize vocabulary in a systematic way. Meanwhile, the least common technique was creating their own sentences and translations, which was reported by only 6.7% of the participants.

Question 2: What are high school students' opinions on using YouTube to enhance their lexical competence?

Students' perspectives on the benefits of using YouTube in learning vocabulary

Table 8*The Participants' Perspectives on the Advantages of Using YouTube to Improve Lexical Competence*

Item	Statement	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
8	Learning vocabulary from YouTube videos helps you understand the meanings of words better.	0.0	3.3	40.0	50.0	6.7	3.60	0.61
9	Learning vocabulary from YouTube videos helps enhance your English vocabulary resources.	0.0	0.0	30.0	48.3	21.7	3.91	0.71
10	Learning vocabulary from YouTube videos helps you pronounce words better.	0.0	1.7	31.7	48.3	18.3	3.83	0.74
11	YouTube videos provide a lot of vocabulary related to the topics of the lessons in the curriculum.	0.0	3.3	36.7	41.7	18.3	3.75	0.79
12	You feel more confident when taking vocabulary tests after a period of watching YouTube videos.	0.0	6.7	33.3	46.7	13.3	3.66	0.74
13	Thanks to watching YouTube videos, you use vocabulary accurately and flexibly when speaking and writing.	0.0	1.7	43.3	40.0	15.0	3.68	0.74
14	You find that you remember vocabulary longer thanks to watching YouTube videos.	3.3	1.7	40.0	46.7	8.3	3.55	0.81
15	YouTube is more effective for improving English vocabulary skills compared to other learning methods (such as TikTok, TED Talk, Duolingo, etc.).	0.0	3.3	58.3	31.7	6.7	3.41	0.63

Based on the data presented in Table 8, most participants had a positive perspective towards using YouTube to enhance their lexical resources. In terms of mastering word meanings, the participants agreed that watching YouTube videos was beneficial to understand meanings better

($M = 3.6$) and remember word meanings longer and more easily ($M = 3.55$). Regarding their confidence in using vocabulary, the majority of the students (60%) expressed their agreement that watching YouTube increased their confidence in the vocabulary test ($M = 3.66$) since the platforms provided a lot of vocabulary relevant to lessons in the curriculum ($M = 3.75$), and boosted their repertoire ($M = 3.91$). Additionally, the participants reported better pronunciation ($M = 3.83$) and more accurate vocabulary use when speaking and writing ($M = 3.68$). However, the respondents were neutral, stating that YouTube was a more effective tool for enhancing vocabulary than other platforms like TikTok, Duolingo, or TED Talks.

The interview findings supported the questionnaire results by providing further explanations for students' positive perceptions of using YouTube to enhance vocabulary learning. While the questionnaire indicated that participants believed YouTube helped them understand word meanings, remember vocabulary more effectively, improve pronunciation, and expand their lexical repertoire, the interviews revealed several reasons behind these perceptions.

A common theme emerging from the interviews was that YouTube enabled vocabulary to be learned in meaningful contexts. Six of the eight participants explained that watching authentic videos showed them how words were naturally used “in real-life situations” (Participant 2), making vocabulary easier to understand and retain.

In my opinion, the biggest benefit is that vocabulary is used in real contexts, which makes it easier to remember. Listening to native speakers' pronunciation also helps me speak better. (Participant 3)

In my opinion, the benefit of this is that I can both listen and see the context in which to use those words. By combining learning with the vivid images and videos on YouTube, it becomes easier to remember and apply what I've learned compared to just studying from books. (Participant 5)

Furthermore, most interviewees highlighted that the combination of images, audio, subtitles, and authentic pronunciation created “a richer learning experience than traditional text-based materials” (Participant 6). These findings are consistent with the questionnaire results, which showed relatively high levels of agreement that YouTube improved pronunciation and increased learners' confidence in vocabulary use.

The biggest benefit is seeing realistic and clear images of the quality of the lessons that teachers passionately deliver online. Additionally, it helps me better understand the English language and learn many new words. (Participant 1)

Students' perspectives on the potential concerns of using YouTube to enhance their lexical competence

Table 9

The Participants' Perspectives on the Potential Concerns of Using YouTube in Enhancing Lexical Competence

Item	Statement	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
16	You often find it difficult to find YouTube videos that match the topics of the lessons in the textbook.	1.7	6.7	51.7	28.3	11.7	3.41	0.84
17	Sometimes, you get distracted when using YouTube to learn vocabulary.	1.7	1.7	35.0	40.0	21.7	3.78	0.81
18	Sometimes, you have difficulty with the internet connection when trying to watch videos on YouTube.	1.6	6.7	11.7	33.3	46.7	4.16	0.99
19	Some vocabulary videos on YouTube are not interesting due to long-winded explanations.	0.0	6.7	43.3	33.3	16.7	3.60	0.81
20	Some vocabulary videos on YouTube don't have subtitles, making them difficult to understand.	1.7	11.7	38.3	38.3	10.0	3.43	0.88
21	You will continue using YouTube as a learning tool to expand your English vocabulary.	1.7	8.3	3.3	45.0	41.7	4.16	1.03

The results shown in Table 9 indicate that the mean scores fall within the medium-to-high assessment range ($M = 3.41\text{--}4.16$), reflecting a mix of neutral-to-slightly concerned attitudes toward the challenges of using YouTube for vocabulary learning. The participants expressed

strong agreement on the issue of internet connection ($M = 4.16$), suggesting that technical problems remain a significant barrier to using YouTube effectively for vocabulary learning in rural areas. Moreover, more than 60% of the respondents agreed that distraction from other content on YouTube was also a challenge ($M = 3.78$). However, the students adopted a neutral position on the difficulties of finding YouTube videos aligned with lessons in textbooks ($M = 3.41$). They remained neutral in mentioning that a lack of subtitles in YouTube videos led to incomprehension of the content ($M = 3.43$). Although the participants agreed that sometimes long-winded explanation vocabulary videos on YouTube bored them ($M = 3.6$), they expressed a strong intention to continue utilizing YouTube as a vocabulary learning tool ($M = 4.16$)

The interview findings generally supported the questionnaire results by providing deeper insights into the challenges students encountered when using YouTube for vocabulary learning. The most frequently mentioned challenge was distraction (Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4). Most interviewees (Participants 1, 2, 4, and 5) reported that advertisements, notifications, and “too much entertainment content on YouTube” (Participant 3) often diverted their attention from learning. Several participants also acknowledged that the biggest challenge was “not having self-discipline or motivation” (Participant 2) when using a platform primarily designed for entertainment

There are a few difficulties, such as getting bored because after learning a little, ads pop up, which often distract me and make it hard to focus. I might suddenly encounter ads or get notifications from other apps, or after learning for 5 minutes, I want to play games. (Participant 4)

Another concern was information overload. Three out of eight interviewed students explained that the enormous number of available videos made it difficult to identify materials that matched their learning needs. Therefore, they spent a lot of time searching for suitable videos.

I find difficulties in several areas. The most notable is that YouTube has too many different videos to choose from. This can lead me to select videos that don't align with my learning goals, resulting in wasting time as I have to go back and search for other videos that match my objectives. (Participant 5)

Consistent with the questionnaire findings, the interview results expressed concern about the lack of video subtitles. Some interviewees stated that videos without subtitles made it difficult to understand the content, particularly when unfamiliar vocabulary was introduced.

The biggest challenge is that I easily get distracted because there is too much entertainment content on YouTube. Additionally, if a video doesn't have subtitles or the speaking speed is too fast, I find it hard to keep up and feel discouraged. (Participant 2)

I find it difficult to learn from videos without subtitles because I cannot always catch what the speaker is saying. If the speech is too fast or the vocabulary is unfamiliar, I easily lose track of the content and become less confident in understanding the lesson. (Participant 8)

*Students' suggestions for an efficient application of YouTube in learning vocabulary***Table 10***The Participants' Recommendations for An Efficient Implementation of YouTube*

Item	Statement	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	M	SD
22	Vocabulary videos on YouTube should include subtitles to help students understand the material better.	0.0	5.0	23.3	40.0	31.7	4.0	0.87
23	Vocabulary videos on YouTube should be under 5 minutes long to avoid boring the learners.	0.0	6.7	31.7	28.3	33.3	3.9	0.95
24	Teachers should suggest reliable video sources on YouTube for students learning English.	0.0	1.7	15.0	35.0	48.3	4.30	0.78

As shown in Table 10, with the mean scores of a high range from 3.9 to 4.3, the participants favored the suggestions for efficient use of YouTube to enhance their lexical resources. Particularly, the participants showed a strong consensus on the necessity of teacher support in recommending reliable YouTube video sources for students to learn English ($M = 4.3$), indicating the important role teachers play in guiding students toward trustworthy and effective learning resources on YouTube. Moreover, the respondents supported the inclusion of subtitles in vocabulary videos on YouTube to enhance comprehension ($M = 4$). They also preferred shorter videos lasting around 5 minutes ($M = 3.9$). Overall, the students showed their preference for subtitled short videos and those recommended by their teachers.

Consistent with the questionnaire findings, the interviewees emphasized the importance of teacher guidance and video subtitles. Most participants suggested that teachers should recommend “appropriate and reputable learning channels” (Participant 6) to ensure the videos matched students’ proficiency levels and learning objectives.

I think teachers should introduce a list of reliable YouTube channels for students. Their recommendations can help students save time and avoid videos with incorrect or confusing information. (Participant 7)

Sometimes I am confused by the diversity of YouTube videos. If my teacher recommends a few good channels, I feel more confident and motivated to watch vocabulary videos. (Participant 8)

The interview data also supported students’ preferences for videos with subtitles. The interviewees explained that subtitles enabled them to follow speakers and understand the content more easily (Participants 3 and 4). Moreover, reading subtitles while listening to the

video content provided them with opportunities to practice pronunciation and have better vocabulary retention (Participants 5 and 6).

I think it's best to choose channels that are easy to understand and offer subtitles. Additionally, taking notes on new vocabulary and reviewing them multiple times can help with long-term retention. (Participant 3)

I prefer videos with subtitles since I can understand video content more easily. Moreover, I can pick up new vocabulary and practice pronunciation when reading subtitles. (Participant 5)

Discussion

Question 1: How do high school students utilize YouTube to enhance their lexical competence?

The present study investigated how students at Le Hoang Chieu High School employed YouTube to enhance their lexical competence in two main themes: the frequency of YouTube integration and students' learning habits.

Regarding the frequency of using YouTube for English vocabulary learning, the results showed that most participants practiced frequently. The data from the semi-structured interview supported the quantitative findings. The interviewed students reported that YouTube provided diverse and accessible learning resources, such as instructional videos, subtitled songs, and language exercises, which enhanced engagement, promoted consistent learning habits, and supported their English development. This conclusion is consistent with the ideas discussed by Tran et al. (2026), who assert that the enormous number of YouTube videos presents authentic materials at different proficiency levels that are suitable for personalized learning.

Regarding students' learning habits, the results indicated that students at Le Hoang Chieu High School tended to form a habit of utilizing YouTube as a source of language input to improve their lexical competence. Although they spent different amounts of time watching YouTube vocabulary videos, they attempted to keep this habit daily. The results from the semi-structured interviews clarified the tendency. Students explained that consistent practice of watching YouTube videos for learning vocabulary enhanced their learning autonomy. The finding is similar to that of the study by Ly et al. (2024), indicating that YouTube was effective in boosting learners' autonomy and motivation with authentic, varied, and enjoyable English learning materials.

In addition, the participants claimed that videos related to the school curriculum were the most preferred type of vocabulary content. Specifically, the students primarily focused on lesson-related materials to support their academic improvement. The interviewees asserted that YouTube provided clear explanations with vivid demonstrations, including sound and images, thereby helping them understand classroom lessons more deeply. This conclusion supports the findings of research by Wahidah et al. (2026), stating that watching YouTube videos immersed learners in authentic conversations with cultural nuances and colloquial expressions that were not adequately represented in traditional textbooks

Moreover, the participants frequently applied note-taking techniques and repeated the content of YouTube videos for better retention. Data from the structured interviews support these findings. Many students reported actively writing down new vocabulary they encountered in the videos, then looking up the meanings and reviewing them during their free time.

Question 2: What are high school students' opinions on using YouTube to enhance their lexical competence?

Based on the findings of the current study, both 11th and 12th-grade students at Le Hoang Chieu High School believed that YouTube is an effective tool that helps to enhance their lexical competence. The findings indicate that 50% of students agreed that learning vocabulary through YouTube videos improved their understanding of word meanings and better long-term retention of lexical terms. This enhancement in vocabulary comprehension subsequently contributed to students' increased confidence in using English for speaking and writing. The respondents explained that YouTube provided a dynamic and engaging platform for language learning, offering students access to a diverse source of authentic content that enhances both vocabulary and overall language skills in an enjoyable and entertaining learning environment. These results align with research by Kusumariana (2022) and Listiani et al. (2021), who argued that YouTube improved students' vocabulary understanding by demonstrating how words are used in different contexts, thereby supporting better retention.

Discussing the challenges encountered during the process of using YouTube to learn vocabulary, the students at Le Hoang Chieu High School reported problems of distraction arising from advertisements, entertainment content, and notifications of the platform. The interviewed students claimed that they found it hard to focus and remain consistent since the ads frequently popped up and other highly recommended entertaining videos appeared at regular intervals. These observations align with the conclusion of research conducted by Ly et al. (2014), which highlighted that distraction from advertisements and the excess of information in online environments significantly hinder learners' focus. Another notable challenge was the vast amount of video content, which led to confusion in selecting appropriate learning materials and to time-consuming practice. The interviewees explained that a variety of YouTube videos made it difficult to choose suitable ones for their learning objectives. Furthermore, YouTube without subtitles also caused difficulty for learners. These findings were consistent with those of research by Novawan et al. (2021), claiming that diverse YouTube videos made it difficult for students to select suitable videos matching their learning needs and proficiency levels.

In terms of suggestions for an effective use of YouTube for vocabulary acquisition, most participants affirmed the importance of teacher guidance for suitable channels and reputable videos. They also expressed a preference for short videos with subtitles.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how EFL students at Le Hoang Chieu High School perceived the use of YouTube to enhance their lexical competence. A mixed-methods design was employed: quantitative data were collected via a questionnaire completed by 60 eleventh- and twelfth-grade students, and qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with eight students. The study concludes that YouTube has considerable potential to support English vocabulary learning in EFL contexts by providing students with accessible, diverse, and authentic language input. As a supporting learning resource, it can promote learner autonomy, increase motivation, and create opportunities for students to expand their vocabulary beyond the classroom lessons. However, to maximize its educational value, students require teachers' guidance in selecting appropriate content and developing effective learning strategies to avoid distractions and information overload.

The findings also suggest several pedagogical implications. English teachers should integrate YouTube purposefully into vocabulary instruction by recommending reliable educational

channels that align with learning objectives and students' proficiency levels. Moreover, their guidance on active vocabulary-learning techniques such as note-taking and contextual practice makes the use of YouTube for vocabulary acquisition more efficient. In addition, subtitled videos with concise and well-structured content may further enhance students' comprehension and retention. Finally, high school educators should encourage students to develop independent language learning through applying media platforms to their learning habits. Generally, YouTube can complement traditional classroom instruction and contribute to vocabulary development among EFL high school students when they receive teacher guidance and carefully select video content.

Limitations

This study has several remaining limitations. Firstly, the research employed a convenience sample of 60 students from a single high school and a small group of interviewees, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the study was conducted exclusively at Le Hoang Chieu High School in a specific province of Vietnam, so the cultural, social, and educational factors unique to that setting may affect the applicability of the results to other regions, schools, or student populations. Moreover, the study did not conduct direct assessments of vocabulary improvement under controlled conditions, which may limit the analysis of some questions.

Recommendations

The findings of this research may serve as a foundation for future studies on the effectiveness of various social media platforms in supporting language acquisition or promoting learner autonomy. For educators, the results can offer insights into integrating YouTube into the English language curriculum to enrich vocabulary instruction. Specifically, at Le Hoang Chieu High School, where students encounter challenges in vocabulary learning, incorporating YouTube as a supplementary learning tool may provide students with increased exposure to authentic language use and more interactive learning experiences.

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Students' perceptions of interactive live worksheets in online French language learning

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: live worksheets, gamification, French as a Foreign Language, motivation, Jamaica, Foreign Language Excitement (FLEX)

Digital tools are increasingly used in online foreign language learning, yet limited research has examined students' perceptions of live worksheets, particularly in Caribbean higher education. This exploratory descriptive study investigated 16 undergraduate students' perceptions of live worksheets in a 15-week beginner French course at a Jamaican university, focusing on benefits, limitations, motivation, and the instructor's role. Using convenience sampling, data were collected through an online questionnaire comprising open- and closed-ended items. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses underwent thematic analysis. Findings indicate that students perceived live worksheets as beneficial for engagement, motivation, and Foreign Language Excitement, while immediate feedback supported self-assessment, recall, and application of linguistic knowledge. However, inaccurate automated responses and difficulties with diacritics presented challenges. Students emphasized the instructor's role in verifying accuracy, clarifying misunderstandings, and facilitating feedback. The study highlights the potential of live worksheets as formative assessment tools in foreign language learning.

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) continues to transform the educational landscape (Elmi et al., 2024), providing access to diverse digital platforms and online resources (Kiong, 2022) while enabling educators to diversify pedagogical practices in response to the demands of contemporary learning environments (Ahmad et al., 2024). Within higher education institutions (HEIs), technology integration has become increasingly important not only for course delivery but also for fostering engagement, interaction, and formative assessment in online and hybrid classrooms (Madden et al., 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this shift, forcing universities worldwide to transition rapidly to remote learning and compelling educators to adopt innovative strategies to sustain student participation and motivation in virtual environments (Ali & Khoza, 2023). Although many institutions have resumed face-to-face instruction, online and hybrid modalities remain important because they offer flexibility to

students who balance employment, commuting challenges, and financial constraints, particularly in developing contexts (Madden et al., 2024). Regardless of the instructional format, it is the role of educators to find enticing ways to grab students' attention without diminishing academic integrity. Fuertes et al. (2023) and Pham (2022) cite a correlation between student engagement and academic achievement. In a foreign language (FL) class, teachers have an even greater responsibility to ensure continuous interaction and engagement so that learners develop foreign language enjoyment (Zeng, 2021) and reduce foreign language anxiety (FLA) (Yan & Liang, 2022), all while actively co-constructing meaning.

The move toward online instruction presents both opportunities and pedagogical challenges (Pike et al., 2022). Language learning depends heavily on interaction, repetition, collaboration, immediate feedback, and continuous communicative practice (Sadiqzade, 2025; Wedlock & Binnie, 2025). However, maintaining these elements in virtual classrooms can be difficult, especially when students experience disengagement, reduced motivation, or FLA. Consequently, online French language classes require carefully designed pedagogical approaches and interactive tools to sustain learner participation and promote meaningful language development (Bahari et al., 2025). The offering of online French courses has therefore become increasingly relevant in higher education because it expands access to language learning opportunities for students who may otherwise be unable to attend face-to-face classes due to geographic, financial, or scheduling limitations. At the same time, online FL instruction requires educators to rethink how engagement, formative assessment, and communicative practice are facilitated in technology-mediated environments (Xerri et al., 2025).

As ICT continues to shape language education, there is growing reliance on Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), and Technology-Assisted Language Learning (TALL) tools to support communicative and student-centered learning experiences (Khan & Tufail, 2020; Nuraeni, 2021). Interactive platforms such as Kahoot!, Quizlet, Jeopardy-style games, and live worksheets are increasingly integrated into online FL instruction as mechanisms for engagement, reinforcement, and formative assessment (Le & Prabjandee, 2023; Madden, 2022; Sadeghi et al., 2023). These tools often fall within the broader concept of gamification, which incorporates game-like elements to improve motivation, participation, and academic performance (Al-Dosakee & Ozdamli, 2021; Luo, 2023).

Among these tools, Liveworksheet has gained growing popularity because it transforms traditional worksheets into interactive digital activities that provide immediate feedback, self-correction, and autonomous practice opportunities (Pradnyadari et al., 2025). Accessible via *Liveworksheets.com*, Widiantho et al. (2023) indicate that the platform offers an assorted collection of materials that have been applied across several disciplines, including mathematics, social sciences, physics, and foreign languages (Ariskasari & Sulisworo, 2021; Hidayah & Asari, 2022; Roswahyuliani et al., 2024), as well as at the primary school level (Pulungan et al., 2022). In FL contexts specifically, Ryabchikova et al. (2020) argue that live worksheets support communicative competence and linguistic development, while Madden et al. (2023; 2024) highlight their usefulness in promoting vocabulary acquisition, recall, learner autonomy, and application of knowledge.

Despite these reported affordances, important pedagogical concerns remain insufficiently explored. Existing research has not adequately examined how students perceive the effectiveness, limitations, and motivational impact of live worksheets in online French language classes. Similarly, limited attention has been paid to the teacher's role in mediating the use of these tools through guidance, explanation, feedback, and pedagogical scaffolding. These issues are especially significant because digital tools alone do not guarantee meaningful learning; rather, their effectiveness depends heavily on how teachers integrate them pedagogically and how students experience and interpret their use within the online classroom.

Against this background, the present study explores students' perceptions of the use of live worksheets in online French classes, focusing specifically on perceived benefits, challenges, motivation, and the role of the teacher in facilitating the learning experience. By addressing these pedagogical concerns, the study contributes to emerging discussions on technology-enhanced FL instruction and formative assessment within online higher education contexts.

Literature review

Foundations of live worksheets

The origins of interactive worksheets in language education can be traced to the early development of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) during the 1960s and 1970s, when digital exercises primarily emphasized drill-and-practice activities grounded in behaviorist learning theories (Aslan, 2025). These early systems promoted repetition, immediate feedback, and self-paced learning but were criticized for encouraging mechanical language use rather than authentic communication (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). With the emergence of communicative and integrative CALL approaches in the 1980s and 1990s, digital worksheet activities evolved to include more contextualized and learner-centered tasks such as cloze exercises, sentence reconstruction, and multimedia-supported interaction (Warschauer & Healey, 1998; Yang, 2010). The growth of internet-based and Web 2.0 technologies further transformed worksheets into interactive online resources that supported learner autonomy, multimodal learning, and immediate formative feedback (Mayer, 2020; Perumal & Vinothkumar, 2022). Studies have since highlighted the motivational and engagement benefits of interactive worksheets in language classrooms, particularly through the integration of images, audio, gamified elements, and self-assessment opportunities (Le & Prabjandee, 2023; Yusuf & Ali, 2022). However, scholars caution that despite their pedagogical affordances, interactive worksheets may still privilege lower-order cognitive tasks if not carefully designed and mediated by instructors (Mayer, 2020). Consequently, contemporary research increasingly emphasizes the importance of integrating live worksheets within communicative, constructivist, and student-centered pedagogical frameworks rather than treating them merely as automated drill tools.

Definitions and characteristics of live worksheets

Available at Liveworksheets.com, live interactive worksheets are internet-based pedagogical resources that allow instructors to create, customize, or select already prepared ones *from* a worldwide community of teachers, trainers, and pedagogical engineers (Madden et al., 2024; Le & Prabjandee, 2023; Yusuf & Ali, 2022). Also known as interactive e-worksheets (Tressyalina et al., 2023) and interactive digital worksheets (Dewi et al., 2022), live worksheets are conventional paper-based tasks converted into digital formats that allow students to obtain immediate feedback. Live worksheets come in different electronic media, such as animations, images, puzzles, texts, and videos, which can develop different language competencies and help students to feel engaged. The activity types (see examples in Figure 1) include matching, gap fill, drag-and-drop, multiple choice, and short answer questions, which cater to different learning needs and *personalize* the process. Mayer (2020) notes that the multimodal *nature of* live worksheets strengthens comprehension and memory retention. The Liveworksheet.com site has numerous activities in various languages to serve both teachers and students in the pedagogical process, providing convenience and support. Madden and Robinson (2025) emphasize that teachers are constantly on a quest to find strategies and activities to ensure the best learning outcomes.

Figure 1.

Examples of French live worksheet exercises



Benefits and limitations of live worksheets

Live worksheets bring several benefits to teaching and learning. They help instructors to save time on preparing exercises, evaluating students, and providing feedback, and give teachers insights into students' formative performance and progress both in terms of content area and language competence (Le & Prabjandee, 2023; Montalvo-Balbed, 2012). The results from the worksheets inform the future didactic interventions of the teacher. Students also benefit from

immediate feedback. Immediately after submitting their responses, students can see whether their answers were correct. If they chose incorrect answers, they may be prompted to learn from their mistakes. Additionally, live worksheets promote autonomous learning. Instructors can provide self-paced exercises, or students can locate them independently, which encourages self-directed learning (Nuraeni, 2021). This independence allows students to develop their cognitive skills, especially in vocabulary and grammar (Madden et al., 2024). Kopniak (2018) adds that live worksheets help activate acquired knowledge, *develop information-processing skills*, and boost students' motivation to study, while promoting active learning. Le and Prabjandee (2023) agree that the worksheets promote differentiated *instruction and that their unique features enhance students' engagement by making the learning process more entertaining*. Madden et al. (2023) highlight the flexibility of such worksheets, which can be used in both online and in-person classes. They state that the worksheets can be incorporated at different *points* during the lesson, whether to activate *prior knowledge as an icebreaker*, present new content, consolidate learning, reinforce newly taught concepts, or assess and apply new knowledge. Furthermore, the worksheets are user-friendly, and students appreciate their appealing designs (Le & Prabjandee, 2023; Madden et al., 2024).

Although live worksheets *offer* several benefits, they *also have* limitations. Despite their potential to develop *diverse* language competencies, it is difficult to evaluate learners' pronunciation and language fluency *across* contexts (Le & Prabjandee, 2023). There are also technical *challenges, such as the inability to easily add diacritics on a standard keyboard, which may render correct answers incorrect, and other issues related to the algorithm that sometimes produce incorrect answers* (Madden et al., 2023, 2024). For this reason, instructors have to carefully vet the live worksheets and complete them ahead of students to identify any inaccuracies. Additionally, as the worksheets are internet-based, they rely heavily on strong internet connectivity and access to appropriate devices. In the absence of reliable technology or internet access, students will face obstacles in participating effectively in online classes (Sadeghi et al., 2023). Another downside to the worksheets is that they promote individual learning, which limits interpersonal interactions. However, especially in the context of online learning, teachers could discuss the answers openly so that students have an opportunity to participate and learn from each other.

Recent studies on live worksheets in FL teaching and learning

Husain Subroto et al. (2024) conducted a study among 10th-grade students at an Indonesian school to ascertain whether there was a significant improvement in reading skills between students taught *with* live worksheets and those *taught with* traditional paper-based worksheets. The research was quasi-experimental and involved a control class and an experimental class, with the same number of students (36) in each. The study collected data through pre- and post-tests and questionnaires, which were analyzed using SPSS and descriptive quantitative methods. Findings revealed a significant difference in reading scores between the two groups, with the experimental *group showing higher scores*. Students' perceptions of live worksheets were very positive, with the drawbacks noted as very insignificant.

Kholida (2024) examined the use of live worksheets as an English test tool for 34 senior high school students in Indonesia. The study sought to ascertain the perspectives of students and

teachers on the use of live worksheets and the difficulties experienced by teachers using the worksheets as an assessment tool. A descriptive-quantitative method was used, which included observations, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. Results showed that live worksheets are considered positive as they are user-friendly, flexible, and efficient, and they facilitate grade management and provide good feedback. Specifically for the students, live worksheets are praised for their ease of use and capacity to motivate learning and develop skills. However, challenges include academic dishonesty and worksheet customization.

Rusdan and Mulya (2023) used live worksheets to measure students' cognitive learning outcomes among 72 grade-11 students at an Indonesian high school. The data collection methods included a questionnaire and tests as assessment materials. Using univariate and bivariate analyses in SPSS, the results showed that the average value of the group that used live worksheets was higher than that of the non-experimental group. There was a significant difference in the effect of the pre- and post-test learning outcomes on students who used live worksheets.

The studies highlighted in this section show the use of live worksheets in different contexts to investigate different elements, such as reading, effectiveness and difficulties, cognitive learning outcomes, and speaking confidence and motivation. All of the studies were conducted in Indonesia, at the high school level, and employed quantitative analysis to arrive at their results. Consequently, more research is needed from other jurisdictions and contexts, including higher education, from a qualitative or mixed-methods perspectives. Additionally, studies are limited on the use of live worksheets in FL learning such as French. Furthermore, the literature is limited on the role of the teacher when using interactive worksheets in L2 learning – an area this present study seeks to examine.

Gamification and theories of motivation in FL

The interplay between gamification and FL outcomes is of critical importance, especially as it can be challenging at times to sustain students' FLEX and motivation. FLEX is the ensemble of positive emotions and satisfaction that students experience before, during, and after the language-learning experience, while motivation is the "combination of attempt plus desire to obtain the objective of learning the language plus desirable attitudes towards learning the language" (Alizadeh, 2016, p. 11). Gamification refers to the application of game-based elements to non-game contexts with the aim of enhancing student engagement. Luarn et al. (2023) emphasize the positive influence of gamification on motivation, citing its potential to augment the quality of learning experiences. Panmei and Waluyo (2022) endorse the position that gamification strategies in L2 contexts can increase learner motivation and engagement in L2 tasks. In L2 learning, where dedication and persistence are important, gamification provides a promising means to reinforce proficiency development and equip learners for global communication demands in our interconnected world (Madden, 2022; Shen et al., 2024). Furthermore, Panmei and Waluyo (2022) argue that gamification can be instrumental in vocabulary acquisition and retention, as games often invite learners to repeatedly use newly learned vocabulary in context. Moreover, Kayimbaşioğlu et al. (2016) indicate that the use of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), through learning applications employing gamification, allows flexibility and encourages self-paced learning in diverse contexts, thereby

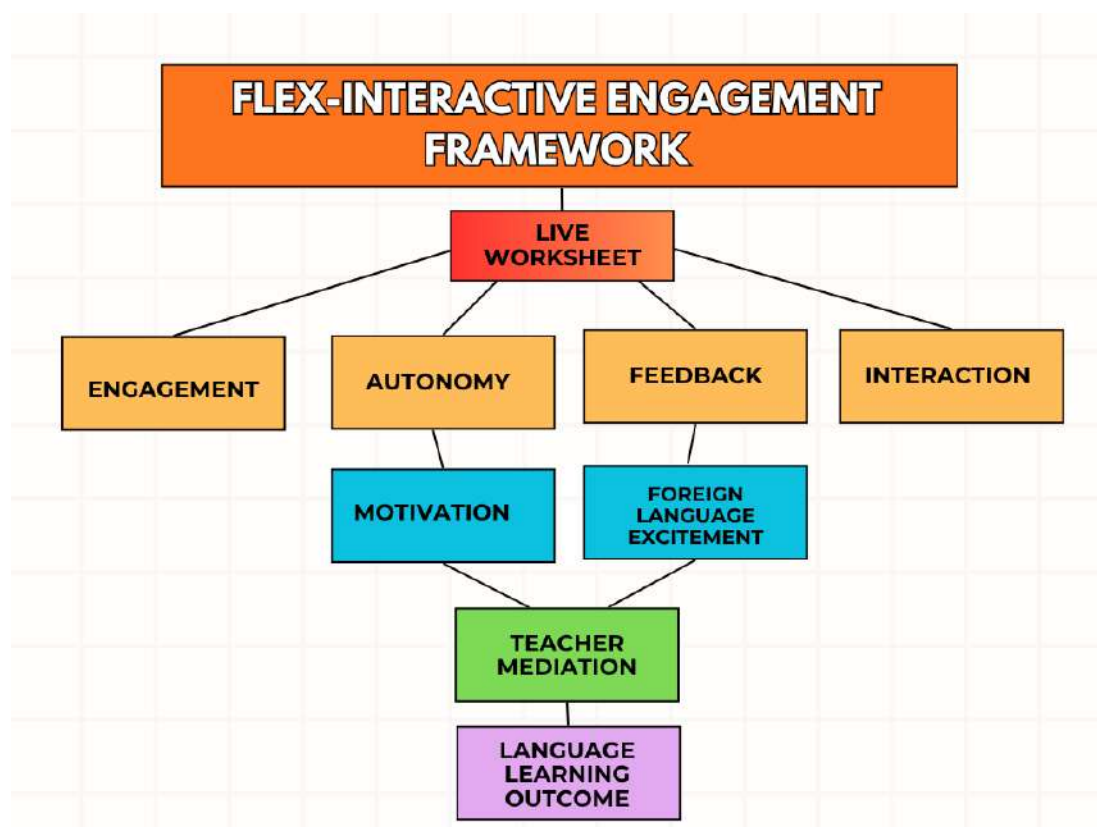
nurturing L2 learning outcomes. Live worksheets, as a form of gamification, can be accessed on the go across different digital devices and completed independently at the learner's convenience, outside of structured classes.

Conceptual Framework

Interactive live worksheets act as a catalyst for engagement, motivation, FLEX, and language development in online language learning. Figure 2 positions interactive live worksheets as the central pedagogical tool influencing students' learning experiences in online foreign language education. The framework integrates principles from CALL, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000), Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and research on foreign language enjoyment (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

Figure 2.

The FLEX-Interactive Engagement Framework



The proposed FLEX-Interactive Engagement Framework (FLEF) conceptualizes interactive live worksheets as the central pedagogical tool shaping students' online foreign language learning experiences. Grounded in CALL, the framework posits that the multimodal and interactive affordances of live worksheets—including drag-and-drop activities, matching exercises, instant feedback, visual prompts, and self-paced tasks—create opportunities for active engagement and cognitive stimulation. These digital affordances encourage students to participate more actively in the learning process while reinforcing vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and recall. The interactive nature of the worksheets also supports differentiated

learning by accommodating various learning styles, particularly visual and self-directed learners.

At the cognitive and affective level, the framework suggests that the use of live worksheets supports learner autonomy, self-assessment, and metacognitive awareness. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), the framework proposes that students experience a greater sense of competence through immediate feedback and error correction, while the flexible and interactive format fosters autonomy and sustained participation. These experiences are susceptible to contributing to increased motivation and the development of FLEX, which is associated with higher levels of engagement, confidence, willingness to communicate, and positive emotional investment in language learning. The gamified and visually stimulating elements of live worksheets may also reduce FLA and transform online classes into more dynamic and enjoyable learning spaces.

The framework further positions the teacher as a critical pedagogical mediator whose role significantly influences the effectiveness of live worksheets in online language instruction. Informed by Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), the framework recognizes that meaningful learning occurs through guided interaction and scaffolding. Consequently, teachers are responsible for clarifying concepts, correcting misconceptions, validating worksheet responses, contextualizing linguistic structures, and facilitating reflective discussion. Rather than replacing instruction, live worksheets function as complementary pedagogical tools whose educational value depends largely on teacher guidance and integration into broader instructional practices. Teacher facilitation also helps students critically interpret feedback, remain motivated, and develop communicative competence more effectively.

Ultimately, the framework proposes that the interaction among live worksheets, learner engagement, motivation, FLEX, and teacher mediation contributes to improved language-learning outcomes in online language classes. These outcomes include enhanced vocabulary acquisition, grammatical reinforcement, reading comprehension, communicative confidence, learner autonomy, and sustained participation in the target language. The framework therefore presents online foreign language learning as a multidimensional process in which technological affordances, emotional engagement, and pedagogical support work together to shape meaningful and effective language acquisition experiences.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the following questions were used as a guide:

1. What are students' perceptions of live interactive worksheets in French online classes?
2. What is the role of the teacher when integrating live worksheets into foreign language classes?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

As summarized in Table 1 below, the study sample consisted of 16 undergraduate French as a foreign language learners with different majors at a Kingston-based university in Jamaica. Their ages ranged from 17 to 40 years. They were all enrolled in the elective course Basic French (Fre3001), taught entirely online and offered by the language unit within the education faculty. The module introduced beginner-level French to non-native speakers through controlled

communicative tasks *set* in everyday contexts (providing basic information about *oneself* and others and *discussing* university life). Students engaged in integrated listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities designed to develop foundational linguistic competence and communicative confidence in French. The module also sought to foster positive attitudes toward foreign language learning while promoting intercultural awareness through exposure to Francophone cultures. Upon completion, students were expected to communicate in basic real-life situations using repair and rephrasing strategies, develop foundational language skills for further French study, and demonstrate appreciation for both their own culture and Francophone cultural contexts. The course was held online over a 15-week period (45 hours) in semester 1 of the academic year 2024-2025 for three hours weekly – one session, which lasted two hours, and another session that lasted one hour. Most of the students ($n = 10$) had some prior exposure to French, whether up to middle school or high school, while the others ($n = 6$) were entirely new to the language. All participants were native speakers of English, who were between A0 and A2 in French on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Given the students' level in French, the course was delivered in both French (60%) and English (40%).

Live worksheets were incorporated in eight of the 15 weeks. They were specifically used as reinforcement and application exercises to help learners better grasp the content that was taught. During the two-hour sessions, live worksheets were used at least twice, depending on the topic being explored. The worksheets were used as part of formative assessment and contributed to students' overall module engagement activities, which constituted 15% of the overall course grade. On average, students were allotted 10 minutes to complete a worksheet. Afterward, the answers were discussed in open class.

Convenience sampling was used to select the participants, as they were a part of the course and accessible to the instructor (Golzar et al., 2022), both during the class sessions and in the class WhatsApp group. A criterion to participate in the study was that students needed to have completed at least 10 worksheets within the given semester. Given that the instructor recorded students' completion of each worksheet throughout the semester, all the participants met this basic criterion. Participation was voluntary; interested students were asked to consent to the use of their responses for research purposes after the instructor provided a detailed description of the *study's purpose*. Although *completing* the live worksheets contributed to students' module engagement grade, participation in the research component was entirely voluntary and not assessed. Consequently, students' questionnaire responses were collected and analyzed independently of the grading process to ensure that participation, responses, and findings did not influence their course grades.

Table 1.

Demographic information of participants

Category	Classification
Setting of experiment	University in Kingston, Jamaica
Year of study	1 – $n = 1$ 2 – $n = 3$ 3 – $n = 4$ 4 – $n = 4$ 4 extended – $n = 4$
Frequency of sessions	Two sessions weekly (online)
Duration of sessions	Two hours One hour
Number of participants	16
Gender	10 Male 6 Female
Majors	Business Administration ($n = 5$) Computer Science ($n = 4$) Law ($n = 2$) Communication and Technology ($n = 2$) Pharmacy ($n = 1$) Economics ($n = 1$) Mechanical Engineering ($n = 1$)
Age range	17-22 ($n = 10$) 23-28 ($n = 5$) 35-40 ($n = 1$)
Native language of participants	English
Prior exposure to French	62.5% ($n = 10$) – Yes 37.5% ($n = 6$) – No
Level in French	A0-A2 (CEFR)

Data Collection and Procedures

The data collection instrument used in this study was a Google Forms questionnaire with both open- and closed-ended questions. The questionnaire (see appendix) consisted of 10 demographic questions and 11 questions (including parts a and b) addressing students' perceptions of live worksheets regarding effectiveness, benefits, limitations, classroom use, motivation, and *the* role of the teacher. Of the 11 questions on live worksheets, seven of them were closed-ended, which provided quantitative responses. The open-ended questions allowed for free-form, in-depth perspectives, *yielding* qualitative insights *that* supported the quantitative responses. This approach was necessary as only one data collection instrument was used.

The questionnaire, designed in English, was conceptualized based on a study by Madden et al. (2023) on the same topic at another Jamaican university. Given similar university contexts and an online learning modality, the instrument for this study was a close replica of the established instrument. Their study included 16 participants but adopted a mixed-methods approach. As a precedent was already established, the questionnaire for this study was slightly modified in keeping with the objectives and research questions. After the lead researcher tweaked it, it was then peer-reviewed by three colleagues in applied linguistics. Subsequently, the items were further refined to enhance readability, remove redundancy, ensure comprehension, and guarantee neutrality, as part of content and construct validity (Indu et al., 2025). Thereafter, the

questionnaire was piloted among 10 students, and basic amendments were made to avoid technical or troublesome language and word choice.

After using live worksheets in the first six weeks of classes during a 15-week semester, the instructor (primary researcher) distributed the Google Forms questionnaire during online class and subsequently shared the link in the class WhatsApp group comprising 40 students. Students were given a month to respond to the questionnaire and were reminded at intervals about their voluntary participation.

Participants were informed that the questionnaire contained no identifiable information and were encouraged to respond candidly. They were also advised that no rewards or penalties were associated with their participation or responses and that there were no “right” or “wrong” answers. These measures were implemented to minimize social desirability bias (Bispo Júnior, 2022) and promote authentic responses, given that the instructor was the lead researcher.

At the end of the questionnaire, students consented to whether they wanted their responses to be used as part of the research dataset.

Data analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Quantitative data were compiled from the responses of 16 FFL students and descriptively tabulated in Google Forms to generate frequencies and percentages. The qualitative data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed through thematic analysis, using Braun and Clarke’s (2021) six-step process: (1) familiarizing oneself with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing potential themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) writing up. The results of the quantitative analysis were used to bolster the qualitative findings.

Results/Findings

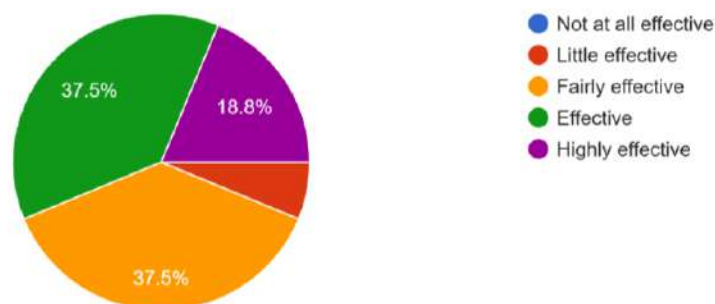
Regarding familiarity with live worksheets, 75% ($n = 12$) of the students indicated that they had no prior exposure to the platform before the 15-week course, while 25% ($n = 4$) reported previous experience using live worksheets in other courses or during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RQ1: Students’ perceptions of live worksheets

Figure 3 presents students’ perceptions of the effectiveness of live worksheets in online French classes. Overall, perceptions were largely positive, with 18.8% ($n = 3$) describing the worksheets as highly effective, 37.5% ($n = 6$) as effective, and another 37.5% ($n = 6$) as fairly effective. Only one student (6.3%) perceived them as minimally effective.

Figure 3.

Students' perceptions of the effectiveness of live worksheets in French classes



Interactive learning, knowledge reinforcement, and learner autonomy

A dominant theme emerging from the qualitative responses is that live worksheets enhanced engagement, reinforced language learning, and promoted learner autonomy. Students appreciated the platform's interactive nature, particularly its immediate feedback and self-check features, which encouraged active participation and reflection. One participant explained that the worksheets are “*very interactive*” (Participant 4), while another highlighted that they “*give instant feedback*” (Participant 7). Similarly, Participant 13 noted that the worksheets provide “*visual representations*” and allow learners to “*instantly check to see if [their] answers are correct.*”

Students also perceived the worksheets as effective tools for reinforcing and extending linguistic knowledge. Participant 5 explained that the activities included “*things learnt in class along with information that hasn't been taught yet,*” thereby encouraging independent learning beyond the classroom. Likewise, Participant 6 stated that the worksheets “*test my knowledge and increase my learning in the language,*” while Participant 1 emphasized the importance of teacher review, explaining that “*even if I get them wrong, my teacher goes over them, so we understand.*”

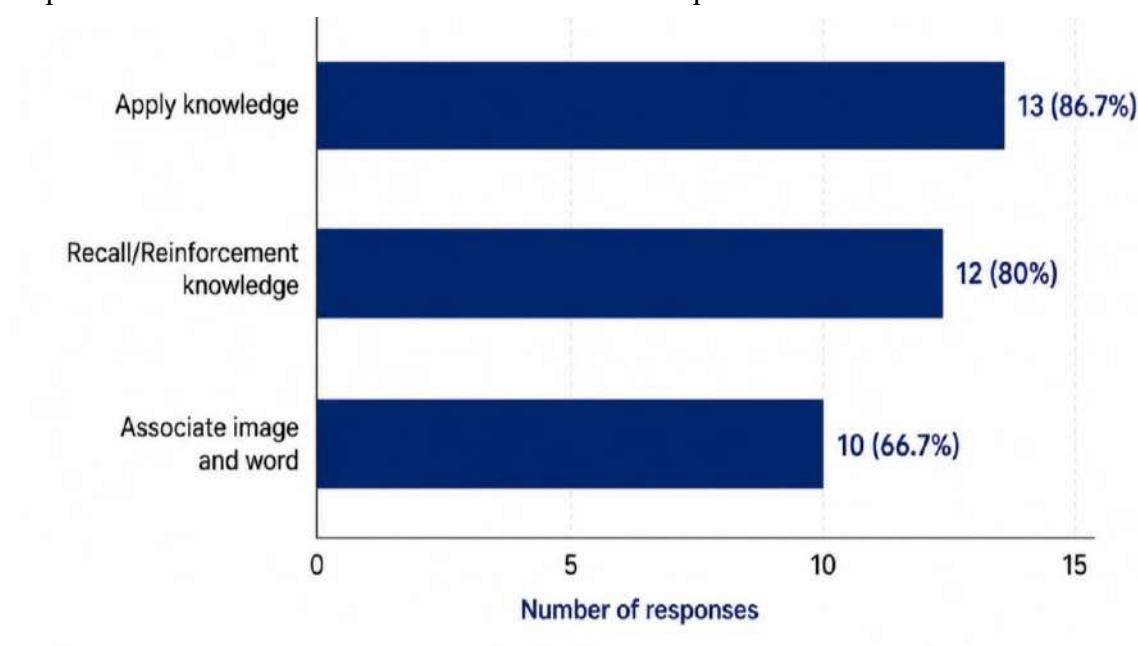
The findings further suggest that live worksheets support self-assessment and metacognitive awareness. Students valued the ability to independently evaluate their understanding through immediate corrective feedback. Participant 3 stated that the worksheets “*allow you to test yourself,*” while Participant 16 described them as “*a typical Q and A that allows you to assess how much you know.*”

Comprehensive language development and visual learning support

Students additionally perceived live worksheets as valuable for developing multiple language skills simultaneously. From the 15 responses received for this question, Figure 4 shows that 86.7% ($n = 13$) of students reported applying knowledge through the worksheets, 80% ($n = 12$) indicated that the activities reinforced learning, and 66.7% ($n = 10$) highlighted the association between images and vocabulary.

Figure 4.

Impact of live worksheets on students' French development



Qualitative responses revealed that the visual and contextual nature of the worksheets significantly supported vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and recall. Participant 2 explained that the worksheets helped them “*better understand French*” because, as a visual learner, they could “*easily associate which is which.*” Similarly, Participant 4 stated that “*the images help you to remember the words you learn better,*” while Participant 8 observed that matching images to French vocabulary strengthened “*memory retention.*”

Students also emphasized the role of the worksheets in promoting contextualized language use and fluency development. Participant 8 noted that fill-in-the-blank and conjugation exercises provided opportunities “*to use what [they’ve] learned in a practical context,*” while Participant 9 stated that the worksheets “*challenge [them] to be more fluent.*”

Collectively, these findings suggest that live worksheets support multimodal and learner-centered language instruction by combining visual learning, practical application, and immediate feedback within a structured digital environment.

Motivational and participation driver

Findings revealed that the majority of students ($n = 13$; 81.25%) believed that live worksheets positively contributed to their motivation to learn French, while only three students (18.75%) indicated that the worksheets did not influence their motivation. The dominant theme emerging from the data was interactive engagement as a motivational factor. Several students explained that the worksheets helped to increase their participation and made lessons more enjoyable and dynamic. For example, Participant 1 stated that the worksheets “*push me to participate more,*” while Participant 7 noted that they “*make the class more interactive.*” Similarly, Participant 5 described the worksheets as “*fun and engaging,*” emphasizing that the activities sparked curiosity through “*one or two surprises that make you want to research to get the correct answer.*” Another major theme was independent learning and self-improvement through feedback and practice. Participant 12 explained that “*after getting something wrong it inspires*

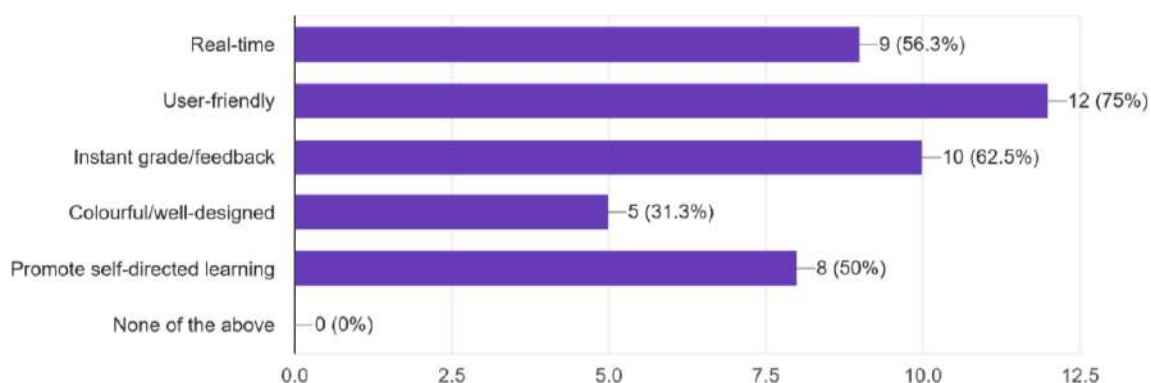
me to question my professeur or Google to get the right answer,” while Participant 8 highlighted the value of “immediate feedback” that “helps me identify areas for improvement and gives me a sense of accomplishment.” Students also associated the worksheets with language development and increased confidence. Participant 6 explained that the activities motivated them “to learn more French so I can read fluently without hesitation,” whereas Participant 13 stated that the worksheets motivate them “to practice so when a question is asked I am able to interpret what it is saying.” However, among the minority who expressed negative perceptions, Participant 16 stated that “my motivation for the language has to do with my interest,” suggesting that intrinsic interest in French outweighed the influence of the worksheets. Overall, the findings indicate that live worksheets motivated most students by fostering engagement, curiosity, active participation, and a sense of language growth.

Perceived advantages of live worksheets

Figure 5 further illustrates students’ favorable perceptions of live worksheets in foreign language instruction. Most students (75%, $n = 12$) found the platform user-friendly, while 62.5% ($n = 10$) appreciated the instant grading feature. Additionally, 56.3% ($n = 9$) valued the real-time nature of the activities, and 50% ($n = 8$) identified their role in promoting self-directed learning.

Figure 5.

Students’ perceptions of advantages of using live worksheets



Students particularly valued the accessibility and flexibility of the platform. Participant 3 described the worksheets as containing “interactive elements” such as drag-and-drop and audio components that make learning “more engaging,” while also supporting “remote learning or on-the-go study.” Another participant explained that the activities “make [them] question why [they] got things wrong, rather than just accepting it” (Participant 4).

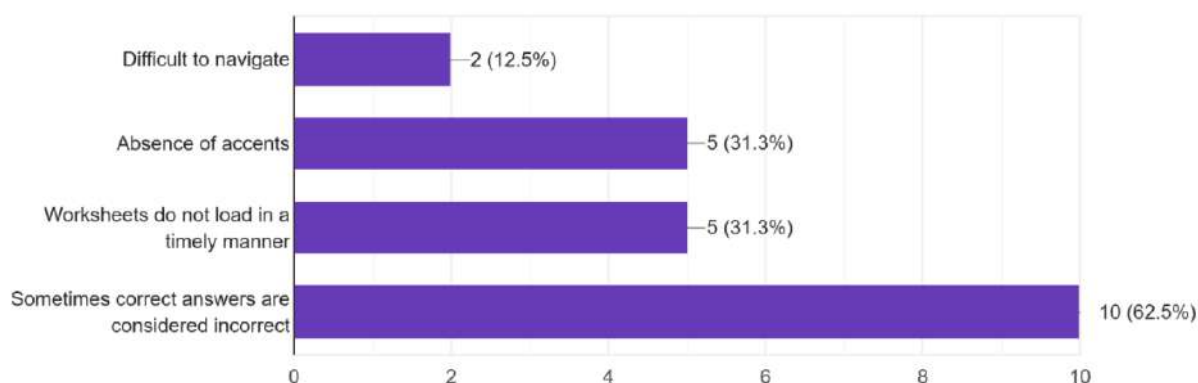
Technological limitations and areas for improvement

Despite the generally positive perceptions, students identified several technological concerns and pedagogical limitations. Figure 6 indicates that the most common issue was the platform incorrectly marking correct answers as wrong, as reported by 62.5% ($n = 10$) of the participants. Other concerns included the absence of accents (31.3%, $n = 5$), loading delays (31.3%, $n = 5$),

and navigation difficulties (12.5%, $n = 2$). One participant additionally highlighted the “*limited feedback*” provided for incorrect answers, which made it “*harder to understand mistakes.*”

Figure 6.

Limitations of live worksheets in French online classes



Some students also expressed a desire for more authentic and communicative learning activities. Participant 8 acknowledged the effectiveness of the worksheets but suggested that “*there is still room for improvement with more interactive and real-life application activities.*” Technical functionality across devices also emerged as a concern, with Participant 14 reporting that “*the page tends to reload whenever I use my phone or tablet.*”

Overall, while students perceived live worksheets as engaging and pedagogically beneficial, the findings suggest a need for improved technical reliability, more contextualized language activities, and enhanced feedback mechanisms to optimize the online foreign-language learning experience.

RQ2: Role of the instructor when using live worksheets

The qualitative responses strongly position the teacher as an indispensable pedagogical mediator in the use of live worksheets, rather than a passive facilitator of technology. Through thematic analysis, three closely related themes emerged: instructional guidance and clarification, corrective feedback and reinforcement, and learner support and engagement.

The dominant theme was instructional guidance and clarification, appearing in 8 of the 16 responses (50%). Students repeatedly emphasized that the teacher’s role extends beyond assigning worksheets to actively explaining concepts and ensuring comprehension. Participant 3 noted that “*he teaches and then we do the worksheet to test the knowledge that we have gained and then he goes through it with us,*” highlighting the integration of instruction, practice, and review. Similarly, Participant 4 explained that the teacher supports learning “*by going through each question and explaining what you probably don’t fully understand.*” These responses suggest that students perceive live worksheets not as self-sufficient tools, but as supplementary resources requiring teacher mediation to maximize effectiveness. This aligns with constructivist approaches to CALL pedagogy, where technology is most impactful when scaffolded by instructor interaction and clarification.

A second major theme concerned corrective feedback and reinforcement, identified in 6 responses (37.5%). Participants valued the teacher’s role in correcting errors and reinforcing accurate language use. Participant 2 remarked that the instructor “*not only goes over the correct*

ones [answers] but the wrong ones as well in detail,” while Participant 9 highlighted assistance with “misspellings or enunciating words incorrectly.” Such responses indicate that immediate feedback remains central to language acquisition, particularly in online foreign language learning contexts where learners require ongoing linguistic correction and pronunciation support. The findings therefore reinforce the pedagogical importance of teacher feedback even within technology-enhanced environments.

The third theme, learner support and engagement, appeared in 5 responses (31.3%). Students associated teacher involvement with motivation, confidence, and deeper engagement in the learning process. Participant 6 described the teacher as “*crucial*,” explaining that instructors maintain motivation, facilitate discussions, and enrich the learning experience. Likewise, Participant 8 stated that the instructor “*tries to ensure we grasp/understand the material he provides*.” These comments demonstrate that students value the socio-affective role of the teacher alongside the technological affordances of live worksheets. The teacher is therefore viewed as both an academic guide and a motivational presence who sustains learner participation in online instruction.

Interestingly, only one participant suggested a more autonomous perspective, indicating that “*if there is enough interest the student may take on that initiative*” (Participant 13). However, even this response acknowledged that teacher involvement “*would be better*,” further underscoring the perceived necessity of instructional support.

Overall, the findings suggest that students do not perceive live worksheets as replacements for teachers, but rather as pedagogical tools whose effectiveness depends heavily on teacher guidance, explanation, and feedback. The responses collectively reinforce the continued centrality of the teacher in online foreign language instruction, even within increasingly technology-mediated learning environments.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the pedagogical value of interactive live worksheets in FL online learning environments, particularly in fostering engagement, motivation, autonomy, and cognitive participation. Overall, students perceived the worksheets positively, especially because of their interactivity, immediate feedback, and ability to support different aspects of language learning. These findings reinforce constructivist and sociocultural perspectives on learning, which emphasize active participation, learner interaction, and scaffolded meaning-making in digital environments. Rather than being passive recipients of content, students became active participants who engaged continuously with linguistic input, feedback, and task-based activities. This aligns with Vygotskian principles of mediated learning, where technological tools act as mediational artifacts that facilitate cognitive development and learner autonomy (Vygotsky, 1978).

A major finding concerns the effectiveness of instant feedback in promoting learning and self-regulation. Students appreciated the opportunity to immediately verify their responses, identify errors, and reinforce understanding. This supports the principles of formative assessment and self-regulated learning, in which timely feedback enhances metacognitive awareness and enables learners to monitor their progress. Importantly, the motivational findings revealed that 81.25% of participants believed that live worksheets positively influenced their motivation to learn French. Students associated the worksheets with feelings of curiosity, enjoyment,

participation, and accomplishment, with some explaining that the activities motivated them to research unfamiliar concepts, seek clarification, and practice more independently. These findings resonate strongly with FLEX and positive psychology perspectives, which suggest that enjoyable and low-anxiety learning environments contribute to learners' willingness to participate and sustain motivation (Wu & Kabilan, 2025). The multimodal and interactive nature of live worksheets therefore appears to contribute not only to linguistic development but also to affective engagement and learner curiosity. Similar conclusions were reached by Khikmiah (2021), Kopniak (2018), and Nurhidayati (2019), who found that interactive digital worksheets stimulate learner interest, participation, and motivation in online learning contexts.

The findings further suggest that live worksheets helped to promote deeper cognitive engagement compared to more passive online learning methods such as lectures or static readings. Through matching exercises, drag-and-drop activities, listening tasks, and open-ended responses, students are required to apply, analyze, and evaluate language knowledge in real time. This supports cognitive engagement theory, which posits that meaningful learning occurs when learners actively process and manipulate information rather than merely receive it (Singh & Rajendran, 2024). Students' reports that the worksheets encouraged them to "*research to get the correct answer*" and "*question [their] professeur or Google*" after making mistakes further demonstrate the development of inquiry-based and self-regulated learning behaviors. The worksheets' multimodal features also support dual coding and multimedia learning theories, particularly through image-word associations that enhance vocabulary retention and recall (Ryabchikova et al., 2020). Students' reports that vocabulary development was the most positively affected area of FL learning further confirm the effectiveness of combining visual and textual input in language acquisition. These findings are also consistent with Madden et al. (2024) and Wang (2014), who highlighted the positive impact of technology-mediated vocabulary learning on knowledge retention and application.

Another important implication of the findings is the inclusive and differentiated nature of live worksheets. Students appreciated the diversity of activities and the ability to work at their own pace and receive personalized support through immediate correction. This reflects principles of differentiated instruction and learner-centered pedagogy, which advocate adapting instruction to diverse learning preferences and abilities. Visual learners benefit from graphics and diagrams, kinesthetic learners from interactive manipulation tasks, and reflective learners from written-response opportunities. The findings therefore support the argument that interactive digital tools can contribute to more inclusive online learning environments. Additionally, the possibility of integrating live worksheets into learning management systems such as Moodle, Canvas, and Google Classroom demonstrates their compatibility with contemporary digital pedagogies and blended learning frameworks.

The study also highlights the perceived motivational role of live worksheets in supporting participation and sustaining attention in online FL classes. Students explained that the worksheets "*push[ed]*" them "*to participate more*" and made the class "*more interactive*," suggesting that the activities helped reduce the monotony and passivity often associated with online learning. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, the worksheets may support intrinsic motivation by satisfying learners' needs for competence, autonomy, and engagement. Students experienced competence through immediate feedback and successful task completion, autonomy through self-paced interaction, and relatedness through classroom discussion and teacher guidance. These motivational affordances are particularly significant in online language learning contexts where maintaining learner attention and participation can be challenging. Nevertheless, the minority of students who reported that the worksheets did not influence their motivation demonstrates that digital tools alone do not guarantee meaningful

learning or intrinsic interest; pedagogical support and learner disposition remain essential.

Indeed, the findings strongly emphasize the continued centrality of the teacher's role in technology-enhanced learning environments. While live worksheets can facilitate independent learning, students still rely on instructors for guidance, clarification, scaffolding, and emotional support. This aligns with sociocultural theory, which views teachers as mediators who support learners within their Zone of Proximal Development. Teachers therefore remain essential in designing pedagogically meaningful worksheet activities, aligning them with lesson objectives, troubleshooting technical issues, and clarifying misconceptions. The findings also support the teacher-facilitator model in online learning, in which instructors guide interaction and encourage collaborative knowledge construction rather than simply transmitting information. Importantly, allowing students to explain concepts collectively during worksheet correction promotes metacognitive reflection and strategic competence, as highlighted by Andriyani et al. (2020) and Madden and Robinson (2025). Such collaborative explanation processes may also strengthen communicative competence and reinforce pronunciation, grammar, and cultural understanding.

Although the findings support the pedagogical value of live worksheets, some challenges remain evident. Students identified issues such as faulty automatic corrections, delayed loading times, and the absence of target-language diacritics. These technological limitations can negatively affect learner confidence, accuracy, and overall learning experiences, especially in FL contexts where orthographic precision is essential. Similar concerns were raised by Madden et al. (2023, 2024), suggesting that technological reliability remains an important consideration when integrating digital tools into FL instruction. These findings further reinforce the importance of teacher preparation and digital competence. Teachers must test worksheets beforehand, anticipate potential technical difficulties, and provide learners with additional support resources when necessary.

Finally, the findings suggest that live worksheets are most effective when integrated into broader pedagogical ecosystems rather than used in isolation. Their optimization through scaffolding, formative assessment, gamification, peer review, and multimodal integration reflects principles of blended and interactive learning design. Pairing worksheets with videos, readings, discussions, and collaborative tasks can create richer learning experiences that combine cognitive engagement with social interaction. Consequently, the study supports a conceptual framework in which live worksheets function as interactive mediational tools that influence FL learning outcomes through interconnected dimensions of engagement, motivation (FLEX), cognitive activation, learner autonomy, and teacher facilitation. The teacher's pedagogical mediation remains central in ensuring that technology meaningfully supports language acquisition rather than merely digitizing traditional exercises.

Conclusion

The findings underscore the perceived pedagogical value of interactive live worksheets in online French foreign language classes, particularly in contributing to and enhancing students' foreign language excitement (FLEX), motivation, participation, and engagement. Students perceived the worksheets as beneficial for reinforcing vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and word-image association through immediate feedback and interactive practice, thereby supporting recall, metacognitive awareness, and self-directed learning. Their user-friendly and flexible nature also contributed to a more dynamic and learner-centered online environment.

Importantly, the findings suggest that digital formative assessment tools can help mitigate some of the interactional and motivational challenges commonly associated with online foreign language instruction, especially within beginner-level contexts.

Beyond the immediate classroom implications, the study contributes to broader discussions surrounding technology-enhanced language learning (TELL), gamification, and formative assessment in higher education. The positive student perceptions indicate that carefully designed interactive tools may strengthen learner autonomy, sustain engagement, and support differentiated instruction in increasingly digital and hybrid educational spaces. The findings also reinforce the evolving role of the teacher as facilitator, mediator, and guide in technology-mediated learning environments, where pedagogical support and collective review remain essential to meaningful learning.

Nevertheless, some challenges emerged, including occasional inaccuracies in automated responses and issues related to missing diacritics, which at times marked correct answers as incorrect. These findings highlight the need for instructors to critically evaluate and test digital worksheets before implementation. Providing students with supplementary linguistic support, such as links for French (or any other applicable language) accents and spelling conventions, may also reduce frustration and improve accuracy. Additionally, while live worksheets encourage learner independence, the findings demonstrate that teacher guidance remains indispensable. Collective correction sessions, clarification of errors, and opportunities for students to actively participate in reviewing responses may further enhance strategic competence and deeper language processing.

Overall, this study suggests that interactive live worksheets hold considerable promise as accessible and engaging pedagogical tools in online foreign language education. Future studies employing larger samples, comparative designs, and mixed-methods approaches could provide deeper insights into their long-term impact on language proficiency, learner autonomy, and digital pedagogical practices across diverse educational contexts.

Additionally, future studies should explore blended learning outcomes, by pairing interactive live worksheets with other teaching methods such as live instruction, video instruction, and traditional approaches. Another idea for exploration could examine live worksheets' influence on student motivation and self-directed learning behaviors in language courses. Furthermore, on a macro level, studies could investigate how students from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds interact differently with live worksheets, by focusing on user interface preferences, engagement patterns, and comprehension.

This study presents several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the absence of a control group limited the ability to make robust comparative claims regarding the effectiveness of live worksheets relative to other instructional approaches. As such, the findings should be interpreted as embryonic and perception-based rather than causal. Second, the relatively small sample size ($N = 16$) restricts the statistical generalizability of the results; however, the study was designed as a context-specific investigation intended to provide in-depth insights into students' experiences within an online French learning environment. To mitigate this limitation, both quantitative and qualitative data were incorporated to enhance the

richness and credibility of the findings through methodological complementarity. Finally, the reliance on self-reported data may have introduced subjectivity and response bias. Nevertheless, measures such as anonymous participation and the assurance that there were no right or wrong answers were implemented to encourage honest responses and reduce social desirability bias. Future studies may strengthen the methodological design through larger samples, comparative groups, classroom observations, interviews, or longitudinal approaches.

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Biodata

Oneil Madden is a lecturer and applied linguist with 12 years of experience in higher education. He has taught courses in English, French, Spanish, and Francophone literature at local, regional, and international levels. A prominent Caribbean researcher, his scholarly interests include gamification in language education, artificial intelligence and language learning, innovative pedagogy, and intercultural communication. He has authored more than 30 scholarly publications, including journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers. Beyond academia, Oneil is a journalist and respected public intellectual. He writes a weekly column for the Jamaica Observer, where he examines issues spanning education, current affairs, social concerns, and politics. To date, he has published more than 500 newspaper articles, contributing significantly to public discourse on issues of national and regional importance.

Appendix

Gender: Male, Female

Age range: 17-22, 23-28, 29-34, 35-40, 41 & over

Program of study

Year of study: 1, 2, 3, 4, 4 extended

1a. Did you take French before taking this course? Yes/No

1b. If yes, up to what level?

2a. Were you familiar with live worksheets before this course? Yes/No

2b. If yes, what context were you exposed to live worksheets/Kahoot?

3a. Based on the scale below, how effective do you find the worksheets to be in your French classes?

- Not at all effective
- Little effective
- Fairly effective
- Effective
- Highly effective

3b. Explain your answer in 3a.

4. Choose the word/s that best describe/s the advantages of using live worksheets. (More than one selection possible)

- Real-time
- User-friendly
- Instant grade/feedback
- Colorful/well-designed
- Promote self-directed learning
- None of the above
- Other:

5a. Choose the word/s that best describe/s some of the disadvantages of live worksheets. (More than one selection possible)

- Difficult to navigate
- Absence of accents
- Worksheets do not load in a timely manner
- Sometimes correct answers are considered incorrect
- Other:

6a. In what way/s do/es the live worksheets help you with your French? (More than one selection possible)

- Recall/reinforcement of knowledge
- Apply knowledge
- Associate image and word

6b. Elaborate on your answer above, providing examples where necessary.

7. With 3 being the highest and 1 the lowest, rank from highest to lowest the areas that the live worksheets have helped you the most. Choose a different number for each row.

- Vocabulary development/reinforcement
- Grammar development/reinforcement
- Reading skills

8. How often should live worksheets be given?

- Every class
- Once weekly
- After every unit
- Every two weeks
- Never

9. Do live worksheets play a part in your motivation to learn French? Please justify your response.

10. Does the teacher have a role to play in the teaching/learning process with the use of live worksheets? Please justify your response.

11. How do you feel when you are doing the live worksheets? (More than one selection possible)

- Autonomous
- Unsupervised
- Lost
- Annoyed
- Engaged/curious

12. Do you (re)consult the live worksheets after you have completed them in class? Explain why or why not.

13. Would you say the live worksheets are a good replacement to the traditional paper-based assessments? Justify your answer.

Leave any additional comments about live worksheets.

I consent to participate in this study. Yes/No

Students' Perceptions of the Impacts of Lecturer Translanguaging on EMI Lecture Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: EMI, lecture comprehension, translanguaging, Vietnam, higher education

The purpose of this study is to examine students' perceptions of the impacts of lecturers' translanguaging practices on students' lecture comprehension in English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) classes. This mixed-methods study collected questionnaire data from 70 students at a university in Hanoi, Vietnam, followed by semi-structured interviews with five participants. The findings indicated that translanguaging generally supports lecture comprehension micro-skills at the intermediate proficiency level, including lexical and conceptual understanding, inferential comprehension, functional language comprehension, and adaptation to speech rate. However, the spontaneous use of translanguaging was perceived to compromise lexical and conceptual understanding as it decreased exposure to English and diverted learners' attention from lecture content. The current study highlights the benefits of pedagogical translanguaging practices in EMI classrooms as well as the need for its strategic use to maximize the comprehension support.

Introduction

Globalization and internationalization have fostered the adoption of EMI in higher education, particularly in non-English-speaking countries (Tsou & Kao, 2017). Implementing EMI is expected to be a strategy for enhancing universities' international visibility and improving their positions in global rankings (Galloway et al., 2020). With this acclaimed benefit, EMI has been implemented across Asian higher education institutions, including Vietnam. In this Southeast Asian country, the rising popularity of EMI is reflected in the national project "Teaching and learning foreign languages in the public education system from 2008 to 2020", which identifies the expansion of EMI programs as a key objective (Government of Vietnam, 2008).

Despite its expansion, discussions surrounding students' comprehension level of lecturers' instruction remain ongoing, especially in settings where both lecturers and students may not possess native-like English proficiency (Yuan et al., 2022). A central issue in these dialogues concerns the relationship between lecturers' language choices and students' lecture comprehension levels (Romanowski, 2020). To address this issue, translanguaging, the strategic use of multiple languages, has emerged as a means to facilitate comprehension and interaction in EMI classrooms (Jinghui, 2023).

In previous empirical studies, students generally perceived that translanguaging enhances their overall comprehension in EMI classrooms by clarifying terminology, explaining abstract concepts and localizing knowledge in ways that make input more accessible (Aldaghri, 2024; Fang et al., 2022; Wang, 2021). Similarly, research in Vietnam has also revealed students' positive perception regarding mostly concept and lexical comprehension (Nguyen et al., 2024; Nguyen, 2024). These studies, however, typically focus on learners' self-perceptions of a limited number of EMI comprehension subskills, while overlooking other critical aspects such as following speech rate and inferring lecturers' attitudes. Addressing this gap may provide EMI educators with more detailed insights for designing targeted pedagogical interventions that support a broader range of lecture comprehension subskills. Thus, this study has drawn on the gap left in previous studies to investigate Vietnamese university EMI students' perceptions of the impacts of lecturers' translanguaging practices on micro-skills of lecture comprehension. By doing so, it contributes to EMI literature by providing more comprehensive insights into how translanguaging reportedly influences lecture comprehension, particularly in the Vietnamese tertiary context where EMI is increasingly adopted. The findings of this study also provide practical implications for EMI lecturers in strategically employing translanguaging to support learners' academic lecture comprehension.

Literature review

The definitions of translanguaging

In the current literature, the concept of translanguaging is interpreted from a variety of perspectives. Originally, the term was coined in Welsh by Williams (1994, as cited in García & Lin, 2017) to describe a pedagogical practice of switching between languages during reading, writing, or other language-related activities. Beyond educational contexts, Baker (2011) later viewed the term through a social lens, defining it as the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, and gaining understanding through the use of two languages in social interactions. Besides, from a cognitive perspective, Lewis et al. (2012) noted that translanguaging involves using both languages dynamically and functionally to organize and mediate mental processes in understanding, speaking, literacy, and learning. These definitions suggest that translanguaging is a dynamic practice that supports communication, meaning-making, and learning across various fields, but arguably more dominantly in the field of education (García & Kley, 2016).

Distinguishing Translanguaging from Translation and Codeswitching

Since the three terms *translation*, *translanguaging*, and *codeswitching* entail the use of more than one language to convey meaning, they can be easily confused with one another (Balam, 2021; García & Li, 2014). Knowing the distinction between these concepts allows researchers to examine the impacts of each more accurately, thereby providing lecturers with a stronger basis for designing appropriate activities that support meaning-making processes.

Firstly, translation focuses on transferring meaning across two distinct linguistic systems by seeking equivalence between source and target texts (House, 2014). Unlike translation, translanguaging emphasizes the flexible use of all available linguistic resources to facilitate understanding and meaning-making (García & Li, 2014). For instance, an EMI lecturer practicing translanguaging might facilitate group discussions in whichever language is available within students' linguistic repertoire to ensure optimal comprehension.

Secondly, codeswitching is grounded in a monoglossic perspective, suggesting that bilinguals have two distinct language systems to fulfill a certain communicative purpose (Balam, 2021). For instance, a code-switched statement might look like “You’re going to work in pairs, sau đó chúng ta sẽ cùng thảo luận” (You’re going to work in pairs, then we will discuss together). Meanwhile, translanguaging adopts a heteroglossic view, perceiving multilinguals' language use as an integrated linguistic system, rather than separate language systems (García & Li, 2014). Due to this unified nature, translanguaging likely enables learners to draw flexibly on their entire linguistic repertoire to construct and interpret meaning, making it particularly relevant to lecture comprehension (Flowerdew, 1994).

From the foregoing discussion, translanguaging provides more opportunities for dynamic meaning-making practices than both codeswitching and translation and is therefore adopted as the most appropriate concept for the present study.

Conceptualizations of translanguaging

In the current literature, a prominent conceptualization divides translanguaging into two practices: pedagogical translanguaging and spontaneous translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). Pedagogical translanguaging refers to intentional instructional strategies planned by teachers to facilitate students' comprehension of academic content (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). This means that teachers carefully plan which languages are used for specific activities to scaffold learning. This view aligns with the original conceptualization by Williams (1994), which framed translanguaging as a deliberate classroom strategy utilizing students' entire linguistic repertoire (as cited in García & Lin, 2017). On the other hand, spontaneous translanguaging is defined as “the reality of bilingual usage in naturally occurring contexts where boundaries between languages are fluid and constantly shifting” (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020, p.18). In other words, unplanned translanguaging involves spontaneous shifts between languages without pedagogical planning or institutional restrictions, based on the view that languages are not distinct systems (García & Lin, 2017).

Despite this initial distinction, the boundary between these two practices may not always be clearly defined, as pedagogical translanguaging may occur alongside spontaneous practice during meaning-making processes (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). It can therefore be argued that spontaneous translanguaging may also carry pedagogical value when it contributes to learners' understanding. However, many concerns remain regarding spontaneous implementation (Pham

& Vu, 2023; Ngo, 2024; Zhou & Gao, 2021) because this use is prone to misalignment with learning objectives, potentially interfering with L2 development (Halim et al., 2023). Given this caution, the present study considers both pedagogical and spontaneous translanguaging to develop a more nuanced understanding of how each shapes participants' lecture comprehension experiences.

Translanguaging in EMI classrooms

Translanguaging in EMI classrooms has been documented to serve three primary functions: content transmission, classroom management, and social and affective involvement (Jia et al., 2023; Genc et al., 2023; Sahan & Rose, 2021). Content transmission is the most frequently observed function, where teachers switch to students' L1 to explain new or complex concepts (Jia et al., 2023). For instance, a lecturer might deliver the content in English, yet at certain points, switch to L1 to introduce or clarify new content before returning to English to present further content. Besides academic functions, translanguaging also supports classroom management, rapport-building, and anxiety reduction in tertiary-level EMI classrooms, although these uses occur less frequently (Datta, 2025; Fang & Liu, 2020; Genc et al., 2023; Sahan & Rose, 2021). Given that pedagogical and spontaneous translanguaging arguably coexist in EMI classrooms (Aldaghri, 2024; Halim et al., 2023), the present study considers both forms to provide a more comprehensive account of translanguaging and its influence on lecture comprehension.

Features of lecture comprehension

Many researchers have reached a consensus that listening comprehension and lecture comprehension share some common features (Flowerdew, 1994; Goh, 2008; Hellekjær, 2017). Specifically, to understand certain content, listeners must undergo two interactive processes: real-time processing and phonological/lexico-grammatical processing (Flowerdew, 1994). The former involves the learner's ability to comprehend the message as it is presented. The phonological process includes the ability to recognize acoustic signals such as individual sounds, pausing, false starts, hesitation, stress, and intonation. In addition to phonological features, spoken texts contain distinct lexico-grammatical elements that require listeners to understand both semantic and syntactic information. However, this conceptualization appears to overlook the role of background knowledge in listening. Hellekjær (2010) subsequently incorporated this factor when characterizing lecture comprehension, maintaining that lecture comprehension, similar to listening comprehension, encompasses two key features: bottom-up and top-down processing. In bottom-up processing, listeners construct meanings by integrating information from phonemes, words, and discourse features (Buck, 2001; Vandergrift, 2007). Richards (1983) detailed several factors that directly influence listeners' efforts to process speech from a bottom-up approach, including clausal basis, reduced forms, ungrammatical forms, pausing and speech errors, rhythm and stress, rate of delivery, the use of cohesive devices, and discourse markers. On the other hand, top-down processing involves using context and prior knowledge to understand, verify or fix comprehension. This knowledge arguably enables learners to compensate for the identification of some speech constituents such as syllables and words to achieve understanding (Richards, 1983; Vandergrift, 2007). Reinforcing the important role of background knowledge in lecture comprehension, Flowerdew (1994) identified the requirement for specialist knowledge as a key distinction from general listening comprehension.

From the preceding discussion, it could be deduced that lecture comprehension comprises skills to process both bottom-up characteristics of texts (phonological, lexico-grammatical cues) and top-down features (drawing on background knowledge, context, and inferencing). From the aforementioned contributors to lecture comprehension, it is paramount to have a set of micro-skills that reflect the complex nature of the process, thereby serving both research and teaching purposes. In the current literature, among existing inventories developed for listening comprehension in conversational discourse (e.g., Brown, 2007; Munby, 1978), Richards' (1983) taxonomy has received notable attention, consisting of 18 items targeting academic listening comprehension as follows:

1. ability to identify the purpose and scope of the lecture
2. ability to identify the topic of the lecture and follow the topic development
3. ability to identify relationships among units within discourse (e.g., major ideas, generalizations, hypotheses, supporting ideas, examples)
4. ability to identify the role of discourse markers in signaling structure of a lecture (e.g., conjunctions, adverbs, gambits, routines)
5. ability to infer relationships (e.g., cause, effect, conclusion)
6. ability to recognize key lexical items related to the subject/topic
7. ability to deduce meanings of words from context
8. ability to recognize markers of cohesion
9. ability to recognize the function of intonation to signal information structure (e.g., pitch, volume, pace, key)
10. ability to detect the attitude of the speaker toward the subject matter
11. ability to follow different modes of lecturing: spoken, audio, audio-visual
12. ability to follow the lecture despite differences in accent and speed
13. familiarity with different styles of lecturing: formal, conversational, read, unplanned
14. familiarity with different registers: written vs. colloquial
15. ability to recognize irrelevant matter: jokes, digressions, meanderings
16. ability to recognize the function of non-verbal cues as markers of emphasis and attitude
17. knowledge of classroom conventions (e.g., turn-taking, clarification requests)
18. ability to recognize instructional learner tasks (e.g., warnings, suggestions, recommendations, advice, instructions)

These 18 micro-skills can be seemingly grouped under the two previously mentioned types of listening process suggested by Hellekjær (2010), which are illustrated in Table 1 below. This correspondence facilitates the examination of the impacts of translanguaging practices on these specific aspects of students' lecture comprehension. Therefore, this model is selected as the

theoretical framework for analyzing how translanguaging mediates both bottom-up and top-down processes during lectures.

Table 1

The alignment of lecture comprehension micro-skills with features of lecture comprehension

Features of lecture comprehension (Hellekjær, 2010)	Lecture comprehension micro-skills (Richards, 1983)
Bottom-up processing (focusing on decoding language form, sounds, words, cohesion, intonation)	6. Ability to recognize key lexical items related to subject/topic 7. Ability to deduce meanings of words from context 8. Ability to recognize markers of cohesion 9. Ability to recognize function of intonation to signal information structure 12. Ability to follow lecture despite differences in accent and speed 13. Familiarity with different styles of lecturing (formal, conversational, read, unplanned) 14. Familiarity with different registers (written vs. colloquial)
Top-down processing (focusing on background knowledge, context, discourse structure, and inferencing)	1. Ability to identify purpose and scope of lecture 2. Ability to identify topic of lecture and follow topic development 3. Ability to identify relationships among units within discourse (major ideas, hypotheses, supporting ideas, examples) 4. Ability to identify role of discourse markers in signaling structure of a lecture 5. Ability to infer relationships (cause, effect, conclusion) 10. Ability to detect attitude of speaker toward subject matter 11. Ability to follow different modes of lecturing (spoken, audio, audio-visual) 16. Ability to recognize function of non-verbal cues as markers of emphasis and attitude 17. Knowledge of classroom conventions (turn-taking, clarification requests) 18. Ability to recognize instructional learner tasks (warnings, suggestions, advice, etc.)

The definition of EMI

One widely cited definition of EMI is the use of English to teach academic subjects in contexts where English is not the first language (L1) of the majority population (Galloway et al., 2020). In detail, in those classes, English is normally used for (1) interactions between lecturers and students (2) teaching and learning materials and (3) assessments. Numerous Asian countries such as Hong Kong, India, Japan, Singapore, and China have adopted EMI in hundreds of universities and achieved success (Kirkpatrick, 2017). In Vietnam, to progress in parallel with the regional advancement and global integration, the country has applied EMI in tertiary education since 2008. This is the year in which the Vietnamese government enacted a number of national policies and projects on foreign language teaching and learning, including the National Foreign Language Project 2020 (Government of Vietnam, 2008). The Project aims to achieve multiple goals, including accelerating global exchange, raising educational prestige and providing Vietnam with a high-skilled, bilingual workforce to support its economic development.

The inclusion of EMI in tertiary education was an effort to reach these objectives. Since then, there has been a significant increase in the number of EMI programs, both in Vietnamese public and private universities (Vu & Burns, 2014). At Hanoi University, a public tertiary institution, several EMI programs have been implemented, including Finance & Banking, International Studies, Information Technology, and Business Administration, in which English is the primary instructional language.

Types of EMI programs

Nguyen et al. (2017) classified EMI programs into two main types: foreign and domestic programs. The former is further categorized into two programs: offshoring and franchising. Offshoring programs are co-delivered by local and offshore educational institutions, commonly known as joint programs. On the other hand, a franchising program refers to adapted overseas programs implemented under the agreement of a Vietnamese university and a foreign institution. Meanwhile, domestic programs are administered and taught by Vietnamese universities. The syllabi, materials, and assessment schemes may be informed by overseas programs; however, they must comply with the Ministry of Education and Training's Higher Education Curriculum Framework (Vo, 2023). In Vietnam, the dominant type of EMI is the domestic program, with occasional involvement of foreign teaching staff (Ngo, 2024). Thus, this further raises the issue of whether Vietnamese national lecturers' choice of instructional language has any impact on students' comprehension level.

Previous empirical research

In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of research papers examining students' perceptions of translanguaging in EMI classrooms, most of which highlight positive attitudes toward this practice. To demonstrate, studies by Martin-Beltrán (2014) and Zhou et al. (2021) revealed that learners viewed translanguaging as helping them draw on their full linguistic repertoire to understand complex concepts in the lecture, thereby enhancing content comprehension. Other studies across various international contexts confirmed the enhancement of comprehension through the practice of translating complex terminology, thereby reducing

cognitive load in learning (Karakaş, 2023; Macaro et al., 2018; Raman & Yigitoglu, 2015). While these benefits for comprehension arguably apply to both lower-proficiency and more advanced learners (Adamson & Fujimoto-Adamson, 2021), concerns about its effectiveness persist. Specifically, while Vaivrand (2024) contended that excessive reliance on translanguaging may hinder advanced learners' L2 attainment, Öztürk and Çubukçu (2022) emphasized perceived negative impacts on both lower- and higher-proficiency learners. The findings of these two studies may be explained by the argument that frequent L1 use decreases exposure to the target language for all learners, thus potentially compromising their academic comprehension (Kim et al., 2016). These inconsistencies prompt further research into both the possible benefits and drawbacks of pedagogical and spontaneous translanguaging for learners at different proficiency levels.

In Vietnam, although previous studies have reported EMI undergraduates' generally positive perceptions of translanguaging for lecture comprehension (Hanh et al., 2025; Nguyen et al., 2024; Pham & Nguyen, 2024), learners' proficiency levels have not received adequate attention. Moreover, there remains a dearth of research in Vietnam on discrete lecture-comprehension subskills. This study seeks to bridge these gaps by providing a more comprehensive perspective on how translanguaging influences B2-level students' lecture comprehension subskills in EMI classrooms. Occupying an intermediate position, this group of learners is positioned at the threshold between L1 dependence and the need for sustained L2 exposure. Aiming at this proficiency level may therefore provide more information about the conditions under which translanguaging is perceived as either beneficial or detrimental in EMI classrooms.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey sought to answer the following research question: What are students' perceived impacts of lecturers' translanguaging on their comprehension of lectures in EMI classes at a university in Vietnam?

Methods

Pedagogical Settings & Participants

This study was conducted within an EMI program at Hanoi University, a multidisciplinary institution in Vietnam that offers EMI across disciplines, particularly in the International Studies department. This department was chosen as the research setting because it is the second-largest EMI program at the university in terms of student population, therefore allowing for the collection of generalizable quantitative data.

To obtain quantitative data on perceptions, invitation emails were sent to 100 final-year participants aged 22 who were enrolled in the International Studies department at the time of the study. The final-year cohort was selected because these students have had the longest exposure to EMI instruction, enabling them to offer rich reflections on their experiences with translanguaging. Following the invitations, only 70 students responded to the questionnaires;

their self-reported English proficiency levels ranged from B2 to C1, with the majority identifying as B2 users.

To obtain qualitative data on the reasoning behind the identified perceptions, purposive sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2023) was employed to select five students whose responses reflected the survey findings for one-on-one interviews. To protect participants' privacy, pseudonyms were assigned to all interviewees and used in all transcripts and reports. In addition, the interview data were kept confidential among the research team and not disclosed to any individuals outside of the project. Detailed information regarding the interviewees is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Profiles of interview participants

Pseudonyms	Gender	English proficiency level
Participant A	Female	B2
Participant B	Female	B2
Participant C	Female	C1
Participant D	Female	B2
Participant E	Male	B2

Design of the Study

For this study, a mixed-methods approach, specifically a sequential explanatory design, was adopted to explore students' experiences with translanguaging practices in EMI classrooms. This approach was selected because integrating quantitative and qualitative methods enables both the generalization of results and a more detailed understanding of a complex phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). In this study's context, integrating numerical data and personal accounts enabled examination of the extent of students' perceptions and the reasons underlying them. This approach was therefore consistent with the research aim, which is to explore how students perceive the impacts of lecturers' translanguaging practices and why they hold such views.

Data collection & analysis

Research instruments

To collect quantitative data on students' perceived impacts of lecturers' translanguaging practices on aspects of their lecture comprehension, a questionnaire was used. This instrument was selected highbecause it is claimed to yield high-quality data, achieve good response rates, and ensure anonymity (Marshall, 2005). The questionnaire was adapted from Richards' (1983) academic listening comprehension model, which includes 18 key items covering various aspects of lecture comprehension. The framework was selected for several reasons. Firstly, the framework captures both bottom-up processes (e.g., processing topic-based vocabulary) and top-down dimensions (e.g., identification of lecture topic and scope) of listening comprehension, which are recognized as central to successful lecture comprehension

(Hellekjær, 2017). Secondly, unlike other taxonomies focusing only on micro skills of general listening ability (Brown, 2007), Richards (1983) explicitly distinguished conversational listening (33 items) from academic lecture listening (18 items). This distinction makes the framework particularly suitable for higher-education EMI contexts as skills specific to lecture comprehension were specifically outlined.

The questionnaire included items that provide a focused representation of key spoken lecture comprehension subskills, while excluding skills that were not directly relevant to these processes. The adaptation was intended to support close alignment with the research question while still covering the microskills considered most essential for the study. The detailed rationale for the exclusion was enclosed in Table 3.

Table 3

Modifications for items in Richards' (1983) framework

No	Item	Rationale for exclusion
1	Recognizing intonation functions (item 9)	This item was excluded because English and Vietnamese employ different prosodic systems. While English relies on intonation, Vietnamese primarily uses tones to convey meanings. Therefore, using Vietnamese was unlikely to facilitate students' recognition of English intonation functions.
2	Ability to follow different lecture modes: spoken, audio, audio-visual (item 11),	
3	Familiarity with different registers: written vs. colloquial (item 14),	Unsuitable for the present research as this study is solely concerned with face-to-face spoken academic lecturers.
4	Familiarity with lecture styles: formal, conversational, read, unplanned (item 13)	This micro skill was excluded because it mainly concerns how information is delivered, while this study aims at how academic information is understood.
5	Ability to recognize function of non-verbal cues (item 16)	This item was removed because the present study concerns primarily with the spoken alternation between English and Vietnamese, making the inclusion of non-verbal cues unapplicable.
6	Knowledge of classroom conventions (item 17)	This item was omitted because it reflects students' familiarity with classroom procedures rather than their comprehension of lecture content.
7	Recognition of instructional tasks (item 18)	This item was excluded because it focuses on students' ability to identify and respond to instructional requirements rather than comprehend academic content.

In addition, a five-point Likert scale was employed, with 1 as strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree. Reliability can be established through statistical analysis (Dörnyei, 2007). In this study, the questionnaire's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding an acceptable coefficient of 0.86, which indicates that the instrument was suitable for use in the main study (Pallant, 2020).

To complement the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain insight into the underlying reasons for students' certain perceptions about their lecturers'

translanguaging practices. Semi-structured interviews were selected because they enabled the researchers to gain an insight into respondents' personal viewpoints. Moreover, compared to a structured interview, the semi-structured format allows for flexibility, which provides room for the interviewer to probe further based on students' responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The semi-structured interview protocol consisted of ten open-ended questions, containing two main parts, namely (1) overall background questions about participants' experiences with translanguaging; (2) questions to elicit their explanations for the identified benefits and challenges of translanguaging on their comprehension level. Before the official interviews, two pilot interviews were conducted with two voluntary students whose backgrounds are similar to that of the target participants. After this process, modifications regarding wording were made to improve the clarity of the interview questions. Revisions were constantly discussed among the research team to ensure the clarity and validity of the questions.

Data collection procedures

The survey was distributed online to ensure accessibility and efficiency, specifically to the university email addresses of 100 students currently enrolled in the International Studies department. This quantitative data collection process took 7 days in total and yielded 70 valid responses. Subsequently, invitation emails for interviews were sent to five participants, outlining the objectives and measures taken to ensure confidentiality. Five interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom in English over three days, at times convenient for the participants. Each session lasted approximately 45 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent.

Data analysis

The questionnaire data were processed and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 22. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, were used to summarize the collected data and identify patterns and trends in students' responses (Dong, 2023). Moreover, as the questionnaire items were designed using a Likert scale, using the average values is a common approach (Alkharusi, 2022). Interpretation of the mean score ranges was provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Interpretation of mean score ranges

Mean Score Range	Interpretation
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly Disagree
1.81 - 2.60	Disagree
2.61 - 3.40	Neutral
3.41 - 4.20	Agree
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree

The perceptions were initially divided into several key themes, including promoting lexical understanding; assisting conceptual understanding; improving inferential skill; enhancing functional language understanding; and increasing adaptation to speech rate.

To analyze the interview data, thematic analysis was employed (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Given that themes had already been constructed from the quantitative data, thematic analysis allowed further exploration of those pre-identified themes. As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2019), all interview transcripts were reread multiple times to familiarize the researchers with the participants' responses. Subsequently, initial codes were assigned manually in Excel and grouped into predefined themes derived from the survey findings. Additionally, several codes regarding the disadvantages of unstructured translanguaging practices emerged and were grouped into separate themes. Overall, the use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews enabled themes of both positive and negative perceptions to emerge. The last step involved reviewing themes to merge repeated themes and remove irrelevant ones. To ensure inter-coder reliability, all researchers participated in reading the transcripts and reviewing all generated codes. Any discrepancies were resolved through frequent discussion to enhance the credibility of the findings.

Ethical considerations

Several measures were taken to ensure the ethical standards of the current study. Specifically, participants' names remained anonymized and were not disclosed to individuals outside of the project. After the interviews, transcripts were sent to the five participants to ensure the accuracy of the information.

Findings & Discussion

The positive perceived impacts of pedagogical translanguaging

Promoting lexical understanding

Table 5

The perceived impacts on lexical understanding

Items	Mean	SD
1. Ability to deduce the meaning of new words in the lecture	3.58	0.90
2. Understanding of key terminologies in the lecture	3.65	1.02

The participants reported high agreement that pedagogical translanguaging aids lexical understanding, with mean scores of 3.58 (SD = 0.90) for deducing new words and 3.65 (SD = 1.02) for understanding key terminology. This finding was further elaborated by in-depth interview data. Specifically, Participant A described pedagogical translanguaging “as a savior” in helping them understand economic terms such as “financial projection”, defined as an estimation of future economic trends. The participant indicated a sense of relief when the term was translated into Vietnamese as *dự báo tài chính*, noting that: “If the lecturer only explains

the term in English, I don't think I know what it is." This perception aligns with several prior empirical studies which consistently suggested that translanguaging is perceived to support lexical acquisition within EMI contexts (Duarte, 2019; Källkvist et al., 2022; Pham & Vu, 2023). This correspondence can be reasoned from current findings in the literature. Firstly, translanguaging appears to enable students to access their full linguistic repertoire, therefore connecting the terms taught in the second language (L2) with the already-acquired L1 vocabulary (Martin-Beltrán, 2014). This explanation is justifiably reflected in Participant C's elaboration:

"Vietnamese history-related terms such as the Republic of Vietnam (Việt Nam Cộng Hoà), strategic hamlets (ấp chiến lược), and guerrilla war (chiến tranh du kích) are more effectively conveyed in Vietnamese because we had already had understandings about these terms in the mother tongue."

Another plausible explanation is that pedagogical translanguaging is viewed as a scaffolding strategy, allowing instructors to provide confirmation or additional clarification of the target lexical items (Hug & Amir, 2026). This perception may be particularly relevant for low-frequency or discipline-specific terms, which are often associated with greater processing demands (Bulté et al., 2025). Taken together, these findings suggest that students generally identified pedagogical translanguaging as a useful resource for lexical understanding.

Assisting conceptual understanding

Table 6

The perceived impacts on conceptual understanding

Items	Mean	SD
3. Identification of the purpose and scope of the lecture	3.67	1.03
4. Ability to identify the topic of the lecture and follow the topic development	3.52	1.05

The table shows high agreement for lecture comprehension items, with mean scores of 3.67 (SD = 1.03) for identifying topics and following development and 3.52 (SD = 1.05) for identifying the lecture's purpose and scope. The interview data helped clarify why translanguaging was perceived to assist the participants with concept processing. To illustrate this point,

"Using both languages strategically to introduce new knowledge helps me connect the knowledge I learned before in Vietnamese with the new piece of information the lecturers have just presented." (Participant C)

This elaboration implies that translanguaging enables students to draw on L1 conceptual knowledge to internalize new L2 content, rather than having to construct understanding from the beginning.

This perception is consistent with previous empirical studies (Bruen & Kelly, 2017; Baker, 2011; Karakaş, 2023), which proposed that incorporating L1 in L2 classrooms enhances content

comprehension by linking unfamiliar L2 knowledge to existing knowledge in L1. This interpretation is central to Cummins' (1979) *interdependence hypothesis*, which posits that concepts can be made accessible between L1 and L2 thanks to existing foundational background learned in L1. In the tertiary-level EMI settings, this interdependence may be more relevant as students are often required to engage with specialized content while managing the linguistic demands of English simultaneously (Huang, 2025). This combined demand is reflected in Participant C's remark that the introducing concepts in L1 helps learners avoid "working too hard to understand new concepts." Cognitively, such load appears to be related to the complexity of the listening process, which involves both top-down and bottom-up procedures (Buck, 2001). Specifically, when listening to lectures solely in L2, students who have insufficient L2 proficiency may struggle with the bottom-up process reportedly involving decoding sounds, recognizing words and phrases before constructing meaning. When supported by L1, recognition of such elements can become less problematic, thus appearing to facilitate comprehension of the overall concept (Yeldham, 2016). From a psychological perspective, previous research has suggested that English-only EMI environments may generate anxiety and frustration for some learners (Yeh, 2014; Zumor, 2019). Participants may therefore perceive translanguaging as creating a sense of emotional security, which they believed supports their comprehension (Ghafouri & Esmaeilee, 2025). Viewed from both cognitive and psychological perspectives, the findings help explain why participants regarded that translanguaging assists their understanding in lecture content.

A noteworthy remark by Participant D was that since her course materials were presented in both English and Vietnamese, teachers' in-class translanguaging practices consolidated the concepts introduced in those written texts. While the role of spoken L1 for concept comprehension in the EMI classrooms has been demonstrated (Phyak et al., 2022), little has been charted about its benefit for learners' understanding of bilingual written materials. Participants' perceptions of this relationship therefore point to a potential direction for future research.

Improving inferential skill

Table 7

The perceived impacts on inferential skill

Items	Mean	SD
5. Inferring the relationships of the lecture's details more easily (e.g., comparison, cause and effect, conclusion)	3.54	1.04
6. Inferring the lecturer's attitude toward the subject matter more easily	3.51	1.02

The mean score of the first item in the table falls within the "Agree" range, indicating that the participants generally perceived that the lecturer's translanguaging aids students' inference of lecture details. Previous empirical studies support this finding, demonstrating that combining translanguaging with multimodal tools such as gestures, visual cues and technology deepen learners' understanding of the links between lecture details (Huq & Amir, 2026; Pawliszko,

2025; Tai, 2022). However, the present interview data primarily emphasized participants' perceptions of the indispensable role of verbal translanguaging, particularly for addressing abstract or culture-specific content. Specifically, reflecting on a foreign policy lecture, Participant C noted that Vietnamese examples accompanying the English definition of *comprehensive strategic partnership* “enhanced the connections between the main idea and its supporting ideas significantly”. According to the participant, this support became more important as the content grew increasingly complex across economic, military, and cultural dimensions.

This perception is broadly consistent with Huq and Amir's (2026) argument that visual and gestural resources primarily “supplement verbal definitions” and “enrich the explanation” (p. 9), suggesting that verbal explanations remain central to meaning-making processes. This perceived usefulness of verbal translanguaging may stem from the lack of direct L2 equivalents for highly specialized terminology (Sanesi, 2024), which challenges lecturers attempting to rely solely on English instruction. Consequently, this study underscores that EMI students generally recognized verbal translanguaging as a particularly valuable resource, with other semiotic resources serving complementary roles in EMI classrooms.

The second key finding indicated that participants perceived lecturers' translanguaging as helping them infer lecturers' attitudes. To explain, Participant D noted that a lecturer's expression of urgency or significance cannot always be fully conveyed through English alone. For example, the participant perceived “It's the key point for your exam, nên là chú ý vào em nhé!” (It's the key point for your exam, so pay more attention!) as conveying emphasis more effectively as the L1 was more emotionally expressive. This perception aligns previous studies suggesting that L1 use may help speakers express concerns, authority or reassurance, thereby enabling students to recognize lecturers' attitudes more easily (Dewaele, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2024; Pham & Vu, 2023). Several linguistic features of Vietnamese may help explain these perceptions. Firstly, Vietnamese contains a dynamic system of personal pronouns, allowing it to express age differences and, more importantly, interpersonal attitudes more flexibly than in many other languages (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025). Secondly, since Vietnamese is a tonal language, subtle prosodic variations help communicate emotions, politeness, irritation, and hesitation even when the words themselves remain unchanged (Mac et al., 2010). These characteristics may have contributed to participants' perceptions that English–Vietnamese translanguaging helped them interpret lecturers' attitudes more effectively. While prior research supports the role of L1 in identifying speaker attitudes (Dewaele, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2024; Pham & Vu, 2023), the perceived link between English–Vietnamese translanguaging and learners' ability to identify attitudes remains under-researched. The present study therefore contributes to the extension of understanding in this area.

*Enhancing functional language understanding***Table 8***The perceived impacts on functional language understanding*

Item	Mean	SD
7. Ability to identify the role of discourse markers and markers of cohesion in signaling structure of a lecture (e.g., conjunctions, adverbs, gambits, routines)	3.40	0.88

The finding suggests that participants perceived translanguaging as helping them identify how discourse markers organize lectures. While existing literature has documented the perceived benefits of translanguaging for acquiring and utilizing transitional devices, these studies have primarily focused on writing rather than lecture listening (Cabilan et al., 2026; Chen & Dalton-Puffer, 2026). Thus, this finding provides empirical contribution to such an underinvestigated area.

This perceived influence may stem from the argument that a single English discourse marker may correspond with multiple Vietnamese equivalents, depending on the context (Diem, 2021). In this regard, translanguaging may help reduce learners' cognitive load when processing these alternatives, thereby enabling them to follow the lecture's flow more effectively. To illustrate, the marker *now* in English can be understood as *ngay bây giờ* (*at present*), indicating temporality or *nào* in “*nào, mau lên!*” (“*now, hurry up!*”), signaling urgency or immediacy. Furthermore, as most participants in this study were B2-level learners who reportedly relied on more basic, high-frequency connectors such as *for example*, *but*, *so* (Chen, 2023), they might have found less familiar discourse markers used in lectures more challenging to process.

*Increasing adaptation to speech rate***Table 9***The perceived impacts on the ability to adapt to speech rate*

Item	Mean	SD
8. Following the lecturer's different speed more easily	3.58	1.00

It was found that following lecturers' speech rate received a mean score of 3.58, indicating agreement among the participants. Previous empirical studies have similarly reported that students perceived translanguaging as beneficial when processing rapid instructional speech (Hamman-Ortiz et al., 2025; Tai, 2022). A possible explanation for this consistency can be found in the interview data. Specifically, three participants acknowledged this perceived cognitive advantage, expressing that translanguaging ensured that their “memory is not overloaded” (Participant A) when they had to “pay too much attention to unknown words” (Participant B).

These elaborations broadly align with cognitive psychology research suggesting that listeners' ability to follow speech is constrained by working memory capacity (Dunham et al., 2020). Specifically, when overloaded, working memory can no longer retain additional information, thereby disrupting listeners' ability to follow ideas (Dunham et al., 2020). In this regard, translanguaging may reduce the amount of effort required to process L2 input at multiple levels, including sounds, vocabulary, sentence structures, and overall meanings (Buck, 2001). Participants, therefore, appear to regard translanguaging as helping them allocate cognitive resources more efficiently, which seemingly enabled them to keep pace with the lecture.

Besides, Participant E remarked that “teachers’ translanguaging gives us a small pause to catch up with their speed.” This perception is also consistent with suggestions by Pham and Nguyen (2024) and Tai (2022) that translanguaging introduces opportunities for lecturers to pause, discuss, and translate key information in learners’ stronger language. Therefore, participants may have felt that translanguaging creates additional processing time, which helped them follow the instruction flow more efficiently. In short, from these perceptions, it can be found that pedagogical translanguaging may make classroom speech more manageable, particularly in the EMI settings where subject matter can become abstract and field-specific.

The negative perceptions regarding spontaneous translanguaging

Reduced lexical comprehension

The interview data indicated that some participants perceived spontaneous classroom translanguaging as potentially limiting understanding of L2 academic vocabulary. Specifically, Participant A expressed concern that unintentional translanguaging may make learners become “familiar with oversimplified meanings of specific academic terms and concepts” (Participant A), thereby affecting their ability to comprehend these lexical items in English. This concern aligns with research indicating that simplified language, while supporting understanding among less proficient users, can offer few opportunities to engage with new L2 vocabulary (Nation, 2001). Consequently, participants may have viewed such practices as hindering their lexical development.

Another caution concerning the constrained exposure to terms was echoed by Participant B,

“Explaining academic terms primarily in Vietnamese might limit students’ exposure to English terminology, which is essential for understanding academic texts, writing research papers or participating in discussions.”

This perception has been reported in previous EMI studies, which have suggested that spontaneous translanguaging reduces opportunities for learners to interact meaningfully with disciplinary English (e.g., Aldaghri, 2024; Ngo, 2024; Zhou & Gao, 2021). This might arguably reduce exposure to the language and therefore hinder L2 attainment (Aldaghri, 2024) and compromise vocabulary comprehension (Muñoz & Cadierno, 2021). One possible explanation is that a strong understanding of an L2 word typically requires repeated exposure to its form, meaning, and use as well as opportunities for its active use (Nation, 2001). When these conditions are not met due to excessive translanguaging, participants may view translanguaging as detrimental to their lexical comprehension. Thus, this finding suggests that translanguaging should be used “in a controlled and minimized way” (Aldaghri, 2024, p.9) to avoid potentially

undermining lexical understanding while maintaining a certain degree of comprehension support. This perception is particularly relevant for B2 language users who require continued exposure to academic English to progress to higher proficiency levels (Cambridge Assessment English, 2021).

Reduced conceptual comprehension

During the interview, besides the benefits, both Participants D and E expressed concerns that spontaneous use of translanguaging might decrease their ability to understand lecture concepts. This perception corresponds with studies by Wang (2021) and Vaivrand (2024), which suggest that extensive reliance on translanguaging might be associated with challenges with content comprehension, especially among advanced learners.

Several explanations may account for this perception. Firstly, the over-reliance on L1 might cause lecturers to give “lengthy and unfocused explanations” (Participant D). This issue is also reported by Domalewska (2015), who suggested that the mother tongue may often be used as the default medium for casual conversation, thereby likely leading to unnecessary content during lectures. This redundant information may increase learners’ extraneous cognitive load, thereby reducing the cognitive resources available for conceptual comprehension (van Merriënboer & Sweller, 2005).

Secondly, unnecessary translanguaging practices might “disrupt students’ train of thought, causing them to lose track of the lecture’s main ideas” (Participant D) and even “have lower academic performance” (Participant E). These findings align with prior research indicating that frequent and abrupt language shifts diminish listeners’ ability to concentrate on important information (Golumbic et al., 2012; Rodriguez-Fornells et al., 2011). One possible interpretation is that processing multiple languages typically requires listeners to manage many linguistic systems simultaneously, thus potentially increasing cognitive demands. Over time, the prolonged cognitive efforts may diminish concentration, an element necessary for comprehension of extended lectures (Blackburn & Wicha, 2022; Salig et al., 2025).

Pedagogical implications

Taken together, the perceptions discussed suggest that pedagogical translanguaging is viewed as a vital scaffold for improving lecture comprehension in EMI classes, particularly for intermediate EMI learners. In detail, it is perceived as helpful across a number of lecture comprehension micro-skills, including lexical and conceptual understanding, inferential skill, speech rate adaptation, and functional language comprehension. Given these reported benefits, EMI educators may consider moving away from English-only policies and instead incorporate purposeful translanguaging to strengthen lecture comprehension. However, in light of the two self-identified challenges from participants’ perceptions, the practice should be implemented strategically. Specifically, clear rules for translanguaging should be established in classrooms, such as selectively using L1 to explain key concepts and technical terms while maintaining L2 as the main medium of instruction to prevent compromised exposure to academic English (Fang & Liu, 2020). This is particularly relevant for B2-level English users who are generally capable of following English academic discourse, yet still benefit from intensive exposure to the language. Furthermore, since needs analysis is considered essential for designing effective

instructional strategies (Yuan, 2024), the frequency of translanguaging can be surveyed through needs analysis to ensure that its implementation aligns with students' specific needs and language competencies.

Conclusion

In summary, the quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrated that pedagogical translanguaging was perceived to play a crucial role in supporting the multilayered components of lecture comprehension for intermediate learners. To be specific, the reported bottom-up gains include enhanced comprehension of topic-based vocabulary, functional language, and processing of lecturers' delivery. Meanwhile, the top-down benefits involve improved comprehension of concepts and interpretation of logical relationships among ideas as well as lecturers' attitudes. Although participants generally expressed positive perceptions of pedagogical translanguaging, the findings also revealed several reservations regarding its spontaneous use. In detail, the overuse of translanguaging was perceived to compromise understanding of both L2 vocabulary and concepts by limiting exposure to academic English and disrupting the flow of instruction. The coexistence of positive and negative perceptions highlights the importance of pedagogical translanguaging, rather than spontaneous translanguaging, to address comprehension difficulties.

The current study is subject to some limitations. Firstly, the quantitative and qualitative data generated were obtained from a limited number of participants ($N = 70$ and $N = 5$, respectively) and drawn from a single institution in Hanoi, so the generalizability of the findings might be constrained. This suggests further research with larger samples of EMI undergraduates in Vietnam and other countries to confirm the impact of lecturers' translanguaging practices on lecture comprehension. Furthermore, the study relied on self-reported data, which might not accurately represent students' actual listening comprehension. Thus, incorporating additional measures, such as comprehension tests and classroom observations, would complement the current data on learners' perceptions.

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AI-mediated Interaction through an AI Voice Chatbot: Effects on EFL Speaking Development and Learner Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: AI chatbot; English speaking skills; EFL students; learner's perceptions; Replika

This study investigated the effects of AI-mediated speaking practice using a voice chatbot on Vietnamese EFL students' speaking skills and explored their perceptions of the learning experience. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was adopted with 49 English-major undergraduates participating in a 15-week quasi-experimental intervention. The experimental group practiced speaking with an AI chatbot, whereas the comparison group received face-to-face instruction. Data were collected from pre- and post-speaking tests, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. ANCOVA indicated that, after controlling for pre-test performance, the AI chatbot group achieved significantly higher overall speaking scores than the comparison group, particularly in fluency and coherence. Additionally, participants valued the chatbot's authentic interaction, flexibility, and opportunities for regular speaking practice despite reporting occasional technical and interactional limitations. The findings support the pedagogical value of AI-mediated speaking practice in higher education.

Introduction

English speaking skills are vital for EFL learners (English as a Foreign Language) as they facilitate their participation in authentic communicative situations (Li & Chan, 2024). It also helps to boost the development of other language skills and is considered the most crucial skill for successful communication (Fathi et al., 2024). Nevertheless, speaking skills have caused worries for many EFL learners, especially in the Vietnamese context, as they have limited grammatical knowledge, a lack of vocabulary to express their ideas (Nguyen & Trinh, 2025), inaccurate pronunciation (Nguyen, 2026), and over-reliance on first-language translation and memorization-based learning strategies (Fathi et al., 2024; Nguyen, 2025). In addition, affective barriers such as speaking anxiety, fear of making mistakes (Nguyen & Tong, 2024), and low self-confidence frequently discourage learners from participating actively in communicative tasks (Bui et al., 2022; Nguyen, 2025). These difficulties stem from several contextual

constraints including limited instructional time and opportunities for speaking practice within and beyond classroom (Fathi et al., 2024; Thao & Nguyet, 2019), lack of exposure to authentic communication with native speaker (Chiu et al., 2007; Quyen et al., 2018), restricted), outdated teaching approach (Baek & Lee, 2018; Chen & Hwang, 2019), fears of judgment from peers (Peng, 2019) or teachers' limited English language proficiency (Dao, 2017).

These challenges can be resolved by providing learners with a platform for practice that goes beyond the constraints of traditional classes with recent advances in AI. One widely used technology is an AI chatbot – an AI application designed to simulate human-like dialogue, enabling real-time conversations via audio and text, and updating knowledge and interpreting input through natural language processing (Haristiani, 2019). This resembles real-life interactions due to the naturalness and authenticity that AI chatbots have created (Adamopoulou & Mousiades, 2020). AI chatbots could converse as native speakers (Çakmak, 2022), enabling learners to practice speaking in authentic contexts without being confined to specific times or settings (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006) and to obtain constructive feedback on their responses (Walker & White, 2013).

Although growing evidence suggests that AI chatbots can facilitate language learning, empirical research on their effectiveness in improving EFL speaking proficiency remains limited, particularly in Vietnamese higher education (Dizon, 2020; Fathi et al., 2024). To address this gap, the present study investigates the effects of AI-mediated interaction through a voice chatbot on Vietnamese English-major students' speaking proficiency and explores their perceptions of using this technology for speaking practice.

Literature review

Speaking skills

Speaking skill can be understood as the learners' ability to communicate meaning effectively across a range of communicative contexts, demonstrating effective control of the target language (Brown & Lee, 2015). It comprises several related constructs with two core components: fluency and accuracy. Fluency is related to the production of smooth and coherent speech with minimal hesitation, and accuracy is related to the use of appropriate pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structures (Walker & White, 2013; Wang, 2014). Speaking proficiency involves learners' ability to communicate ideas clearly and coherently in various situations and, more generally, to maintain overall communicative effectiveness (Zhang et al., 2025). Thus, to develop learners' speaking skills, they need ample opportunities to engage in authentic, interactive communication that allows them to practice speaking in meaningful real-world contexts (Kim, 2016).

AI chatbots and Speaking skills

Recent advances in AI technologies have facilitated the development of conversational chatbots, which are considered an acceptable and sustainable substitute for human partners (Fathi et al., 2024). Haristiani (2019) defines AI chatbots as computer programs that employ AI algorithms to conduct text-and voice-based interactions while continuously updating their knowledge to generate contextually appropriate responses. They are capable of supporting

natural and authentic interactions and, importantly, being an conversational companion (Fryer & Carpenter, 2006; Huang et al., 2022). Learners can engage in conversations with native English speakers without being restricted by time or space as in conventional classrooms (Çakmak, 2022; Walker & White, 2013).

AI chatbots have several characteristics that support language learning. First, they enable learners to communicate through text and speech, engage in authentic conversations, receive immediate feedback and constructive comments, and practice pronunciation in real time (Walker & White, 2013). Thus, they are effective in developing grammar and vocabulary skills for language learners (Jeon, 2021) and improving students' pronunciation, intonation, and word stress (Kim et al., 2021). Second, AI chatbots are user-friendly and could interpret learners' intentions and generate contextually appropriate responses (Huang et al., 2022). This could lead to better learning outcomes (Lu et al., 2006) and encourage more frequent language use (Kim, 2016) as learners can practice without the pressure of classroom evaluation (Fathi et al., 2024).

In direct relevance to speaking skills, some studies have explored the effectiveness of different AI chatbots for enhancing English language speaking proficiency and practice in different contexts. These studies consistently report considerable impacts of AI voice chatbots on EFL learners' overall speaking proficiency (Çakmak, 2022; Du & Daniel, 2024; El Shazly, 2020; Duong & Suppasetseree, 2024; Fathi et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2021; Nguyen, 2026) and particular aspects including developing pronunciation, intonation, fluency, word stress, speaking rhythm and organization skills (Zou et al., 2023). AI chatbots are also beneficial for enhancing confidence and interaction (Tai & Chen, 2023; Fathi et al., 2024). Regarding speaking anxiety, there have been mixed results when Tai & Chen (2023) contended that AI chatbots could help to alleviate speaking anxiety, whereas students were reported to still experience anxiety when they faced unfamiliar topics (El Shazly, 2021) or when the chatbots failed to recognise their voices (Kim et al., 2021).

The literature has also identified several limitations associated with integrating AI chatbots into speaking instruction. First, several chatbots such as Google Assistant supported learners through implicit feedback, including comments, clarification questions, silence, and error notifications, which prompted learners to modify their spoken responses. Communication often broke down if learners were unable to interpret these implicit cues (Tai & Chen, 2023). Another limitation of conversational AI is the imperfect accuracy of automatic speech recognition, particularly when processing the speech of L2 learners. AI chatbots often struggle to recognize non-native accents and longer utterances (Dizon, 2020; Xie et al., 2021).

Overall, previous studies present several methodological limitations. Although Kim et al. (2021) documented positive impacts of AI voice chatbots on speaking performance, their assessment relied on read-aloud and question-response tasks, which may not adequately capture learners' communicative speaking competence. Moreover, most international studies have been conducted in informal learning settings rather than formal classroom instruction. In the Vietnamese context, existing studies are limited by the use of one-group quasi-experimental designs without a control group (Duong & Suppasetseree, 2024; Nguyen, 2026), relatively small samples (Duong & Suppasetseree, 2024), and short intervention periods (8–10 weeks), reducing the robustness and generalizability of the findings.

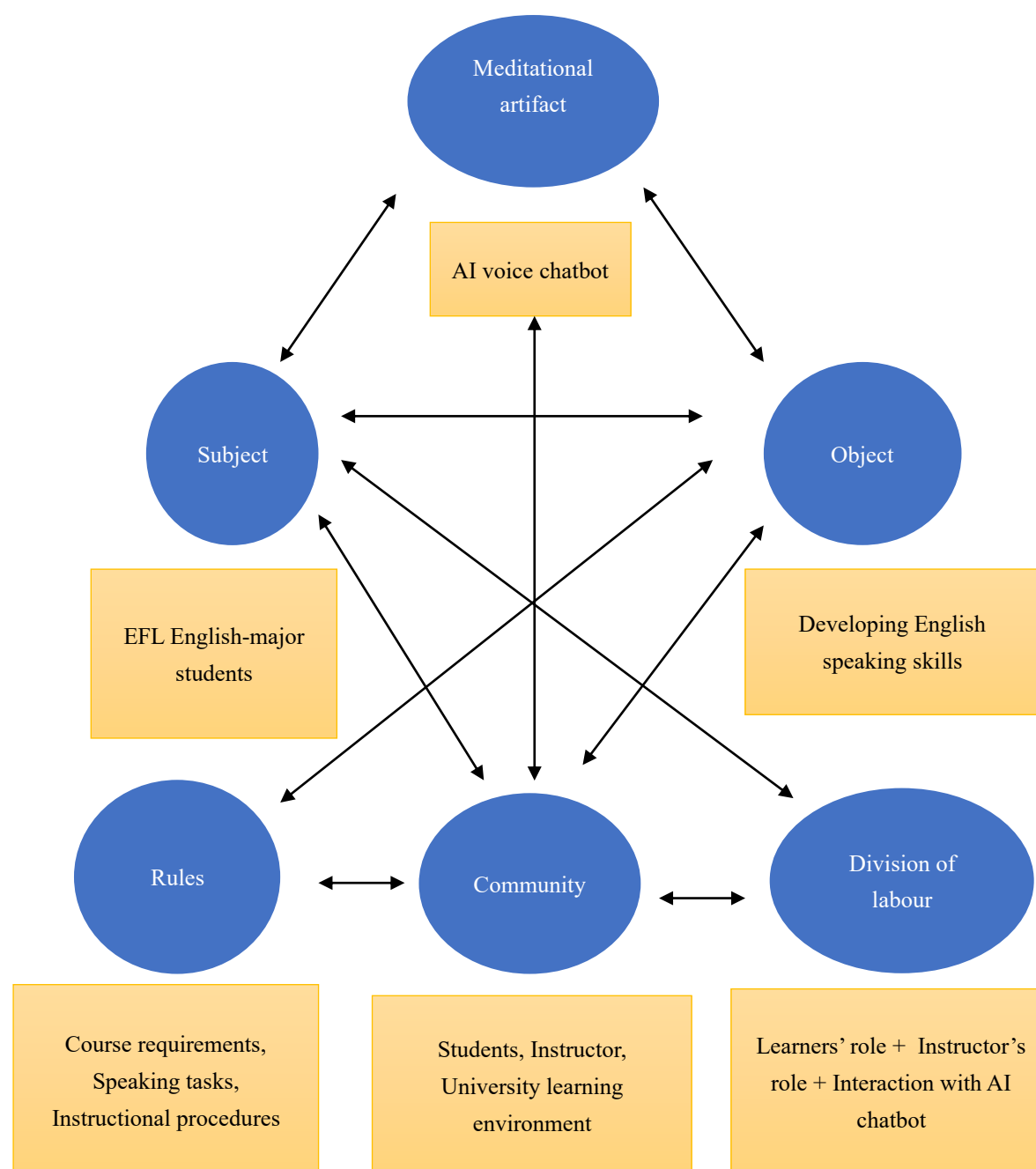
Theoretical Framework

This study draws upon Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987). From a social constructivist perspective, language learning develops through collaborative engagement with others, where learners gradually extend their abilities with appropriate guidance and support within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In AI-supported learning environments, conversational chatbots can function as mediating tools by facilitating dialogue, offering timely feedback, and creating opportunities for authentic communicative practice. While Social Constructivism explains the cognitive mechanisms underlying learning, Activity Theory provides a broader analytical lens for understanding the interaction among learners, technologies, and learning environments.

According to Engeström (1987), learning occurs within an activity system comprising six elements: subject, object, mediating artifacts, community, rules, and division of labor. In this study, English-major EFL students participating in the speaking course (the subject) used the AI voice chatbot – Replika (*meditational artifact*) to develop their English-speaking proficiency (*object*) through sustained communicative practice. Their practice occurred within a *community* comprising the students, course instructor, and university learning environment. *Rules* referred to the course requirements, speaking-task expectations, and instructional procedures governing students' use of Replika during the intervention. The division of labor concerned the complementary roles of the students, the instructor, and the chatbot: students engaged in speaking practice, the instructor provided guidance and monitored the learning process, and Replika functioned as a conversational partner.

Figure 1.

Activity theory concepts framed in the study's context

*Research Questions*

The study addressed two research questions:

1. To what extent does AI-mediated interaction through a voice chatbot influence the English speaking proficiency of Vietnamese EFL undergraduates?
2. How do Vietnamese EFL undergraduates perceive the use of an AI voice chatbot for

improving and practicing English speaking skills?

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design (Creswell et al., 2003). A quasi-experimental pretest–posttest design was first conducted to evaluate the intervention, followed by a qualitative phase to further interpret and elaborate on the quantitative findings. Quantitative data were collected through IELTS-format speaking pre- and post-tests and a questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with participants from the AI chatbot group after the intervention. The two types of data were integrated during interpretation, with interview findings used to explain and complement the questionnaire results, particularly regarding students' perceptions and experiences of AI-mediated speaking practice.

Participants

The study involved 49 Vietnamese English-major undergraduate students (6 males, 43 females). They enrolled in an English Integrated Skills course (with a focus on developing speaking skills) at a foreign language university in central Vietnam. For practicality, the cohort was chosen from two intact classes: 24 students received conventional speaking instruction (face-to-face group instruction), and 25 students practiced AI speaking with an AI chatbot. The participants had intermediate English proficiency (CEFR B1 equivalent), as determined by the institutional testing. They all had considerable experience in using technology yet had never used AI voice chatbots before. Prior to data collection, participants were informed of the study procedures, and their consent to participate was obtained.

The study employed Replika, one of the most widely used AI voice chatbots since its launch in 2018 (Pentina et al., 2023). Available on iOS, Android, and web platforms, Replika offers both free and premium interaction modes. Unlike rule-based chatbots, it generates adaptive responses based on users' conversational input, enabling more diverse conversations (Pentina et al., 2023).

Figure 2.

Screenshots of students' interactions



An IELTS-based speaking assessment was administered before and after the intervention to evaluate participants' oral English proficiency. Students' speaking ability was assessed in four domains: fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, and pronunciation, following the IELTS Speaking band descriptors and the study assessment rubric. Each domain was rated on a 10-point scale in accordance with the university's grading policy, and an overall speaking score was derived by averaging the four domain scores. Two speaking tests from Cambridge IELTS 11 served as the pretest and posttest. To improve scoring reliability, all speaking responses were audio-recorded and independently rated by two lecturers. Inter-rater reliability was high ($r = .85$), indicating strong consistency between the raters.

Learners' perceptions of AI-mediated speaking practice were examined using a questionnaire adapted from Duong and Suppasetserree (2024) and further developed based on Du and Daniel (2024). The questionnaire was tailored to the context of students' use of Replika for English speaking practice and pilot-tested with five students before the main data collection. The pilot testing was conducted to identify unclear or ambiguous items, and minor revisions were made accordingly. The final questionnaire comprised two sections. The first section gathered background information, including participants' gender, years of English learning, and their usage of the AI chatbot. The second comprised 32 Likert-scale items measuring perceptions of fluency and coherence (8 items), lexical resource (5 items), grammatical range and accuracy (3 items), pronunciation (4 items), and overall speaking practice (12 items). The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha as shown in Table 4. The questionnaire demonstrated high overall reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .887$), with acceptable to high internal consistency across the five constructs ($\alpha = .624 - .885$).

Table 1

Reliability of the questionnaire and its constructs

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's α
Overall questionnaire	32	.887
Fluency and Coherence	8	.885
Lexical Resource	5	.843
Grammatical Range and Accuracy	3	.624
Pronunciation	4	.787
Overall perceptions	10	.624

The semi-structured interview protocol was adapted from Duong and Suppasetserree (2024) and Fathi et al. (2024) and tailored to the research questions. The interview questions were reviewed by an experienced EFL instructor to ensure their clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. The protocol focused on learners' experiences of using the chatbot, perceived changes in their speaking performance, perceived benefits, and challenges encountered during AI-mediated speaking practice. The interview consisted of core questions, with additional probing questions used when appropriate to encourage participants to elaborate on their responses. Each interview was conducted individually and lasted about 20–25 minutes. Participants were allowed to communicate in either English or Vietnamese so that they could

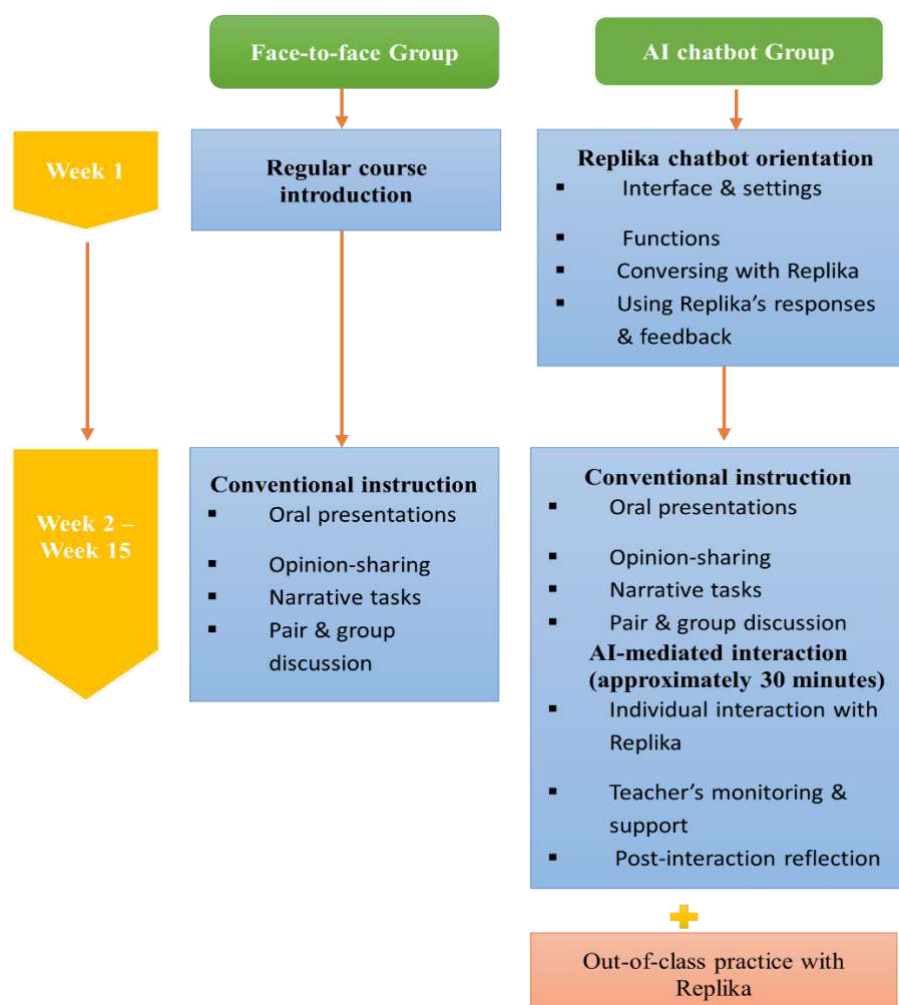
express their opinions more comprehensively. With participants' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized by assigning pseudonyms.

Data collection and analysis

Data collection was conducted through four stages. Initially, all participants completed an IELTS-based speaking assessment to establish their baseline speaking proficiency. Then, they participated in a 15-week intervention, during which both groups attended one 180-minute class session each week. Both groups had the same course content, teaching materials, and assessment requirements. Classroom instruction focused on IELTS-oriented communicative speaking tasks, including oral presentations, narrative tasks, problem-solving activities, and opinion-sharing discussions, and covered topics aligned with the syllabus. The instructional procedure, adapted from Fathi et al. (2024), is illustrated in Figure 3. The Activity system outlined in the theoretical framework also informed data collection. Speaking tests were used to assess the learning outcome, while the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to examine learners' experiences with the mediating tool and their perceptions of interactions within the instructional activity system.

Figure 3.

Instructional procedures for face-to-face and AI chatbot groups



During Week 1, students in the experimental group attended an orientation session on using Replika for speaking practice. They were introduced to the chatbot's functions, interaction strategies, and ways to extend conversations and address common interaction issues. The face-to-face group received the standard course orientation. From Weeks 2 to 15, both groups followed the same classroom instruction and participated in identical speaking activities. The difference was the mode of additional speaking practice. During each lesson, the experimental group spent approximately 30 minutes interacting individually with Replika on the weekly speaking topics, while the instructor monitored the sessions and facilitated post-activity reflection. Students were also encouraged to continue practicing with Replika outside class. This design helped ensure that any differences in learning outcomes were attributable to AI-mediated speaking practice rather than differences in instructional content or teaching procedures. Following the intervention, all participants completed a second IELTS-based speaking assessment to determine changes in their oral English proficiency. Students assigned to the AI chatbot group also completed a questionnaire exploring their perceptions of AI-mediated speaking practice. To gain richer insights into these experiences, nine volunteers from the AI chatbot group participated in semi-structured interviews.

Quantitative data were processed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics were first computed to summarize responses to the questionnaire. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed to compare post-test speaking performance between the experimental and comparison groups while controlling for participants' pre-test scores. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis (Schreier & Asner-Self, 2011). After the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, the transcripts were coded to identify recurring themes that supported the quantitative findings.

Results

Effects of AI-mediated interaction via AI chatbots on developing English speaking skills for Vietnamese EFL undergraduate students

Regarding the participants' demographic characteristics, they were all aged 19-20 years and had studied English for approximately 10–12 years. Most reported using Replika daily for speaking practice. Specifically, 48% spent 30 minutes to 1 hour per day using the chatbot, 44% reported 1 to 2 hours of daily use, and 1 participant used Replika for 3 to 4 hours per day.

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics for overall speaking performance and its four subcomponents across the AI chatbot and face-to-face groups. Before the intervention, the face-to-face group obtained marginally higher mean scores than the AI chatbot group on all speaking measures. Following the intervention, both groups achieved higher speaking scores, although the gains were more pronounced in the AI chatbot group. Overall speaking scores increased by 1.42 points in the AI chatbot group, compared with 0.47 points in the face-to-face group. A similar pattern was evident across the four speaking components.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for overall speaking performance and its components by group

Group	Speaking components	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean difference
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
AI chatbot	Overall Speaking performance	25	7.01	1.03	8.43	1.22	1.42
	Fluency & Coherence	25	7.10	1.08	8.54	1.28	1.44
	Lexical Resources	25	6.95	0.99	8.49	1.23	1.54
	Grammatical range & Accuracy	25	6.99	1.00	8.26	1.16	1.27
	Pronunciation	25	6.96	1.07	8.43	1.22	1.47
Face-to-face	Overall Speaking performance	24	7.31	1.07	7.78	1.29	0.47
	Fluency and Coherence	24	7.40	1.10	7.83	1.34	0.43
	Lexical Resource	24	7.29	1.08	7.97	1.25	0.68
	Grammatical range & Accuracy	24	7.32	1.07	7.60	1.29	0.28
	Pronunciation	24	7.20	1.05	7.75	1.32	0.55

Table 3 summarizes the assumption tests for ANCOVA. Neither the interaction between the covariate and instructional condition nor the pre-test comparisons reached statistical significance for any dependent variable, indicating that the assumptions of homogeneity of regression slopes and baseline equivalence were met (all p s > .05). Although Levene's test was significant for overall speaking proficiency ($p = .013$) and lexical resource ($p = .022$), ANCOVA is considered robust to moderate violations of homogeneity of variances because the two groups had nearly equal sample sizes.

Table 3

Summary of ANCOVA assumption tests

Assumption	Overall Speaking performance	Fluency & Coherence	Lexical Resource	Grammatical range & Accuracy	Pronunciation
Homogeneity of regression slopes (p)	.283	.323	.506	.300	.300
Baseline group equivalence (p)	.327	.341	.261	.272	.432
Levene's test (p)	.013	.191	.022	.175	.760

To address Research Question 1, post-test speaking performance was analyzed using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), with participants' pre-test scores included as a covariate. Effect sizes were interpreted according to partial eta squared (η_p^2), with values of .01, .06, and .14 representing small, medium, and large effects, respectively. The findings are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

ANCOVA results for overall and component speaking performance

Outcome variable	F (Covariate)	F (Group)	<i>p</i>	(η_p^2)
Overall speaking proficiency	199.42	37.34	< .001	.448
Fluency & Coherence	174.04	34.62	< .001	.429
Lexical Resource	133.49	22.42	< .001	.328
Grammatical Range & Accuracy	151.39	33.02	< .001	.418
Pronunciation	151.89	27.58	< .001	.375

After controlling for pretest speaking proficiency, ANCOVA indicated that the instructional approach had a significant effect on learners' overall speaking performance, $F(1, 46) = 37.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .448$, representing a large effect size. Participants' pre-test scores remained a strong predictor of their post-test performance, $F(1, 46) = 199.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .813$. These results indicate that learners who participated in AI-mediated interaction achieved higher adjusted post-test speaking scores than those who received conventional instruction. Learners in the AI chatbot group significantly outperformed their peers in four speaking components, achieving statistical significance ($ps < .001$). Large effect sizes were consistently observed across all outcome measures ($\eta_p^2 = .328-.448$). Across all analyses, pretest scores remained significant covariates ($ps < .001$), confirming that learners' initial speaking proficiency was a strong predictor of their post-test performance.

Students' perceptions towards the use of AI-mediated interaction via AI chatbots in their English speaking development and practice

To address the second research question, descriptive statistics were calculated for items related to perceived improvements in speaking performance and for overall perceptions of AI-mediated interaction (Table 5).

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Improvements in Speaking Performance and Overall Perceptions of AI-mediated Interaction

Construct	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Fluency and Coherence	25	3.88	0.63	2.75	5.00
Lexical Resource	25	4.10	0.62	2.80	5.00
Grammatical Range and Accuracy	25	3.79	0.55	2.67	4.67
Pronunciation	25	4.08	0.61	2.75	5.00
Overall perceptions	25	3.53	0.43	2.83	4.50

Generally, students reported positive perceptions of AI-mediated interaction for English speaking practice. Among the four speaking dimensions, perceived improvements were highest for lexical resource ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.62$) and pronunciation ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.61$), followed by fluency and coherence ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.63$) and grammatical range and accuracy ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.55$). The qualitative findings were largely consistent with these quantitative results. The participants described vocabulary development as the most noticeable outcome. Students reported acquiring more natural and contextually appropriate expressions through repeated conversations with Replika. As one student noted,

"Before, I often used the word "use", but after practicing with Replika, I learned more words that sound more academic and natural, like "utilize" (S1).

Likewise, another student explained that expressions such as *"hit the mall"* and *"brick-and-mortar store"* made her speaking *"more natural than just using simple vocabulary"*. Several other participants reported using newly learned vocabulary in subsequent conversations.

Besides, many students explained that their frequent interactions with Replika increased their awareness and development of pronunciation, noting that the unsuccessful recognition of their speech provided a cue or signal of their pronunciation problems. This prompted them to adjust their pronunciation until they were understood. One student said,

"When I pronounced a word incorrectly, Replika couldn't understand me, so I had to repeat it until it recognized what I wanted to say" (S3). Another student appreciated its usefulness in practicing pronunciation: *"I think Replika was really useful for shadowing and improving my pronunciation because the AI used a very standard native-speaker voice. Listening to it and trying to imitate the way it spoke really helped improve my pronunciation" (S6).*

Regarding fluency and coherence, the interviewees also noticed changes in how they expressed and organized their ideas during conversations, which enabled them to become more fluent speakers. Several explained that interacting with Replika encouraged them to respond more spontaneously instead of mentally translating from Vietnamese. One student recounted,

"because Replika only waited for a short time for you to speak, I gradually learned to think and speak faster instead of pausing for too long" (S2).

Student 5 explained that he used the chatbot to *"refine my ideas"* because it *"reorganized my responses, made them sound more natural, and helped improve my flow."* Grammar was the area in which students perceived the least improvement, although many still considered Replika's corrective feedback valuable during conversations. Rather than receiving explicit grammar explanations, they described learning by noticing and correcting errors as they communicated. Student 4 shared,

"When I used the present tense to talk about a past event, Replika immediately asked, 'What do you mean?' and then showed me the correct sentence."

Additionally, students held overall positive perceptions of AI-mediated interaction ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.43$). The highest-rated benefits were the authenticity of AI-mediated conversations and the flexibility of speaking practice (*Items 23 and 24*, both $M = 4.16$), followed by increased opportunities for regular speaking practice (*Item 26*, $M = 4.08$) and enhanced motivation (*Item 21*, $M = 4.04$). These findings were supported by the interview data. Many interviewees valued the authenticity and convenience of practicing with Replika, describing the chatbot as a readily available speaking partner that enabled them to practice whenever they wanted. Student 2 said,

"Before, I had to ask my friends to practice with me. But now, whenever I need to practice, I can simply use Replika."

Another student emphasized, *"What I like most is that I can talk to it as if I were talking to a real foreigner because it is very difficult to have opportunities to practice with native speakers".*

Students also described motivational benefits that the chatbot offered and viewed it as a conversational companion. Student 6 commented,

"It feels like I have a real friend to talk to rather than talking to an AI. It makes me feel more comfortable, and it even reminds me to study, which makes me more motivated to learn."

Similarly, one student highlighted both the accessibility of AI chatbots and the increase in her speaking confidence: *"I feel more confident as I am not judged when talking to Replika. I can practice wherever and whenever I want."*

Regarding challenges associated with AI-mediated speaking practice, the most frequently reported concerns were technical issues (*Item 32, M = 3.40*) and insufficient guidance (*Item 29, M = 3.32*). Similarly, the most frequently mentioned concerns among the interviewees were unreliable Internet connectivity, application performance, and device limitations. One student commented,

"Sometimes I encountered technical problems, and the interface was not very attractive," while another noted that *"The app took up too much storage on my phone, so I had to uninstall it and download it again whenever I wanted to practice."* (Students 8 and 9).

Nevertheless, none of the participants regarded these technical issues as a reason to discontinue using Replika; instead, they considered them manageable inconveniences.

The interviews further revealed another challenge that was not captured in the questionnaire. Several participants explained that Replika occasionally misunderstood their intended meaning, produced responses that lacked sufficient detail, or failed to sustain the conversation. One student explained,

"Sometimes I ask a question, but it only answers 'yes' or 'no', or it gives a very general opinion without examples or evidence. I ask it to explain more, but sometimes it still isn't detailed enough." (Student 4).

Student 8 claimed that *"Some responses were quite short, so I usually asked follow-up questions or gave more information to get a better answer."* Several students gradually adapted their interaction strategies by refining prompts or providing additional context. Student 9 reflected,

"If Replika didn't answer the way I wanted, I looked for more information myself and gave it more background. When I provided more information, it used that knowledge to give much better answers later."

Discussion

The present study examined the impact of AI-mediated interaction via an AI voice chatbot on enhancing Vietnamese EFL learners' speaking proficiency and explored learners' perceptions of using this technology. The findings demonstrated that AI-supported speaking practice effectively improved EFL learners' overall oral proficiency and its components. Interestingly, both the AI chatbot and face-to-face groups improved over a 15-week semester; students who engaged in AI-mediated interaction demonstrated substantially greater improvements in all

aspects. The development in the conventional group can be explained by the cumulative effects of communicative instruction and learners' natural maturation. The greater performance of the AI chatbot group is consistent with previous research demonstrating the positive contribution of conversational AI to EFL speaking development (Çakmak, 2022; Du & Daniel, 2024; Duong & Suppasetseree, 2024; El Shazly, 2020; Fathi et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2021; Nguyen, 2026). The observed performance lies in the increased quantity and quality of speaking practice afforded by the AI chatbot. This research integrated AI-mediated interaction into a formal speaking course while encouraging students to continue practicing independently outside class. The combination of structured classroom instruction and autonomous out-of-class practice could have led to better learning outcomes. Indeed, repeated exposure to authentic interaction and more frequent speaking opportunities are vital for EFL learners' oral language development (Kim, 2016; Hwang et al., 2024; Lu et al., 2006).

These findings can be understood through the perspectives of Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987). Replika functioned as a mediating learning tool that continuously scaffolded learners' speaking through authentic interaction, immediate responses, and contextualized language support. Frequent engagement in these conversational exchanges may have helped learners refine their spoken English through continuous practice, timely feedback, and collaborative meaning-making, thereby extending learning within the ZPD. From an Activity Theory perspective, the observed gains should not be attributed solely to the chatbot itself. Instead, learning emerged from the interaction among multiple elements within the instructional activity system, including teacher guidance, communicative classroom tasks, AI-mediated conversations, and learners' independent practice outside class. This interpretation is consistent with the activity-system configuration in the present study, in which Replika operated as a mediating artifact within an instructional environment shaped by teacher support, course requirements, communicative tasks, and learners' independent practice.

Students perceived the greatest improvement in lexical resource, followed by pronunciation, corroborating findings from prior studies (Hwang et al., 2022; Zou et al., 2023). This can be attributed to the contextual nature of AI-mediated interaction, which allows learners to repeatedly encounter and reuse newly acquired expressions in meaningful conversations. Pronunciation also benefited from the chatbot's speech recognition and immediate responses, as participants in the present study described repeating words or modifying expressions until the chatbot successfully recognized their speech. This supports Engwall and Bälter (2007), which claims that timely automated responses and feedback encourage learners to notice pronunciation problems and self-correct.

Improvements in fluency, coherence, grammatical range, and accuracy were less noticeable to students, despite relatively large instructional effects observed on the objective assessment. One possible explanation is that progress in these aspects is inherently less salient to learners than vocabulary acquisition or pronunciation improvement. Such discrepancies between objective performance and learners' self-perceptions have also been reported in previous research, which suggests that L2 learners do not always accurately calibrate their own speaking ability (Trofimovich et al., 2016). Unlike vocabulary, which can be recognized immediately through newly acquired words and expressions, or pronunciation, which receives immediate

confirmation through successful speech recognition, improvements in fluency and grammatical accuracy tend to emerge gradually through repeated interaction. Moreover, AI chatbot typically provides implicit rather than explicit corrective feedback, requiring learners to infer communication problems and modify their spoken output independently (Tai & Chen, 2023). Difficulties in automatic speech recognition when processing L2 speech may further obscure learners' awareness of their progress, as communication breakdowns can be attributed to the system's recognition limitations rather than to changes in their own language performance (Dizon, 2017; Xie et al., 2021).

Additionally, students held positive perceptions towards AI-mediated interaction via AI chatbots for speaking. They appreciated the authenticity of interacting with what they perceived as a conversational partner, the flexibility of practicing at any time, and the increased motivation to speak English more frequently. These findings are in line with the prior research' results, which supported that AI chatbots were beneficial for providing learners with authentic communication in interactive contexts (Hwang et al., 2022), low-anxiety, and readily accessible environments for oral communication (Du & Daniel, 2024; Duong & Suppasetseree, 2024), reducing students' anxiety and fear of judgement, increase their confidence, motivation and enjoyment (Fathi et al., 2024; Nguyen, 2026; Tai & Chen, 2023). The participants in this study also reported speech recognition failures, yet this was regarded as an inconvenience rather than a source of anxiety, unlike in Kim et al. (2021).

This research further indicated several barriers to using AI chatbots for speaking practice, including unstable internet connectivity, application-related limitations, and a lack of guidance from teachers. An emergent challenge from the interview was that students initially found it difficult to formulate effective prompts, sustain conversations, or obtain sufficiently detailed responses from the chatbot. These findings were in line with the limitations documented in the literature including limited response capabilities (Hakim & Rima, 2021), occasional generation of responses that lack contextual relevance or realism (Lu et al., 2006), and difficulties in processing longer or more complex learner utterances (Kim et al., 2019) and the need to have a high-speed internet connection and appropriate technological device (Du & Daniel, 2024).

Overall, this study strengthens the evidence supporting AI-mediated interaction as an effective supplement to classroom instruction for improving EFL speaking proficiency in higher education. The study also adds to the existing literature in several respects. First, unlike Kim et al. (2021), who assessed relatively discrete speaking abilities through read-aloud and short question-response tasks, this study evaluated learners using an IELTS-format speaking test that required extended interaction, narration, opinion development, and communicative competence. Second, the inclusion of a comparison group in a semester-long intervention provides stronger evidence that the additional gains were attributable to AI-mediated interaction rather than to normal language development or classroom instruction alone.

Conclusion

This research investigated the role of AI-supported interaction through a voice chatbot in enhancing Vietnamese EFL learners' oral English proficiency and examined their experiences

of using the technology for speaking practice in a formal university context. The findings indicate that integrating AI-mediated interaction into classroom instruction was associated with greater improvements in speaking proficiency than conventional face-to-face instruction, while learners generally reported positive experiences with this approach despite some technical and interactional challenges. The findings enrich current knowledge by providing evidence from a classroom-based mixed-methods study of both learning outcomes and learner experiences.

The findings have several pedagogical implications for English-speaking instruction. First, the present study suggests that the greatest benefits were achieved when AI-mediated interaction complemented teacher-led speaking activities and extended opportunities for individual practice outside class, supporting previous research that highlights the value of combining AI-supported learning with teacher scaffolding and communicative pedagogy (Du & Daniel, 2024; Fathi et al., 2024). Second, the challenges identified in this study indicate that learners require explicit guidance on how to interact effectively with AI chatbots. Specifically, teachers should provide detailed instructions and model strategies for initiating and sustaining conversations, formulating effective prompts, providing sufficient contextual information, interpreting implicit feedback, and asking follow-up questions to maintain meaningful interaction (Fathi et al., 2024). Such guidance may help learners overcome common difficulties related to speech recognition, generic responses, and communication breakdowns while facilitating more productive AI-mediated speaking practice. Finally, because learners in this study gradually adapted their interaction strategies over time, AI literacy should be considered an integral component of language education. Developing learners' ability to communicate strategically with AI, critically evaluate AI-generated responses, and use conversational AI as a tool for autonomous speaking practice may become increasingly important as AI technologies are more widely adopted in EFL classrooms.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the participant sample was restricted to English-major undergraduates from a single university in Vietnam, which may reduce the applicability of the findings to other educational settings. Second, although the intervention lasted one academic semester, research over a longer period is needed to determine whether the observed learning gains can be maintained. Finally, students' out-of-class use of Replika was measured through self-reports rather than system-generated usage data. Thus, the actual frequency and duration of AI-mediated speaking practice could not be objectively verified. Future research could integrate chatbot usage logs or learning analytics to provide more precise measures of learners' engagement with conversational AI.

Declaration of the use of AI

The authors used ChatGPT solely to assist with language editing, including grammar and spelling correction, during manuscript preparation. All revisions were carefully reviewed by the authors, who assume full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the final manuscript.

Declaration of competing interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

Ethical statement

Before data collection commenced, all participants provided informed consent. They were advised that participation was voluntary and that they were free to discontinue their involvement at any stage without any negative consequences.

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Appendix 1

QUESTIONNAIRE ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING AN AI CHATBOT FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING PRACTICE

This questionnaire explores your experiences of using Replika for English speaking practice. It examines your perceived improvements in speaking skills and your views on the benefits and challenges of using Replika. The questionnaire takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. All responses will be kept confidential and used exclusively for research. Thank you for your valuable contribution.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. How long have you been studying English?
 - a. 5-10 years b. 10 years c. Others:
3. How much time do you spend using Replika to practise English speaking outside class?
 - a. 30 minutes – 1 hour
 - b. 1- 2 hours
 - c. Others:

II. PERCEPTIONS OF USING AI CHATBOTS IN IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS AND PRACTICE

Please tick the response that best reflects your opinion for each statement.

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
FLUENCY AND COHERENCE						
1	The AI chatbot helps me form sentences more quickly.					
2	The AI chatbot makes my speech smoother and more natural.					
3	The AI chatbot helps me speak more fluently.					
4	The AI chatbot helps me organize my ideas better.					
5	The AI chatbot helps me expand my ideas in conversations.					
6	The AI chatbot helps me connect ideas more clearly.					
7	The AI chatbot helps me connect ideas more coherently.					
8	The AI chatbot encourages me to think more deeply about my responses.					
LEXICAL RESOURCE						
9	The AI chatbot teaches me new and useful words.					
10	The AI chatbot improves my vocabulary use in spoken English.					
11	The AI chatbot helps me use words in the right context.					
12	The AI chatbot helps me understand and use new words.					
13	The AI chatbot helps me remember and use words I have learned.					

GRAMMATICAL RANGE AND ACCURACY						
14	The AI chatbot helps me to understand sentence structure better.					
15	The AI chatbot helps me use better sentence structures.					
16	The AI chatbot helps me use grammar more accurately.					
PRONUNCIATION						
17	The AI chatbot helps me pronounce words more clearly					
18	I can mimic native-like pronunciation through using the chatbot.					
19	The AI chatbot helps me improve my stress and intonation.					
20	The pronunciation models used in the AI chatbots are easy to follow and imitate.					
OVERALL PERCEPTIONS						
21	I am motivated in using AI chatbots for learning English-speaking skills.					
22	Practising speaking with the AI chatbot is enjoyable.					
23	It is easy to access the AI chatbot.					
24	AI chatbots create an environment that feels similar to real-world conversations.					
25	The AI chatbot helps me feel less afraid of making mistakes.					
26	I practise English speaking skill more often when using the AI chatbot.					
27	The AI chatbot does not always give detailed feedback.					
28	The lack of human interaction makes learning less engaging.					
29	I need more guidance to use the AI chatbot effectively.					
30	The AI chatbot sometimes uses words or phrases that are not useful for me.					
31	I sometimes find the AI chatbot's responses difficult to understand.					
32	I sometimes have technical problems when using the AI chatbot.					

Appendix 2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do you think using Replika influenced your English speaking? Can you give some examples?
2. Which aspect of your speaking (e.g., fluency, coherence, vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation) improved the most? Why?
3. What did you find most helpful about using Replika for speaking practice?
4. What challenges did you experience when using Replika? How did you deal with them?

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