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Application of Padlet.com to Improve Assessment as Learning in Speaking Classes: An Action Research in Vietnam

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Abstract

Hardly could 4.0 education processes exist without digital tools, which has, particularly, been proved worldwide throughout waves of the Covid-19 pandemic. Vietnam, where remote learning, instead of blended or traditional approaches was carried out at almost all educational institutions as the last resort during this period, is not an exception. In order to support students in learning English efficiently and effectively, the research team conducted action research by applying Padlet.com in speaking lessons for 93 Business-majored students at a Vietnamese university in semester 1 of the academic year 2021-2022. A questionnaire, speaking assessment rubric, and class observations were designed to investigate the effectiveness of the interactive tool in class assessment as learning. The findings include students' positive attitudes and perceptions towards the practice and some achievements. This paper is expected to enlighten teachers and stakeholders in the domain of education in general and those of languages in particular on the ways to utilize Padlet.com so as to improve their students' online learning quality.

Keywords: *Remote learning, Padlet, speaking, online learning quality*

Introduction

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic led to the essence of prompt transformation of teaching and learning styles at almost all levels of education throughout the world, and teachers of English and students in Vietnam are not an exception in response to social changes to ensure the training quality during these unprecedented times (Dau, 2021). Before the pandemic, blended learning had been applied to non-English majors at a Vietnamese university since 2015. This model means mixing classroom-based education with online learning on the internal LMS, namely eop.edu.vn. In more detail, students have to do various tasks of vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, and writing involved in each topic with their accounts on the LMS before practicing in-class speaking activities in 2 periods per week. During the pandemic, students still learned listening, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary on the LMS, but the scheduled on-campus face-to-face lectures were provided for students, mainly using the video conferencing tool Zoom and others to facilitate students' digital learning such as Padlet, Ideaboardz, Nearpod, etc. However, teachers faced significant difficulties due to the relatively modest interaction between teachers and students. Some contributing factors may be related to motivational factors of learning, motivation for learning, or technological factors. The authors realized that creating a classroom that optimizes student contributions and increases student-student as well as student-teacher interactions still ensures effective class hours. Therefore, the

authors conducted action research on the use of Padlet.com when teaching speaking to non-English-majored students. The purpose of the study was to understand students' attitudes and perceptions about employing Padlet when learning speaking skills and the effectiveness of learning speaking over Zoom with the support of Padlet.com site.

Literature review

Speaking skills

Being a productive skill, speaking is regarded as a vital and difficult language aspect for learners to master (Truong & Le, 2022). As noted by Leong and Ahmadi (2017), in order to achieve specific objectives, they should have good competence in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension to communicate in the target language. Le (2017) adds that speaking has two major components, including accuracy (the correct use of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation) and fluency (the potential to speak easily, well, and quickly). This means important elements of speaking include vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and the ability to keep communication going on.

The importance of speaking skills is indicated that good English speakers are more open to job opportunities and promotion (Baker & Westrup, 2003). As for Hoang and Tran (2019), about 50% of employers suppose that more time should be given to speaking practice. Speaking skills, therefore, are pivotal and draw much attention in the workplace.

Assessment

Overview of assessment

As for Stassen et al. (2001), assessment is collecting and analyzing information to give feedback about how students should improve their studies to achieve their goals. Converging with Stassen et al., Linn and Miller (2005) state that assessment is a systematic process to get information about learners' progress in accordance with learning goals. Assessment in the classroom includes all the ways in which teachers collect and use information, both qualitative and quantitative, during the teaching process to make judgments and decisions to help teachers understand the teaching-and-learning quality, from which to adjust, classify and rank students.

With regard to advantages, assessment is beneficial to both teachers and learners (Gallo et al., 2006). Students can demonstrate intellectual activities, including memorizing, summarizing, generalizing, systematizing, and applying; realize how well they complete their learning tasks as well as justify their progress; self-adjust their learning methods; and motivate themselves. Accordingly, teachers can know students' attitudes and level of task completion as well as progress, classify students and take appropriate measures to help them; and self-assess the effectiveness of their teaching in terms of content and pedagogic methods to make the necessary adjustments.

From the purpose perspective, Education (2006) states that there is assessment for learning, assessment of learning, and assessment as learning. Assessment for learning focuses on how students learn, helps them know how to improve and develops the capacity for self-and-peer assessment. It usually occurs during the teaching and learning process to clarify students' learning and understanding, so ongoing feedback is required. Assessment of learning concentrates on whether students have met the curriculum outcomes at the end of a unit, term or semester. Assessment as learning examines each student's thinking about his or her learning, what strategies they apply, and tactics they should deploy to adjust and improve their learning. While assessment for learning allows teachers to determine the next steps which should

be done for students' learning advances, assessment as learning offers each student chances to keep track of and give critical reflections on his or her own learning and identify the next steps.

Learners can get assessments from their teachers or peers, and different scholars highly appreciate the latter. According to Liu and Carless (2006), peer assessment is good for both givers and receivers. As feedback givers, students learn how to listen and use a rubric to evaluate their peer's products effectively. Feedback receivers can accept or reject the feedback critically. Chorrojprasert (2021) indicates that in discussions and feedback sessions of the ELT programs required courses, peer assessment helps them increase students' confidence, critical thinking skills, and active involvement in the lesson. More importantly, peer review in speaking lessons enables students to improve their study results in terms of vocabulary, fluency, and pronunciation, and it can be carried out instantly or with some preparation before presenting in front of the whole class. In order to ensure the honesty and credibility of peer assessment so that it is a means to improve the learning process, formulation of evaluation criteria is essential as suggested by Elander (2004) and Marsh et al. (2008).

Speaking assessment

Speaking assessment, as to Waugh and Jolliffe (2008), is troublesome, difficult, and challenging. Rahmawati (2014, p.202) also claims that assessment on speaking can be 'a very judgmental issue' for educators. To ensure great objectivity, there appears a necessity to establish a set of criteria to assess learners' conversations or mono-talks. Nevertheless, the standard classification of the criteria to assess students' speaking skills has not been developed until now. Each scholar suggests his or her assessment scale, dependent upon the educational context or students' level, but in general, speaking assessment components include pronunciation (how often pronunciation errors occur and how they interfere the communication), grammar (control of sentence structures and other grammatical phenomena), vocabulary (range, precision, and usage of word choice), fluency (how well the production of speech in a conversation is delivered), comprehension (understanding the context of the conversation and able to give appropriate responses to questions) and task (completion of the question responses during the speaking test) (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010; Nunan, 1999).

Overall, through reviewing the associated literature over the last three decades, it cannot be denied the benefits of assessment in education. Also, it is not easy for learners to satisfy all the above-mentioned assessment criteria, but it is necessary to remind language teachers as they design, administer and assess their students' speaking performance as a rubric for assessment is of true essence.

Application of digital technology in education

It is witnessed that the recent advances in technology in general and the booming of digital applications such as Padlet, Blendspace, Nearpod, Mentimeter, Kahoot, Quizlet, etc. in particular, have made significant changes in the educational field. A number of studies have been carried out to see if the technology integration could enhance active learning for students and support teaching (Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014; Dube & Scott, 2017; Durriyah & Zuhdi, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2021; Ozdamli, 2017; Rony, 2021; Setiawati, 2020). In detail, technology offers learners opportunities to engage in self-directed actions, a safely interactive environment where errors get corrected, and specific feedback is given (Bahadorfar & Omidvar, 2014). Dube and Scott (2017) also state that digital technology allows teachers to have advanced administration and management as well as organize interactive activities. In addition, several obstacles to time, place, student-student or teacher-student interaction and communication could be reduced, thereby developing the students' language skills like their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills (Dube & Scott, 2017; Rony, 2021). Not only improve students' creativity and skills, but digital tools also promote their learning motivation and interest in a

certain subject (Nguyen et al., 2021; Ozdamli, 2017). Moreover, using Techtools makes students feel freer to share their thoughts and enables the teacher to get students' expectations or accessibility, which will increase the communication and understanding between the students and the teacher (Durriyah & Zuhdi, 2018). It can be found that digital technology applications have been proven beneficial to both teachers and students. This study will merely focus on one of the Web 2.0 tools – Padlet.

Overview of Padlet

Padlet is a digital tool allowing users to present content in different formats, such as images, audio, videos, documents, text, and links (Holovina, 2021). It can be likened to a traditional board with contents attached to many different places on the board. The creator of a Padlet can share it so that multiple people can contribute ideas simultaneously. Because of having an eye-catching and user-friendly interface, the application is suitable for all ages. Teachers can use Padlet to give lectures and collect ideas from learners through instant interaction on computer screens or support learners with group discussions (Holovina, 2021). Particularly, they can use it to interact with students after classes. Therefore, this is a really useful teaching and learning tool.

Padlet can be signed in with Google, Microsoft, or Apple but the first two ways are more popular (Silas, 2022). Generally, there are five different plans of Palet, namely Padlet Neon, Padlet Gold, Padlet Platinum, Padlet Team Gold and Padlet Backpack, of which only the first one is free for users but limits the number of “boards” and file upload, and the last one is designed for schools. However, it is possible to free up more space in basic ones by temporarily archiving, then deleting the “boards”. The basic plan allows storing up to 12 boards.

Features of Padlet

Diverse features of Padlet have been emphasized by several researchers (Anwar et al., 2019; Haris et al., 2017; Holovina, 2021; Rony, 2021), specifically as follows:

Post content in several forms

Posts can be easily shared by writing texts or by entering a data file with the available icons: click the first icon to upload files, the second to take a picture, the third to share links, and the fourth to post photos. The color of the post can be changed with the available color palette.

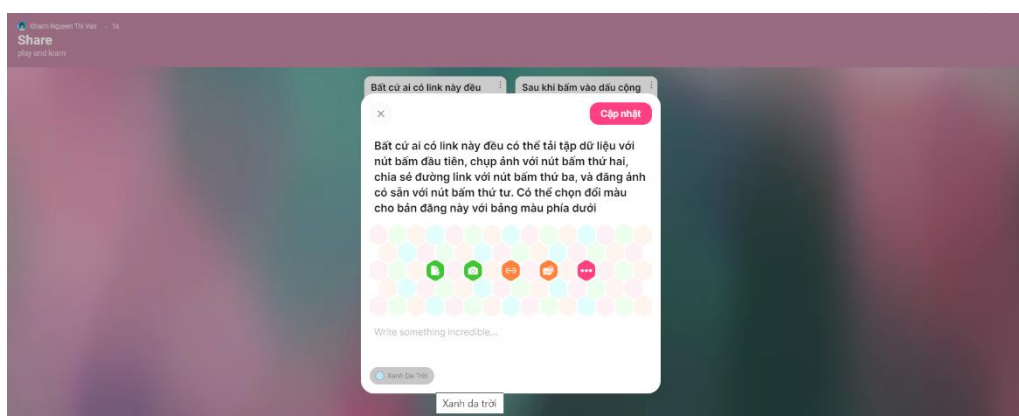


Figure1. How to post various contents

It is convenient for teachers to upload listening files with the first button so that students can download to their devices and listen directly, avoiding being affected by poor internet connection. Speaking activities can also be done easily by clicking on the “...” pink icon, then selecting Audio Recorder to make recorded audios.

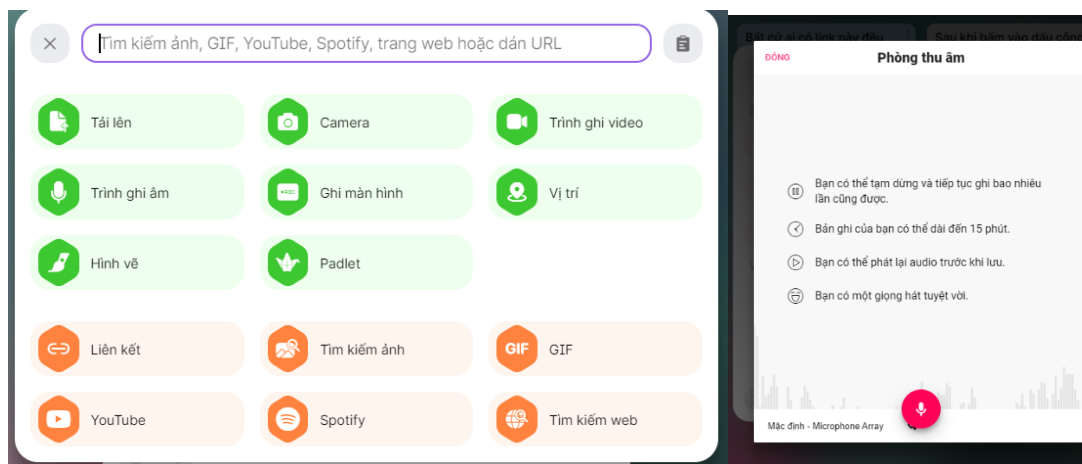


Figure 2. How to record audio/ videos

To keep class hours appealing and inspiring, teachers can ask students to record videos using available 'video recorders'. However, students may be less confident when they have to appear in the video while the recording time is limited to only up to 5 minutes per video, the video capacity is quite heavy, and students will take longer to submit, so teachers need to consider before using this feature.

Increase interactions

Apart from allowing teachers to get students' ideas synchronously and asynchronously in the form of texts, images, audio, videos or documents, Padlet enables students to do a task such as discussing, brainstorming together, giving their comments, feedback or voting on the posts, encouraging collaborative work. It can be said that Padlet is a wonderful tool for peer feedback. Interestingly, students' interactions as well as their participation in the lesson, can be observed by the teacher.

Share content via various sites

A Padlet creator can then share a Padlet board with other sites such as Facebook and Google classroom or save pdf files as options in the image below.

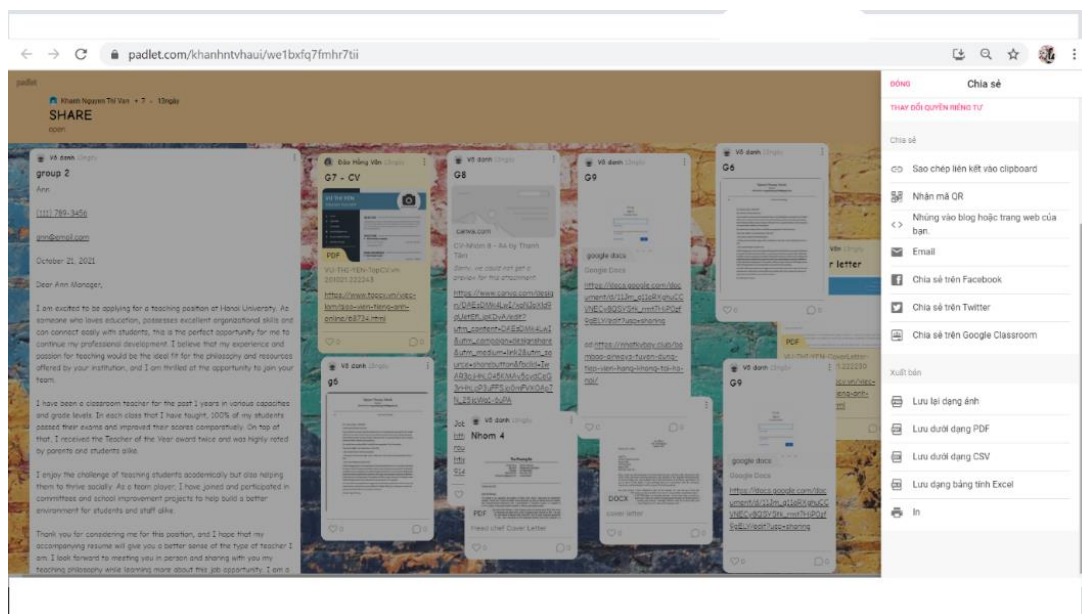


Figure 3. Sharing content via different sites

In short, being a powerful digital tool, Padlet brings learners a handful of benefits. Not only is it easy to use, but it also allows students to post different types of files, have more teacher-student and student-student interactions, as well as sharing of content via various sites. That is the reason why Padlet has become one of the most popular tools to aid online teaching and learning, especially in times of lockdown and social distancing due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Previous related studies

There have been a lot of studies about applying Padlet in teaching and learning. Here are some typical Vietnamese and international studies.

Harris et al. (2017) conducted an experimental study on the effectiveness of using Padlet in English classrooms for 30 first-year students majoring in Islamic Finance, Islamic Studies, and Business at Sains Islam University (Malaysia). Research data were collected from pre-and-post tests after using Padlet in English grammar teaching and student survey questionnaires at the end of the post-tests. The results of the study showed that there was a significant improvement in student learning outcomes when teachers incorporated Padlet in grammar teaching and learning (60% of students achieved higher test scores than before the Padlet application); learners' high preference and positive attitude towards the use of Padlet as a means of learning grammar.

Similarly, another quasi-experimental study on the use of Padlet as a tool for teaching English writing skills was also carried out by Ismawardani and Sulistyanto (2019). 73 grade 10 students at a school in Kediri City, Indonesia, participated in the study. Teachers used Padlet in teaching writing skills to the experimental class (36 students), while no interventions or Edtech tools were provided for the control class (37 students). The data collected from the written tests of both groups were analyzed using the T-test method. The results showed that the written test scores of the experimental class were higher than those of the control class, and it can be concluded that Padlet is considered an effective means of teaching writing skills.

In the context of Vietnam, author Bui (2019) also implemented a study entitled Using Padlet to develop students' autonomous learning in modern world history in grade 11 at Hoa Lu A - Ninh Binh High School. The author applied Padlet in teaching lesson 3 "China" to 44 grade-11 C students of Hoa Lu A High School within 4 weeks. The lesson 3 teaching plan is prepared in accordance with the latest regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training oriented towards capacity development plans for students. Four instruments were used in her study, namely observations along with assessment criteria sheets, survey questionnaires and interviews before and after employing Padlet. In terms of research instruments, the author selected and designed a rating scale of learners' autonomy and conducted surveys and interviews for grade 11C students before and after using Padlet to teach Modern World History. The findings indicated positive changes in students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards history in general and modern world history in particular. Another most recent study related to Padlet done by Dang and Tran in 2021 also once again determined that Padlet is highly effective for English pronunciation training for students of Bac Kan College.

It can be seen that there are quite a lot of Vietnamese and foreign studies that have proven the effectiveness of applying Padlet in teaching and learning in general and teaching-learning English in particular. This is the basis for the research team to decide to carry out research on the application of Padlet in business English speaking lessons for business-majored students at a Vietnamese university. Despite being trained and fostered in the application of IT in teaching, teachers just adopt Padlet from personal sharing and experience. So far, no formal studies in

Vietnam have been systematically conducted to investigate the current state of Padlet, learners' perceptions, and assess the effectiveness of the application. To fill part of this research gap, this study is vital for improvement in the online learning quality in ESP for non-English-majored students at the research site in particular and developing countries in general.

Research questions

In order to fulfill the study objectives, the following research questions are raised:

- a) What are the third-year non-English major students' attitudes and perceptions on using Padlet in learning speaking skills?
- b) What are the students' perceptions on utilizing Padlet in making and receiving feedback on their speaking performance?
- c) How do students perceive the effectiveness of applying Padlet in learning speaking skills?

Methods

Pedagogical setting and participants

To address the research questions, the researchers conducted a study with 3rd-year non-English majors in semester 1 of the academic year 2021-2022, HaUI, when they taught Business English 5. The module lasts 10 weeks. The number of students in each class ranges from 31-32 and each teacher is in charge of one class, so the total number of student participants in the study is 93. At the end of the course, students are expected to reach level 3 in the 6-level foreign language proficiency framework of VSTEP (equivalent to B1 level of CEFR). Their speaking scores are assessed based on progress (30%) and final (70%) tests. In terms of speaking output standards, students need to be able to imitate the pronunciation and intonation of native speakers related to the topics included in the curriculum and produce conversations as well as individual topic talk.

Design of the study

The authors applied an action research approach in 8 weeks for this study because, according to Burns (2010), it not only brings positive change to the classroom but also is a part of teaching.

During the teaching process, the authors found that teaching speaking skills simply via Zoom was not effective because using the breakout room feature is time-consuming. Students can be kicked out of the room in the middle due to poor internet quality while teachers have to join each room to control students' practice, making it difficult to complete the lesson and achieve lesson objectives. In addition, interactions among students and between teachers and students are limited by both objective and subjective factors. It is hard for students to hear and give comments on their friends' speaking performances or talks. In fact, although teachers ask some students to speak directly in class, only a little distraction or poor internet connection can prevent students from hearing their friends' answers. Much worse, even students who have given answers may not remember what they just said. This means that their chances of speaking practice and mistake correction are significantly reduced.

Being aware of the amazing features and effectiveness proven by many previous studies (as presented above), the research team decided to choose Padlet to increase the quality of online teaching and learning speaking skills for non-English majors. In each lesson, from week 3 to week 7, after warm-up activities, students practiced speaking individually or in pairs, depending on the content and activities of each lesson, and are required to record their talk or conversation

using an audio recorder on Padlet. With in-pair speaking activity, teachers divided the room randomly, limited the time allowance for practice and recording (15 minutes on average) and asked students to listen and comment on each other's work within 10 minutes. Simultaneously, teachers also listened to and commented on their work.

Data collection and analysis

In order to address the research questions, data collection tools are a speaking assessment rubric, class observations, and a survey questionnaire. The data collection procedure was done as follows:

First, in the 1st and 2nd weeks of the semester, the research team conducted a two-week pre-test based on pair speaking practice activities designed in the course book via Zoom with breakout rooms which ensured that each student was tested at least once. This pre-test was evaluated by the teachers with the rubrics based on Brown and Abeywickrama (2010). The researchers used rubrics because, according to Suskie (2009), it is advantageous to both teachers and students. It makes scoring easier, faster, more accurate, unbiased, and consistent. Teachers' grading of students' work is, therefore, more efficient. Also, it makes the marking process sound transparent, reliable, and fair to students. More importantly, thanks to marking rubrics, students can understand their teacher's expectations, perform better and get their self- and peer assessment facilitated.

Then from the 3rd to the 7th week of the course, Padlet application was undertaken. During these five weeks, students' speaking performances were commented on and evaluated by both their teachers and peers with the given rubric. Students were assigned to practice speaking in pairs randomly via Zoom. In addition, students were encouraged to listen to their own recording at home again, then made self-assessments and self-correction depending on the rubric. After that, a post-test selected from the progress test bank of Business English 5 was done on the 8th week of the semester. The teachers used the rubric to grade students' work. Specifically, during the teaching process, from week 3 to week 8, the research team observed and evaluated the effectiveness of the speaking practice using Padlet based on the designed rubric.

Finally, in the last lesson of each class, a survey questionnaire adapted from Chu (2013) and Anwar et al. (2019) was sent to the students through online Google form to get an insight into their attitudes/perceptions towards the Padlet application in speaking lessons as well as how effective it is in learning English speaking thanks to receiving teacher correction and peer correction with the rubric. The questionnaire consists of 4 parts: Personal information (2 questions), Students' attitudes and perceptions on using Padlet in learning speaking skills (2 questions), Students' perceptions on utilizing Padlet in making and receiving feedback on their speaking performance (6 questions), Students' perception on the effectiveness of utilizing Padlet in learning speaking skills (4 questions). Most questions were designed with multiple choice questions and Likert's five-point scale from Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly agree. Of the total participants in this study, there were only 89 respondents.

The results of the tests were analyzed with the help of the T-test tool pack in Excel and displayed in the form of statistics to show students' differences or changes before and after the Padlet application. The collected data from the student questionnaire were analyzed in theme-based approaches like students' perceptions towards employing Padlet in online speaking lessons, use of peer feedback and rubrics for speaking assessment.

Findings and discussion

After data analysis, findings from the student survey questionnaire, class observations, and speaking assessment rubric are relatively similar, specifically as follows.

Students' attitudes and perceptions on using Padlet in learning speaking skills

Overall, almost all students hold positive attitudes towards employing Padlet in learning speaking skills.

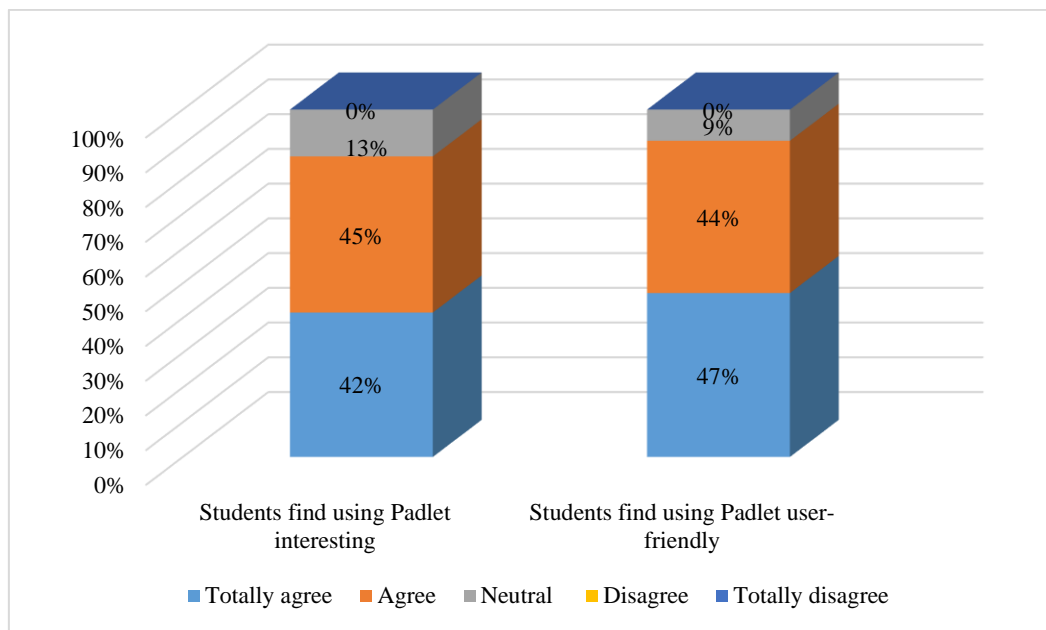


Figure 4. How students find using Padlet

As can be seen from figure 4, approximately 90% of students find using Padlet for speaking practice interesting and user-friendly. Only a small proportion of students have a neutral opinion, and no one does not like this application. This is consistent with the findings from previous studies by Harris et al. (2017) and Bui (2019) that Padlet is an effective tool for improving students' attitudes toward learning. The researchers also found that students were more interested in recording their mono-talks or conversations on Padlet than being asked to present normally, and they could submit their audio as well as give comments on their classmates skillfully just with the teacher's one-time guidance.

Students' perceptions on utilizing Padlet in making and receiving feedback on their speaking performance

Employing Padlet in making and receiving feedback in learning speaking skills has also shown positive results (Figure 5 and Table 1)

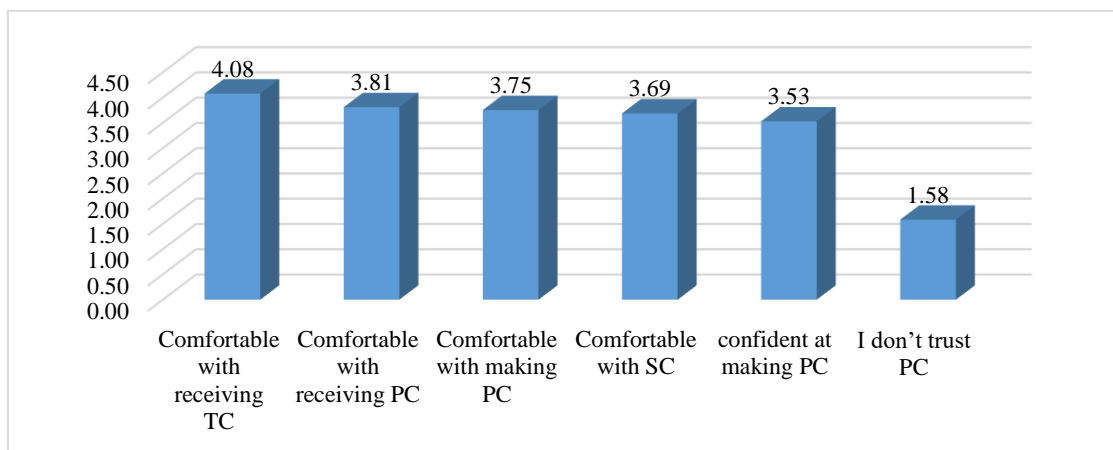


Figure 5. How students perceive feedback

As shown in Figure 5 and Table 1, students highly appreciated using Padlet to give and receive feedback. Getting feedback from teachers (TC) via Padlet sounded most comfortable with them (mean = 4.08). They also felt confident and comfortable with making as well as receiving peer correction (PC) thanks to the support of the digital tool (mean > 3.5). This type of feedback, perhaps because of the given rubric with detailed evaluative criteria, seemed reliable to them. They might be more aware of the standards or criteria for judging their partners’ speaking performance as well as theirs. Therefore, self-correction (SC) was also appealing to them (mean = 3.69).

Table 1. Range of average and scales

Mean	Opinion
1-1.8	Totally disagree
1.8-2.6	Disagree
2.6-3.4	Neutral
3.4-4.2	Agree
4.2-5	Totally Agree

Findings from observations, generally, match questionnaire results. The researchers discovered that not only strong but also so-called weak students were eager to make self-assessments, and give and get peer correction though competent students tended to give feedback with their name while the latter and timid students were more likely to make it anonymous.

Those results are in favor of the opinion of Liu and Carless (2006) and Chorrojprasert (2021) on the benefits of peer assessment in developing students’ confidence and active participation in the lesson.

Students’ perceptions on the effectiveness of applying Padlet in learning speaking skills

Collected data from student survey questionnaires, class observations, and comparison between pre- and post-tests using T-test tools also indicated good results of Padlet exploitation in learning speaking skills. (Figures 6 & 7, Table 2)

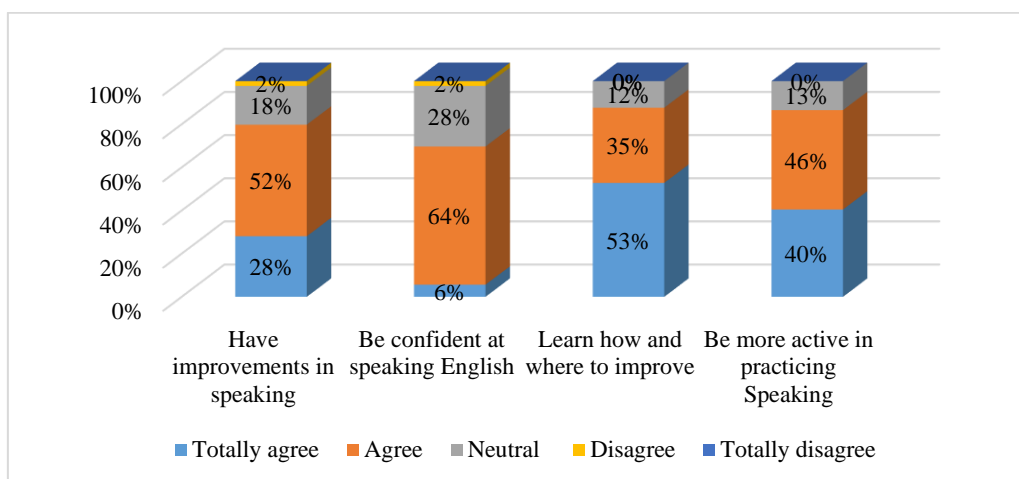


Figure 6. How students perceive the effects

As illustrated from the chart above, 80% of the students who responded to the survey said that there were improvements in their speaking skills; 70% were confident at speaking English; nearly 90% knew how and where they should be improved and felt more proactive in practicing their speaking skills. Only 2% of students denied their progress after using Padlet to learn speaking skills, and none of them said that Padlet failed to help them actively participate in speaking activities or recognize what and how needs to be improved. This is entirely understandable because students provided or got detailed feedback on why and where they need improvement for or from their peers, thanks to the given rubric.

In addition, it was noted from the observations that recording files made giving feedback much easier because it allowed repeated listening and teachers could let students listen and comment on their own recording or their classmates’ or turn on the file for the whole class to listen to. Speaking learning, therefore, became more flexible because it was possible for students to listen to their talks after class and for teachers to respond to their performance even when the lesson was over. In particular, the opportunity for students’ practice and interactions among students as well as between teachers and students increased greatly. Students could actively practice, then record and choose the most satisfying recording to submit. On average, in each lesson, a third of the class, instead of just 1-2 pairs of students as before, got mistake corrections from their teacher. As a result, their speaking ability was significantly improved in terms of a louder voice, greater fluency, better last consonant pronunciation, more mono-talk or conversation completions. Here are some pictures illustrating students’ recordings with their peers’ and teachers ‘comments.

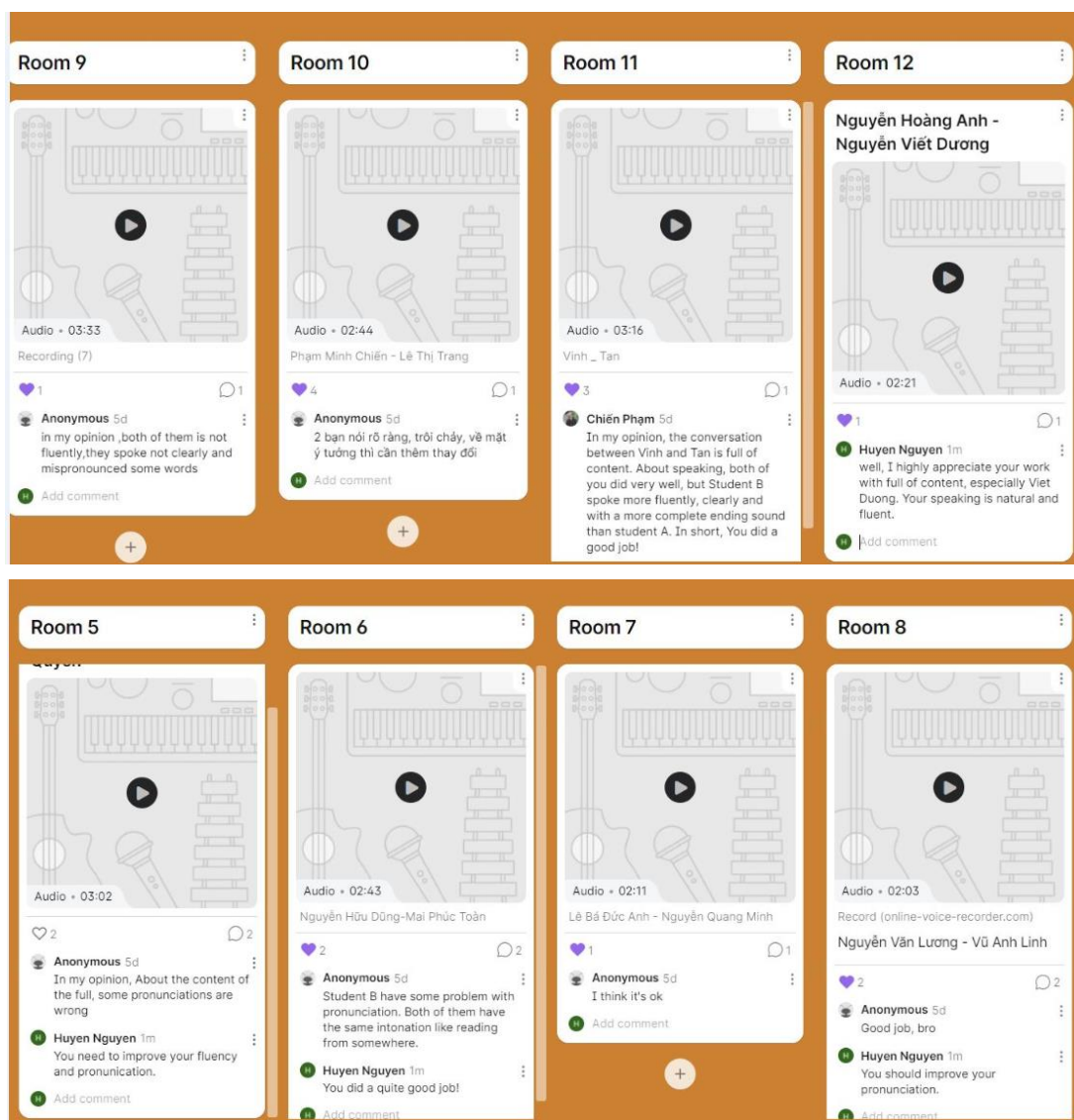


Figure 7. Business English Performance

However, there were also some students failing to complete their recordings within the time allowance. Fortunately, this limitation did not happen to the same students in different lessons and was mainly caused by external/technical factors such as power outages, internet connection quality, wearing headphones while recording, etc. Uploading videos instead of audio was also encountered by the students due to heavy file capacity and more limited recording time. In addition, teachers would face difficulty in creating and managing multiple Padlets for more than 4 classes with Neon subscription tier, which is free of charge and allows 4 active Padlets at a time. Therefore, it was quite difficult for teachers with more than 4 classes to save students' lessons for a long time, and eventually, all teachers managed to run 1 Padlet/class when they used the archive function. Despite such matters, the benefits that Padlet brings to teachers and learners in teaching and learning English in general and speaking skills, in particular, are undeniable as analyzed above.

The effectiveness of Padlet application in learning English speaking skills is not only proven by the findings from student survey questionnaires and class observations but also by the sign of improvement in tests. Week 8 finished with the final observation of 93 students by the teachers, then the average results were compared with those of week 2. The data were analyzed with a t-test tool in an Excel worksheet, with set $\alpha = 0.05$.

Table 2. Summary of T-test comparing week 2 and week 8 scores
Observation of 93. Alpha = 0.05

Marking Criteria	Mean by Week 2	Mean by Week 8	P(T<=t) two-tail	Significant difference (P<0.05)
Addressing questions	3.98	4.01	0.37	no
Richness of ideas	1.28	1.65	0.00	yes
Vocabulary range: Use of appropriate words and phrases to make meaning clear	2.81	3.04	0.00	yes
Grammar range: Control of basic grammar (tenses, subject-verb agreement); use of sentence patterns (simple and complex) and connectors to make meaning clear	3.05	3.08	0.11	no
Fluency	2.12	2.28	0.02	yes
Pronunciation	1.45	1.67	0.00	yes
Self-correction	0.11	0.11	0.57	no
Ability to ask for repetition/clarification/confirmation	0.20	0.22	0.66	no
Maintaining eye-contact	0.49	0.61	0.00	yes
Volume	0.56	0.88	0.00	yes
Total	5.35	5.85	0.00	yes

The data from Table 2 shows that the majority of calculated Ps is smaller than α and is up to what the authors expected. According to this table, despite higher mean scores in terms of answering questions, grammar structure used, self-correction, and questioning the teacher for repetition/clarification, it can be concluded that the practice applied in those classes hardly made changes to these criteria in speaking. However, it demonstrates expected results that there were significant differences in certain aspects of speaking, namely providing more ideas, using relevant vocabulary, fluency and pronunciation, maintaining eye contact, and appropriate volume. Most importantly, the practice contributed to meaningfully higher speaking scores (the total) by week 8. This finding is in the same line with those reported by Harris et al. (2017), and Ismawardani and Sulistyanto (2019) in terms of students' better scores after the Padlet application. Also, it is suggested that there is still room for improvement in the use of varied grammar structures. Therefore, in the next classes, teachers may ask students to focus more on this aspect.

Conclusion

In summary, it can be said that the adoption of Padlet in English-speaking lessons for 3rd-year non-business majors at HaUI was proven efficient and highly appreciated by students with

positive feedback during the Covid-19 pandemic. With this digital tool, not only did students become more interested in English lessons but also achieved significant progress in speaking skills thanks to increasing opportunities for practice and interactions among students and between students and teachers, so it deserves the attention of language teachers in general. Currently, the worst time of the Covid-19 pandemic seems to be over, yet it is necessary to apply educational technology tools in online teaching and learning in case of disadvantaged circumstances like war, natural disasters or the outbreak of some other diseases for quality assurance in online learning as well as continuity in education.

Based on the study results, the researchers have a few suggestions as follows:

- For students: Students need to know how to make full use of Padlet's benefits to practice English skills, and collaboration skills, and promote autonomous learning because Padlet is easily accessible, learners can review themselves, use classmates' posts as references to improve their talks as well as writings.

- For teachers: Teachers need to actively study modern educational approaches through learning communities such as Microsoft Educator Center, Teachthought Professional Development, MIE Vietnam, etc., as well as enhance collaborating and sharing in teaching groups to be able to exploit the features of online Edtech tools fully. In addition, it is important for them to use statistical tools to collect data and feedback from learners to measure and evaluate the effectiveness, thereby making further adjustments and improvements to the quality of online learning. Even in the case of face-to-face or offline classes, peer feedback should be encouraged, and if students have smart devices with internet access availability, Padlet should be taken advantage of as an alternative solution when the time for constructing good English speaking is limited.

- For educational institutions: The researchers hold a belief that if teachers are provided with pro packages for teachers, the quality of online teaching and learning of English in general and speaking skills, in particular, will be more effective. Therefore, financial support for copyrighted applications is very meaningful. In addition, educational institutions and organizations need to offer teachers a number of training courses to improve their knowledge of technology applications or Edtech tools for online education.

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The Impacts of Lyrics Training on Improving Listening Skills for ESL Students

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Abstract

This study found out the impacts of the apps Lyrics Training on learning and teaching Listening skills. A few papers still researched this app and its impact on how students learn the English Language. The qualitative research happened in two weeks with the content analysis method. The researcher collected all highlighted points from the available papers, affecting the learning process. Furthermore, Lyrics Training is a beautiful app because it helps students to achieve their learning goals via music and detect new beautiful songs to add to their playlists. Therefore, it is an ideal tool for teachers to consider applying in their Listening class. After the research process, the researcher will analyze its pros/cons. She also suggested effective ways of learning the Listening skill and teaching this skill with Lyrics Training in class.

Keywords: MALL, listening skill, mobile apps, Lyrics Training, music, ESL learners

Introduction

Background of the study

Nowadays, most Vietnam companies require their candidates to have good English, especially listening skills. As we can see, students now are not only learning to listen to English via their coursebook's CD. They can gain the technics of listening efficiently from different sources like movies, podcasts, and clips in which the contents come from various domains like food and drink, travel, arts and history, etc. However, there is also one more kind of material that we should not skip as it can make students practice listening comfortably. That is the app called "Lyrics Training". According to Mashayekh & Hashemi (2011), music connects people all over the world and lets people learn English in a comfortable atmosphere. It also reduces the pressure and stress in the class. In addition, it may shorten the distance between teachers and students. Listening is a difficult skill. It is a barrier for students to achieve high scores when learning English (Harmer, 2010). In Vietnam, listening has been an underrated skill in most schools. It is because the curriculum of English teaching mainly focused on exam-driven construction (Tham et al., 2019), so they failed in doing the English listening test because they had few chances and types of exercise to practice independently (Thi & Hoang, 2013). Therefore, this app was established to inspire students to learn listening skills when they can practice gap-

filling exercises by listening to some world hits. They can also add the songs they learned to their playlist for listening in their free time.

Statement of the problem

Nowadays, listening skills have become an essential skill that students should pay attention to when they learn a new language. All over the world, there are various books and papers of academic materials from famous publishing houses and universities. However, it will be boring to learn from only one type of material, which contains monotonous daily speeches and conversations. Therefore, changing the form of learning materials into lively songs is necessary for the teachers to make a better learning period.

Aims of the study

This study explores the impacts of the app Lyrics Training on students' listening skills. Simultaneously, it also provides suggestions for applying the app to a Listening class as a good source of materials that can make students enjoy learning this skill.

Significance of the study

Most previous research has shown this app's drawbacks and advantages for learning to speak and listen. However, they still need more solutions to make a practical class with this app, and this research seems like an excellent supplement for the app research.

In particular, this paper suggests that teachers use one app to design efficient and exciting teaching materials for their listening classes. However, students may get bored quickly if they only listen to the academic tapes that their teachers or the university provide. This article hopes to make Lyrics Training the ideal suggestion for teachers and students in teaching and learning listening skills.

Scope of the study

Because of the limitations of time and available materials, the author only focuses on the impacts of the apps Lyrics Training on the English teaching and learning process.

Literature review

Introduction to Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

As we know, many researchers worldwide proposed different definitions of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). According to Miangah & Nezarat (2012), MALL uses gadgets in language learning. This app lets students spend less time in the classroom or in front of computer/laptop screens to learn for many hours per day. Therefore, it seems ideal to conduct two interactions: student-student and student-teacher when students can do the teamwork with their friends in class and also show their opinions about the lesson to the teachers.

Yang (2013) stated that MALL is a small subdivision of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). This method uses advanced mobile applications to develop language skills. Moreover, Kim et al. (2017) showed that the first MALL was used in the 1980s when Twarog and Pereszleyi used the mobile phone to organize the distance learning class with feedback and

support. On the contrary, Valarmathi (2011) emphasized that mobile devices play a vital role in modern education and can create the best learning environment for a language class. This learning method integrates pocket electric dictionaries, personal digital assistants, mobile phones, mp3 players, tablets, and PCs (Zhao, 2005). Nuraeni et al. (2020) described MALL as the latest learning method that combines technologies and traditional learning methods. Finally, Linh & Khuyen (2022) also emphasized that MALL can let students concentrate in the lesson when they must learn via an online platform during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lyrics Training Apps

According to Augusto & García (2012), Lyrics Training is a tool that provides ESL learners with learning sources that stick with learners in real life. To use this app, learners need to prepare a gadget, a good internet connection, and the predisposition to achieve the goals in learning.

Meilinda (2019) stated that Lyrics Training is also an app that uses songs inserted from YouTube. It aims to provide funny ways for students to practice their listening skills in English and other languages. It helps students learn six languages: English, Spanish, German, French, Italian, and Dutch).

Garlaza (2022) also showed that Lyrics Training is a free technological resource for students and teachers. It encourages students to practice listening skills by themselves when they are free.

Garib (2021) listed six outstanding features of the Lyrics Training such as: home-page features, the game-opening page, the game in progress, and the game score.

Home-page features

This page displays some featured music videos, "Try it". The content on this page will be updated frequently every time new songs are released, and all new ones will be put into the playlist called "Latest Lyric". On the other hand, the most popular videos that have been replayed many times will be added to the "Top Lyrics" area, which is located on the bottom-right of the screen, and the viewer can find it by the artist's name and song lyric on the tools.

Game opening page

In this game, learners can choose among thousands of selections of songs. The music video will be shown without the lyrics by pressing the "play" button. On the other hand, when learners press the button "Karaoke", the song with the lyrics will appear. There are three levels for this game. In the beginner, students should complete at least 10% of the blank. Similarly, the intermediate levels will require students to finish with a score of 25%, and the expert mode will be 100%.

Game in progress

When the video plays, students are required to complete the gap-filling exercise. The exercise can only be completed if students meet all of the blanks. There is also a tool for counting the words the users have yet to see. In addition, if students would like to quit the game, they can select "withdraw".

Game score

After finishing, the game will automatically show the scores and the number of words students have missed.

Why choose Lyrics Training

According to Garib (2021), Lyrics Training is a free app that provides learners with 32 different types of music, with two million users in nearly 13 languages. It gives students multiple choices to learn the languages they like via listening to music and doing a task about the song's grammar points. This app can help students improve their listening skills, pronunciation, lexical grammar, and language expressions.

There are a lot of differences that can make this app becomes different in academic life. Azhari & Adnan (2018) showed that in the class, students only learn by listening via scholarly conversation and watching the news on TV passively. They need to join in interactive activities to practice their knowledge. The researcher chose this app because she hoped to let it contribute more attractive materials for students, like some songs and music videos, which can make their learning process enjoyable.

Then thanks to Aldas (2020), this app can improve students' listening and speaking skills via segmental and supra-segmental features. It is a tool that can avoid the monotony in the classes. It is a good representation of the modern English classroom nowadays.

Benefits of music in learning language

According to Lems (2016), watching musical performances can help students learn about Western culture and improve their vocabulary when they hear the content of the songs.

Next, Romé (2014) has shown that music produces a vibration that connects the brain to provide the learning process. It can increase the students' concentration with speaking and listening ability.

Mora (2000) stated that music creates a rich condition for learning listening skills by improving the awareness of rhythms, sounds, stresses, and intonations.

Rosová (2007) also emphasized that songs can teach all skills like speaking, listening, vocabulary, grammar and writing.

Millington (2011) added that songs could be used to teach sentence structure and sentence patterns in the classroom and reinforce the questions that teachers taught.

The effective ways of teaching and learning Listening Skills

English (1979) listed different ways for students and teachers to teach and learn listening skills effectively. Regarding learning methods, students should take about 15 minutes daily to listen to speeches, songs, and conversations in English. Then they should practice repeating the records to learn the new words, which helps do the listening tests when they can deeply save all the latest words in the tape in their brain.

Using the mobile apps is also an ideal way for students and teachers in learning and teaching Listening Skills. According to Luu et al. (2021), mobile learning apps let students to be more

active in their learning process when they can learn whenever and wherever they like. Besides, it also helped students to become more confident in doing Listening test and also in communicating with the foreigners. Then, it corrected the students' mistakes when they did the exercises and made their products look more perfect.

Simultaneously, Hardiah & Bengkulu (2020) also analyzed the teacher's roles in the Listening class. Firstly, the teacher should be a guide and the learning program designer who can design the teaching plan suitable for the students. Secondly, teachers should apply authentic materials like music and movies into their teaching plan to diversify the knowledge they would like to provide to their students.

On the other hand, (Anugerah et al., 2019) also suggests how teachers apply music to their teaching plan. Firstly, they should use laptops, MP3 players, or cassette tapes to serve the teaching purpose. These tools will help the students recognize the different accents of English by hearing the English sounds the native speakers speak. Then, to make this process more convenient, teachers should let students listen to a simple kids' song to motivate their brains to learn.

From another viewpoint, (Mobbs & Cuyul, 2018) have shown two methods teachers can use for applying music to teaching English listening: global listening and Presenting in song. In global listening, this method means using the world's hits which contains different speech pattern of sounds like unstressed endings, articles, inflections and tones, and function words such as prepositions or conjunctions. This method allows students to engage with the songs' meaning and content easily. Then, we can use the technique "Highlighting the fluency and accuracy presented in pieces for students to learn the new grammar rules. In this method, teachers should choose a song with a high level of accuracy in language to introduce to the students.

Related studied

A few articles study the Lyrics Training apps; below are all the papers that the researcher has collected.

The first researcher, Augusto & García (2012), learn about how students use the Lyrics Training app. This research was conducted on the participation of 20 participants (17 beginners and three pre-intermediates) at the Universidad Veracruzana. The experiments contain two rounds with exercises and questionnaires. As a result, the researchers find out that this app helps them to improve their pronunciation and listening skills. Besides, students have a wider variety of songs to choose from (besides the pieces inside the coursebook), making them interested in learning English and listening skills. In contrast, this researcher also felt disappointed that there are some unknown words and spelling ways.

The second one, Angelina (2020) learns about the impacts of strengths and drawbacks of Lyrics Training. It was conducted at the English Language Educational Study Program of Sonata Dharma University in the last four months of 2019. Thirty students join in this experiment. It contains two steps, like the Likert scale and opened-ended questions. Finally, the result showed that there were two advantages and one disadvantage. The first advantage is that it can help students to increase their learning motivation when it reduces their pressure in learning

Listening skills; the second is that they can remember the song's lyrics they like. The disadvantage, it still contains many advertisements, and sometimes it loses the clues.

Then the third researcher, Dharmawan et al. (2019) has done the research with 34 freshmen of Universitas Bandar Lampung, who have been learning English for 12 years but they still confused about listening. So they joined the study with observation from the teachers, questionnaires, and interviews. As a result, most students showed that they were pleased with using this software, which motivated them to learn English. Besides, it makes them concentrate more deeply on the lesson.

The next researcher, (Wahyuni et al., 2019) researched the use of Lyrics Training to improve listening comprehension. First, they examined a group of Indonesian sophomores who have a high level. After finishing the process, students can acquire knowledge of relative pronouns, vocabulary, auxiliary, modal verbs, and listening skills.

Finally, Dixon & King (2016) also researched the technology use of Lyrics Training. They use the content analysis method. Ultimately, they discover this app is better for university students than younger ones. It can also engage their concentration in the lesson well. Next, the way students play this app is also easy, from the path of choosing the app's language and the game's level. It also has various kinds of music that students can choose.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, this paper aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What advantages and disadvantages does the Lyrics Training bring to English-Majored students?
2. How can the teachers effectively apply the Lyrics Training to the English Listening class?

Methods

Design of the Study

This study will use the qualitative method with the content analysis process to save time. The researcher will collect some great points from the available papers related to this content in about one month and analyze them to serve the purpose of this research: learning about the impacts of Lyrics Training and music on improving students' listening skills. Collecting the opinions of the participants is difficult.

Results/Findings and discussion

Benefits of using Lyrics Training

According to Angelina (2020), Lyrics Training can bring students two benefits, including improving students' academic knowledge, especially some factors related to speaking, pronunciation and listening. It includes pronunciation, accent, and amounts of vocabulary. In addition, the game design is also friendly to the players. For example, the music will pause when students give any wrong answer until they get the correct one. Finally, the score will be

saved on the leaderboard to let them compete to improve their skills.

Simultaneously, Dharmawan et al. (2019) listed some more benefits of Lyrics Training, in which some tools will directly impact each skill of the English learning process. In particular, multimedia exercises will help students maintain an excellent ability to use vocabulary. Next, movies and TV shows available on the app will help students improve their communicative competence and use language and grammar more smoothly. Then, it is beneficial when the video stops because it gives students time to think about what they have heard at the last attempts. The final benefit is the social networking tool, in which they can share the game's result with their friends and followers on Facebook and Twitter.

After that, Augusto & García (2012) also showed that the methods of playing music and activities allow them to hear the song they like. From that, they may learn about what the words inside it sound like. It also helps them to improve their pronunciation. Furthermore, there are also a lot of song lyrics along with activities that the students can choose to learn. When they are free to choose the learning content, they will have more interest in their learning.

Setiawan et al. (2019) also showed Lyrics Training could provide students with significant visual stimuli via the combination of illustrations, sounds, graphics, and texts. This app is also a cultural bridge where the students can watch many movies. Some sounds and film subtitles in Lyric Training can affect the fluency of the students' pronunciation skills and glossaries. Besides, the actors' body language will help the students gain knowledge more efficiently.

Disadvantages of Lyrics Training

According to Dizon & Gayed (2021), although Lyrics Training has many advantages, there are still some disadvantages. Firstly, the grade students receive after finishing one activity sometimes does not fit their level (this disadvantages did not always happen, so it did not affect the trustworthy level of the app). Secondly, some users who were at the beginner and pre-intermediate level have shown that some activities prevented them from understanding the lesson clearly. Besides, listening to the songs they do not like also disappoints them.

Then Angelina (2020) also listed two more drawbacks this app brought to the students. Firstly, the pop-up advertisement from the Flash Player, the software that runs this app, appears continuously, which can control the concentration of the students. Next, sometimes the clues are disappeared from the exercises, which causes misunderstanding for students to repeat the English sounds that they only heard once.

After that, Dixon & King (2016) also showed some other disadvantages of this app. First, it uses Flash Player, which is insecure for most internet browsers. Students should turn on the cookies to continue to access the site. Cookies are used for tracking the user's habits to set up the website and collect the data. Then, some MV contains adult content. Therefore, it is sometimes confusing for high school or first-year students to use without the teacher's control.

Using Lyrics Training as a tool of teaching and learning listening skill

Teachers and students can use this app for creating an effective Listening Skill class at the campus. The gap-filling exercises taken from this app can help students practice listening in three stages: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening. This kind of exercise aims to help

students improve the skill of listening for gist, detail, and specific information.

Besides, this app is also suitable for a teacher to design classroom activities. According to Wahyuni et al.(2019), teachers can let students listen to the main grammar points in the songs they like and analyze their meaning. For example, they can hear the song “Somebody that I used to know” by Belgian-Australian singer Gotye, which won a Grammy award in 2013. Then, they find out all the relative clauses “which”, “that”, and “who” in that song and find out each word’s meaning as well as learn the new vocabulary in it.

Simultaneously, Erasmus+ (2022) suggests one more way for teachers and students to apply this app in offline classes; it is a prerequisite. Then, the teacher sends the lyrics paper of that song to students and asks them to listen to it and fill the lyrics into the gaps on the paper. Then the teacher will use the paper without gaps to check students’ answers.

Discussion

In this integration era, listening and speaking skills become essential in teaching and learning a foreign language, especially with a lingua franca like English. However, it will be very boring if the students only learn listening skills with the coursebook and audio CDs. Therefore, the establishment of mobile apps and or mobile learning is really helpful for students to learn Listening skills, both in class or at home (Van et al., 2021) . In particular, Lyrics Training is a new evolution of Learning English, especially in listening skills, when it lets students learn English via music on the mobile phone. As we know, learning English via this app helps students become more interested in the contents of the lessons than the traditional materials.

Nowadays, music has become an essential part of our lives. It joins in many aspects like jobs, entertainment and learning, so avoiding music, especially US-UK music, from learning English is hard (Kuśnierek, 2016). To make the English listening process with music and Lyrics Training apps more effective, teachers should know how to design tasks that can apply this app suitably and efficiently.

In addition, our result has shown all the important pros and cons of Lyrics Training and the ways of applying it in the offline classroom. However, because of the limitations of previous studies about this app and other similar apps, the author could not compare it with the others. Therefore, this article only suggests some activities with this app that the teachers can hold in the traditional class.

Last but not least, most of the previous research has shown the drawbacks and advantages of this app for learning to speak and listen. However, they still lack the solutions to make a practical class with this app, and this research seems like an excellent supplement for the app research.

Conclusion

Lyrics Training has provided students and teachers with many advantages in learning and teaching English, especially listening skills. Therefore, this app is ideal for teachers to prepare

and develop teaching materials. Likewise, Lyrics Training also provides the students with a good source of exercises they can practice at home and entertain with the music simultaneously. The paper also provides teachers and students with suggestions for effectively using it at home and in class.

Finally, the researcher will try hard to get her students' opinions and attitudes toward using this app in the following paper. Unfortunately, in this paper, time limitations have prevented her from doing it.

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Biodata

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Community of Practice: A narrativized Account of a Full-time Multicultural Worker

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Abstract

Working in an international context requires both resilience and flexibility. Every multicultural worker may face distinctive linguistic and cultural challenges but also have precious learning opportunities. This study was motivated by a desire to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of international employees through the voice of a worker currently engaged in transcultural communication. The research participant is a non-native speaker of English but is highly proficient. The participant obtains high-level tertiary qualifications and has worked professionally in her home country. Sarah is Vietnamese and has been working in Australia for years as a research fellow at a university. Data was collected through an elicited narrative, prompted by open-ended questions, and done in written form. The story was coded for transcultural communication topics, and then selected passages were chosen to showcase intriguing ideas. Findings indicated that one could achieve transcultural success in a multicultural working context by conquering transcultural challenges with huge support from his/her Community of Practice (CoP). It is also suggested that workplace CoPs play an important role in proceeding transcultural communication through social interaction between employees in a global organization, which results in transcultural successes.

Keywords: Community of Practice, transcultural communication, transcultural challenges, transcultural successes, narrative inquiry

Introduction

People are probably going to live and work in multicultural settings in this day and age of globalization and widespread migration. Multicultural workers have chances for both personal and professional growth despite obstacles to cross-cultural communication (Gertsen & Soderberg, 2011; Jackson, 2016). As a result, numerous research has been conducted to examine transcultural difficulties in diverse working situations in order to achieve transcultural triumphs (Fountain, 1991; Lillie, Penny, Pat, Julie, & Antonella, 2015; Voigt & Reuter, 2009). Community of Practice (CoP) is thought to aid an overseas worker in achieving these objectives by giving him "access" to the social customs of their target speech community and aiding him in the acculturation process. In reality, CoP may make it simple for international workers to obtain enough learning resources, which makes them feel empowered and fit in well with their host society (Jackson, 2016).

Thus, this paper examines a Vietnamese worker from a diverse background who has spent years working in Australia. The study's second goal is to shed light on the experiences of the worker involved in transcultural communication at the participant's workplace through the analysis of her CoP.

Literature review

Community of Practice

A group with similar interests or occupations naturally forms a community of practice (CoP), according to Lave and Wenger (1991). Members of CoPs share knowledge and experiences in order to grow personally and professionally by learning from one another (Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to Lave and Wenger (1991), a CoP is made up of three essential components: mutual member participation, a jointly negotiated enterprise, and a shared repertory of "words, ways of doing things, gestures, symbols, actions, concepts, routines, and tools" (Wenger, 1998, p.83).

The idea that those gathered in CoP also share "practices, ways of speech, attitudes, and values" was greatly expounded upon by Eckert (2000). The three common traits of a CoP, according to Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002), are a CoP's domain, community, and practice. Domain specifically refers to the interest that is used to provide a common ground for members to forge their sense of group identity. A community is described as a group of people that interact, learn, and form relationships with one another in order to establish commitment and membership. The identity of an individual is partially built by his or her participation in a social context since the learning process is seen through the lens of social participation. Last but not least, practice describes the shared and acquired competencies and common repertoires among members.

In a way, the CoP analysis can show how the emergence of a hybrid identity from the worker's home and host cultures has changed their identity as multicultural workers, which is important for success in cross-cultural communication. Thus, the role of CoP at the workplace is well defined since it offers the interpretive support required to make sense of its legacy. A CoP is a fundamental requirement for the existence of knowledge shared among colleagues. As a result, an epistemological premise of learning is involved in the cultural practice in which any information is present. Learning opportunities are defined by this practice's social structure, power dynamics, and prerequisites for legitimacy (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Especially in the age of globalization, CoP is thought to be a catalyst for knowledge development, and CoP can impede information sharing across boundaries (Matsuo & Aihara, 2022).

Methods

A qualitative method of discourse analysis based on learning about people's lived experiences is known as narrative inquiry. According to Connelly and Cladinin (2006), the gathered narratives are interpreted in a way that records one's own experiences.

The participant is a Vietnamese and non-native speaker of English with highly competent proficiency. Sarah is Vietnamese and turning 34 this year. She was born and raised in Hanoi. After finishing her Bachelor of Arts in English language teacher education, she began her career as an English lecturer at a university in Hanoi (she is still currently employed here). Then, she came to Australia to pursue her Master's in TESOL, which she finished in 2016. She is currently a final-year Ph.D. candidate at an Australian university.

Sarah has rich work experience in teaching and tutoring the English language. She has been a volunteer English teacher for Drop-in Pronunciation (DiP) Program at the City of Darebin Intercultural Center, an academic English advisor, and a peer learning advisor at an Australian university in Melbourne, Victoria.

Data was collected through an elicited narrative, prompted by open-ended questions, and done in written form in English. Since the participant and the author of the paper live in different countries, the participant wished to write down her answer in her free time. In fact, it is crucial to give the participant the confidence she needs to open up and share her tale. The narrative was finally coded for topics pertaining to transcultural dialogue, after which portions were chosen to highlight noteworthy ideas.

Findings and Discussion

After analyzing the participant's data, the information is coded and put in the themes following her life experiences. Sarah's story first begins with the impact of language norms and effects. Then, her transcultural struggles and achievements are critically analyzed. Her professional CoP is finally reviewed and discussed.

Language norms and effect

English is the official language at Sarah's workplace. She uses it to interact with colleagues and managers or do work papers. However, there are no 'fixed' language rules at work as Australia is such a multicultural country, and in most of the related academic workplaces, Australian people value diversity, including linguistic diversity. However, some 'strict requirements' still apply to certain academic situations.

...we were not required to follow any particular forms of English (i.e., American, Australian English). As long as it is academic English, it is acceptable. But I do know that some are quite strict about the use of "ize" "ise" in students' assignments. Students are required to use Australian English (for example, they must use "-ise" instead of "-ize", or "-our" rather than "-or", etc. in their assignments rather than American English.)

Since Sarah works as a volunteer teacher at a multicultural center, she could even use Vietnamese when interacting with Vietnamese refugee seniors. And this was totally accepted by her team members as the use of Vietnamese was very appropriate and useful in this case.

Interestingly, the use of "native" language, such as slang at the Australian workplace, is very much challenging for Sarah to comprehend the cultural references in slang and use them in efficient communication. In fact, one of the biggest language problems she met is understanding Australian slang used by her Australian colleagues though Sarah is well-trained with English

speaking skills at her workplace in Vietnam since one of the primary objectives of most Vietnamese institutions' English language curricula is English speaking ability (Su, Cao, Le, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2021).

I noticed that in PLA team, most of them were local Australians (20 or more staff), and there was only 4 staff that had an international background. Sometimes, when we did not have consultations with students, we normally had chitchats. There were many times that I couldn't follow the conversation, not because I did not understand the language but because the topics or slangs they were talking about were unfamiliar. I might have had the language but lacked the cultural knowledge to decode and join the conversations...

In addition, language significantly affects her work performance even though she is an English lecturer and highly competent in English.

I worked as a peer learning advisor (PLA). As part of the job, I was required to read students' assignments to see if they were on the right track with their work. Students came from different backgrounds and did different majors. I sometimes did not feel confident reading students' assignments from majors completely different from mine, such as law or nursing. Even though the job only required me to look at the big picture or the general structure of the assignments, being unable to fully understand the content due to the language barriers still somehow negatively impacted how I performed my role at work...

Divergence to Transcultural challenges

Sarah has met cultural differences but not really cultural challenges as she claimed due to the differences between her Vietnamese cultural background and Australian cultural norms at her workplace. In reality, Australian society is individualism-oriented and more indulgent than Vietnamese society, which is collectivistic based on Hofstede's cultural dimension model (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). As can be seen from the meanings of Hofstede's cultural indices, Australians are tolerant of individual sentiments and wishes, whereas Vietnamese tend to be reticent, collectivist-oriented, and put their emotion under control.

One example of cultural differences is students' self-discipline at school. In Vietnam, teachers are quite strict about what students are allowed to do or not to do at school. For instance, inappropriate learning postures, eating and drinking misconduct, or frequent lateness can be considered school rule violations (Nguyen, 2021) because those misconducts are believed to negatively impact other peers, while Australian schools seem more tolerant and encourage students to express themselves freely. Besides, how students communicate with teachers must be the most formal to show their respect to those who teach them since teachers are considered 'the second parents' in Vietnamese culture. That is why Sarah feels quite 'strange' in the way Australian professors interact with their students. Interestingly, she has a good outlook despite those "differences."

What impressed me the most about how Australians communicate at work is their openness in sharing their points of view, either to their colleagues or to their supervisors or boss. In Vietnam, it is not that often that staff can be that direct and open in expressing their ideas or viewpoints to their supervisors or managers, as it may be seen as a sign of disrespect. But in Australia, the supervisors or managers do not think themselves in any

way superior to their staff and really encourage you to offer alternative ideas. One supervisor that I had a chance to work with even reiterated multiple times that she also needed to learn from us. This is something very strange to me at first. But I think this kind of openness and equality (if I can call it that way) is important and has made my working experience in Australia pleasant.

However, sometimes Sarah felt confused and questioned while communicating with her Australian colleagues because she had no idea what they meant when they were too 'indirect'.

...sometimes I was confused and questioned because I did not know whether it was what they meant, for they just tried to be nice and tried not to make you feel bad. In Vietnam, it seems that people are more "real" and more direct, telling you what you have done ineffectively and what else you need to do to improve your work efficiency. It is not the case in Australia. I have never been told what to do to improve my work. Everything has two sides. Sometimes I wish "harsher," and more direct comments would be good.

Furthermore, she does not wish to change her accent when speaking English because she defines it as her own identity though sometimes it may cause her difficulties at work.

...my accent seemed to be assimilated into the Australian English accent... I am not inclined to force myself to imitate any (standard) accents... You have your own personal and national identity, which might have been reflected through your use of language...

Obviously, she employed the Divergence strategy for her communicative behaviors as she chose not to adopt the practice to fit in (Giles, 1973). In addition, in the openness and equality Sarah appreciates in the Australian culture, she wished to be more 'direct' or 'real' in particular cases in order to get things done more effectively, but it seems she could not get her expectations met as she may have in Vietnamese working contexts. In addition, the Vietnamese accent in speaking English is seen as Sarah's pride.

Convergence for Transcultural successes

Sarah adjusted herself to being part of her organization. More specifically, she tried to overcome work challenges by studying Australian culture. Sarah compiled a necessity to improve her cultural knowledge to understand slang to join chitchats or conversations among her Australian colleagues and students.

First, I started to invest in learning about Australian cultures a bit more...For example, I remember it was not until the fourth year of my sojourn in Australia that I knew Melbourne Cup is a horse racing competition. I heard of Melbourne Cup over and over again over the years, I did not make any attempt to do any Google search to find out what it is. But since I worked in a team with many Australians, I became more attentive to these local cultural things. Whenever I heard new things, I either asked them for further details or took note of the words and did some study about them later on.

Her efforts also eliminated 'unease' in workplace situations caused by different cultural practices.

Second, I sometimes tried to lead the conversation but initiated the topic of the conversation. I normally talked about things that I know well or things that might be of interest to others, something that is Vietnamese related, etc...

I always prepared well before any meetings. When I worked as a volunteer teacher, we sometimes had staff meetings; before meetings, I often read the meeting agenda, taking notes on the points that I wanted to make, thinking of the language to use...

Be less direct in giving comments. This applies to both the communication with my colleagues and also the students that I worked with...

The aforementioned instances demonstrate how Sarah employed the convergence method to close communication gaps and social and cultural divides with her coworkers to blend in (Gasiorek, Giles, & Soliz, 2014). As a result of her adjustment efforts, which were commended by her coworkers and strengthened by shared understandings, she was able to achieve transcultural success.

I pushed myself to join more social events held by the team. This did make positive changes in my level of confidence and how I performed and communicated with others at work... These social events were great opportunities to build up good and close relationships with other colleagues and to break up the invisible border that I built between myself and my colleagues... Thus, I feel more welcomed...

Professional CoP

Being a participant

Being aware of the disadvantages of language incapacity and foreign background, she was motivated by more learning opportunities and personal development to perform better at work. Thus, she experienced low work morale when her expectations were not fulfilled.

...I was quite ignorant about Australian things that happened around me, just finish work and go home...

Furthermore, a strong desire to be seen as a member of her organization sometimes affected her feelings, resulting in her poor networking at work.

... I feel like an outsider because I could not follow their conversations ... their lifestyle...

Being a core member

Sarah has benefited from being a core member of her community. Firstly, due to the acceptance of cultural diversity at Sarah's institution, she was facilitated in her acculturation and assisted in improving her weakest point – her language capacity.

...In addition, there was always a peer learning leader (PLL) to seek help. They were always very supportive. If I felt it hard to conduct and consult, I could always refer the student to the PLL or other PLAs with expertise in that field. So, I think I relied on the other team members in these cases.

The accommodating attitudes of her coworkers and manager also let her feel like a member of the business. They specifically showed her that they cared for her and welcomed her. She

noticed good alterations in her work attitude over time. That emphasizes how there is a big difference between being a participant and becoming a core member. Therefore, there is a huge difference in the way Sarah defined her Australian colleagues, which is 'we' now but not 'they' like before.

...We were suggested to use the sandwich feedback method, with the three-step procedure to help us with providing feedback, which makes getting things done much more easily...

And Sarah even accepted to adjust her accent to be more easily understood in communication unlike resisting that like before.

...when you are part of a workplace community, sounding more like the majority might be a plus to make you feel at ease.

As a result, she grew a strong commitment and attachment to the aspects of work.

...For me, after an end-of-the-year hang out with the team, I felt like I became a different person and felt more comfortable talking to other team members...I felt I am like one of them. We are making an effort every day for better work.

An outstanding example of the change in her mindset toward the workplace was self-correcting misunderstandings in the past.

...And over time, I gradually reset my mindset, reminding myself that Australians are very friendly and very willing to talk and small talk serves an important purpose - it helps build deeper relationships with other people.

She enthusiastically participated in CoP, including small talks. Her acceptance of this signifies her membership in this CoP for professionals (Holmes & Woodhams, 2013).

...It was getting better and better. I sometimes start a small talk by giving my colleagues compliments /'kɒmplɪmənt/, things like, "I was really impressed with your ideas on this and that ...

These compliments do not need to be work-related all the time. They can be something less formal like "I like your jacket. Where did you get it?" I believe this will make your colleagues feel closer to you because you are asking something or talking about something that matters to them. And you can build up a good relationships with others at the workplace.

Notably, Sarah now confessed her affection for her university and people like her at work as well.

I love this workplace...I do not know what they really think about me, but I feel they like me at work.

That the love she has for her work has paid off illuminates how the role of CoP at the workplace helps its workers develop both personally and professionally to succeed in an international working context. Additionally, workplace CoPs are essential for advancing transcultural communication through fostering social interactions among employees. One may deliberately

modify themselves in order to become a "core member" position within a company when they are completely content and motivated at work.

Conclusion

Findings from Sarah's narrative show that her workplace has worked actively to establish a CoP where transcultural learning can occur through socialization and where cultural diversity is appreciated. It is important to note that not all transcultural success tales involve an easy transition from the start to the finish of the acculturation process. Sarah's experience demonstrates how a multicultural worker with a foreign background may overcome transcultural problems with her own efforts and a lot of assistance from others to succeed in an international working situation.

Additionally, narrative inquiry has shown to be a successful method for exploring people's life stories and giving them meaning. In fact, Sarah's story can reveal the nature and significance of multicultural working experiences and highlight a variety of variables that affect how well people function in multicultural settings.

For more insightful suggestions based on the real-world experiences of global employees, additional and similar studies are welcomed. The possibilities of participant effects, such as participant personality (Sarah perceives herself as an introvert), and how participants present their data, should be taken into consideration by researchers. As participants might not remember and reveal their tales accurately, Jackson (2016) asserts that participants' disclosure decisions and memory effects should also be taken into consideration. Besides, the conventional knowledge of CoPs is being challenged by current discussions on the future of work and new methodological advancements, which also present research opportunities and novel conceptual fusions. It is also highlighted that new theories and conceptualizations may emerge through the interaction of the lenses, the CoP theory, and related literature (Nicolini, Pyrko, Omidvar, & Spanellis, 2022).

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Biodata

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Perceptions and Attitudes towards Blended Learning for English Courses: A Case Study of English-majored Students at Thu Dau Mot University

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Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic, blended learning (BL) has become the new normal for higher education. This study conducts a detailed review of the literature and benefits of BL in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, exploring the perceptions of English-majored students towards BL courses in English courses at Thu Dau Mot University and analyzing the negative attitudes towards BL from the learners' viewpoints. The respondents of this study are 165 undergraduate students majoring in English at Thu Dau Mot University's Faculty of Foreign Languages. The data are collected using a questionnaire to assess students' opinions and unfavorable attitudes towards BL in two principal domains. The writers use both statistical and content analyses to get a deeper comprehension of students' responses. The findings imply that students appreciate the convenience and flexibility of BL, which is more beneficial than one direction delivering knowledge as conventional learning or virtual learning. The results also indicate the improvement of students' English language abilities regarding BL mode in English courses. In the other domain, there are also unfavorable attitudes, mainly about cheating, a lack of interaction between lecturers and learners, and slow internet connection.

Keywords: blended learning, students' perceptions, students' attitudes

Introduction

When people all over the world are banding together to fight against COVID-19, the educational system in Vietnam is in the process of experiencing a huge transition. People involved in education are attempting to find a way to deal with this newly established scenario. As a part of this process, it has become essential to carry out social experiments to discover a new adaptation to the current education situation, which combines offline and online approaches to teaching and learning.

Vietnam's educational system must conform to official guidelines in light of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. On the contrary, challenges may arise from integrating digital and in-person learning in the classroom. Blended learning, also known as hybrid learning, is a teaching method that combines face-to-face instruction with digital resources. BL is both a necessity and a tendency for teachers and students in Vietnam, especially in Thu Dau Mot City, as they adapt

to the new normal phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend calls for the expansion of digital pedagogical media and tools, including online platforms and other digital resources.

Despite being campus-oriented, higher education institutions are attempting to integrate BL into conventional course delivery methods to better prepare both their students and the institution for the future trend in education. This is due to the fact that education is becoming an all-pervasive service that can be provided at any time and from any location via the global network (Bonk, 2009 & McCradie, 2003)

Support and evaluation of the process quality have been ongoing but have been limited to the viewpoints of the institution, the instructors, and the support services. In the case of Thu Dau Mot University's case, many complaint letters from English-majored students expressed their negative attitude towards BL. In line with the current situation, the writers carried out the research on students' viewpoints, assuming that it is crucial to constantly and thoroughly assess learner satisfaction to ensure BL's success, practicality, and profitability. Understanding students' feelings about the learning approach are essential to creating a thriving hybrid learning environment.

The purpose of this paper is to: 1) investigate perceptions and attitudes of English-majored students towards English coursed delivered by the BL approach and 2) identify the negative emotions of students towards BL approaches.

The significance of the study comes from the desire that the writers hope to help students and lecturers assess and improve the teaching-learning procedure effectively by recognizing students' perceptions and attitudes regarding BL. Learner satisfaction is defined as the number of students who have a favorable attitude toward the various advantages of BL settings. Following Willging and Johnson (2009), it is the most critical factor in deciding whether or not an online course is successful. As shown by Chang and Fisher (2003), ensuring that students are pleased with the experience is one of the most influential components of implementing a BL program since it is one of the most crucial features of hybrid learning. In accordance with a body of academic research, the degree to which students feel satisfied with their educational experiences has a substantial bearing on their desire to learn, their level of involvement in their coursework, as well as their level of overall productivity and academic achievement (Wickersham & McGee, 2008).

The combination of traditional and virtual teaching and learning is considered to bring many benefits. In Ghazizadeh and Fatemipour's (2017) view, the results indicate that BL can assist EFL students in enhancing their reading abilities. This is due to the fact that BL gives EFL students the opportunity to take advantage of English language instruction whenever and wherever it is most convenient for them, without having to sacrifice access to their teacher's guidance or time spent in a conventional classroom setting. In line with the results, there is a notable difference between the performance of students in conventional classrooms and those in mixed learning environments, with the latter having a more beneficial effect.

As claimed by Rahim (2019), the conclusions from his research indicate that a BL strategy that mixes online and conventional forms of instruction may be used to its full potential in improving EFL programs. To improve students' academic performance, it encourages EFL

students to adopt more effective language-learning strategies by giving them a platform for adaptable learning. Besides, it emphasized the usefulness of a combined approach to teaching EFL by demonstrating how its use improves students' abilities to communicate with one another and use the language. The study also revealed the perspectives of EFL students and educators on the BL strategy, extending support for its effective implementation.

Literature review

Definition of blended learning

A blended learning system is a hybrid approach to education that combines traditional classroom learning with online resources, as described by Bonk and Graham (2012). BL systems are a pedagogical approach that encourages students to study in an interactive and collaborative context, as well as at their own pace and in their own time.

As defined by Williams, Bland, and Christie (2008), BL combines in-person classroom teaching with online, asynchronous resources. Additionally, it is a method of education that enables students, teachers, and materials to be located in multiple places simultaneously. One of the main features of distributive learning is that it considers that each student has their own specific needs. As a result, the classroom has been designed to maximize students' preferred learning styles and environments.

Ju and Mei (2018) defined BL, in its broader context, as the process of mixing conventional in-class education with the use of digital tools, techniques, and content. In a blended course, students use online tools like virtual environments for learning and online classrooms to interact with their instructors and classmates, watch lectures, study assigned materials, submit questions, and finish their work. This allows students to have more time for class discussions, hands-on activities, and traditional lecture formats in more conventional classroom environments. Mixed learning, hybrid learning, and integrated learning are all terms that relate to the same pedagogical strategy. BL is any formal education program incorporating at least some online learning where the student has some control over their education's pace, schedule, and/or location. The classroom is not the only possible location for BL. Some of the pupils' instructional activities include using the Internet. Online learning resources and classes are a more radical departure from traditional classroom education than online courses.

According to a review of the relevant literature by Bliuc, Goodyear, and Ellis (2007), BL is defined as a mix of co-present and technologically-mediated interactions between students, instructors, and learning materials." This definition proposed by the authors is bridging the gap between the works of literature on BL and research on methodology. Garrison and Kanuka (2004) noted that the virtually unlimited designing and conducting of mixed methods and suitability to many contexts make defining BL challenging. They settled on an experiential focus, citing "integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences" as their definition. In other words, BL is mixing conventional classroom-based face-to-face instruction with online instruction in a virtual environment.

As specified by Pappas (2018), BL is an approach that combines traditional techniques of

language teaching and learning. In actuality, it is a combination of traditional face-to-face education with technological methodologies that, to provide vast quantities of online educational resources, benefits both instructors and students. Since the 1980s, BL has been extensively used by schools and universities as an additional component of education.

The term 'blended learning' to Šafranĵ (2013) refers to the mixing of many educational environments. Depending on the statement's context, it may have a range of distinct meanings. Blended learning allows students and educators to take advantage of a possibly more productive setting. This kind of education may combine conventional in-person training with current computer-based learning.

Blended learning in English as a foreign language education

Blended learning as a platform is a demanding teaching and learning module for the modern classroom, which enhances learning at any time and place. Due to the limited time available during the school week, Ju and Mei (2018) argue that technology-based education methods enable lifelong education. In light of this, the BL approach allows English as a Second Language (ESL) educators to make the most of this window of opportunity by facilitating students' in-class and extracurricular language development.

Rahim (2019) stated that BL and the adaptable learning platform provide a demanding educational tool for the modern classroom. Due to the increasing demands put on education on a worldwide basis, it also has the potential to serve as a vital technique for learning a foreign language. Another benefit is the ability to use one's cognitive skills in a more natural context for practicing a language.

In Tosun's (2015) journal article, it is of great importance to language instructors throughout the globe since many modern universities are employing BL as an additional way of increasing students' competence in learning English. Therefore, there has been a lot of consideration about using a BL strategy to instruct students to acquire a second language.

Regarding the individual differences between learners and classroom instructions, Lightbown and Spada (2021) believe that teachers are in a position to assist students in developing a greater degree of flexibility in their methods for approaching the process of language acquisition by assisting students in expanding their repertoire of learning strategies. Utilizing a number of teaching materials, students have the chance to practice the language outside of the classroom. These assets include films, blogs, online forums, and digital resources.

As stated by Bielawska (2012), the use of BL in teaching and learning English is an effort to assist students in acquiring knowledge more expediently. Students may learn more contextually due to the use of BL in the English classroom. This is due to the fact that content found on the Internet may aid students in understanding how native speakers of the language use it in daily scenarios. Bielawska (2012) notes that the implementation of BL may improve students' test results, which shows an increase in learning English vocabulary.

Nowadays, students may benefit most from adopting a BL approach, in which they use both online and in-person resources while also receiving teacher assistance, as Throne (2003) suggested. Modern students may find success with a blended approach to higher education.

On the contrary, the inclusion of technology into English teaching and learning, as Rachman et al. (2021) continues to show a variety of shortcomings, each of which has the potential to impede teachers' attempts to give students a satisfactory and efficient education. In order to compensate for the limitations of either conventional classroom instruction or online teaching, several educational institutions are using hybrid teaching approaches that mix traditional classroom instruction with online learning.

Perceptions and attitudes of students toward blended learning

In the general education context

Following the research conducted by Ahmad (2008), students have an optimistic opinion of blended education. Consequently, using technology to motivate and inspire students to study, BL may be used as an alternative method in mathematics education. It is recommended that the materials be released online and that larger-scale research be done to confirm the encouraging results.

Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) used a blended approach to investigate the efficacy of three distinct online writing activities in the context of formal university education. For the purpose of this investigation, triangulation was accomplished using a combination of surveys, interviews, and text analysis. The results of the study showed that students had good impressions of the blended course format that included digital writing. Wikis were seen as the most effective form of online writing, followed by blogs and forums. The ability to differentiate between distinct kinds of English writing was shown through qualitative text analysis of forum and wiki writings.

The study by Zhu, Au, and Yates (2013) was to examine the factors that influence initial attitudes about online learning and subsequent changes in those views among a cohort of college students enrolled in a blended course. At the completion of the course, the students' opinions about online education were demonstrated to have greatly improved. Students who successfully finish the course may get a firmer grasp of the subject matter, acquire proficiency with a range of online learning tools, and be better equipped to apply their knowledge in the classroom. One of social psychology's most reliably replicated results is that mere exposure may alter people's perspectives for the better.

Studies conducted by Al-Shaer (2013) and Lin, Tseng, and Chiang (2016) showed similar conclusions that implementing the BL technique in the activities taking place in the classroom has a significant positive impact on the attitudes that students have toward this approach to education.

In the study of Maio and Haddock (2018), strong attitudes may influence performance, and positive attitudes toward learning can help with the optimal application of instructional practices. The attitude of students concerning online education is a crucial element of the learning environment afforded by web-based learning technology. What defines a person's attitude toward an attitude object is that person's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors with respect to the object.

Almasaeid (2014) discovered that instructing students in science via the use of a BL approach

had a positive impact not only on the student's attainment abilities but also on their attitudes. The study showed a high level of overall performance after the installation of the BL approach was completed, which was proven on the achievement test.

In the EFL context

A study was carried out by Banditvilai (2016) at an Asian institution to investigate the usage of combined learning to improve English abilities and the level of self-studying experienced by English language learners. This research aimed to investigate students' perspectives on BL in the context of English language instruction. In order to gather information for his study, the researcher relied on e-lessons, a questionnaire, and accomplishment exams. Following the results of the research, enhancing language abilities in language learners may be accomplished via an online instructional method coordinated with traditional classroom training. Additionally, it was shown that mixed learning might be used successfully to boost learners' independent understanding and motivation levels. The findings of the study indicate that BL is an important idea that can be used to attain educational objectives more effectively. The fact that learners may study and review the language whenever and wherever they wish, as Banditvilai pointed out, makes the BL method better for students attempting to acquire a language.

Liu (2013) investigated the efficacy of BL in an English composition class taught at a prestigious school in Beijing, China. The study aimed to investigate some facets of BL, including course organization, material delivery, student interaction, and teacher evaluation. Students valued the use of BL strategies due to their many benefits, which include encouraging students to take responsibility for their own education, fostering greater collaboration among classmates, reducing students' fear of public speaking, and enhancing students' ability to write effectively for academic purposes. Teacher observation and feedback indicated that students valued using BL strategies due to these benefits. Since BL involves in-person and online training for students of foreign languages, the author concluded that BL is more motivating and encouraging for EFL students.

Yoon and Lee (2010) analyzed how students felt about BL and its usefulness as an instructional procedure in an ESL writing class. The data suggests that students had a favorable opinion of the BL technique used in second-language writing courses. This kind of education is booming, inspirational, and engaging among most pupils. Students' writing skills improved due to exposure to BL methodologies. Using a mixed approach, the researchers discovered that students were more involved and that it aided in the development of essential abilities for learning a foreign language, such as independence, responsibility, and collaboration.

Zhang and Zhu (2018) found that students in BL environments scored more in English courses than in traditional settings. In particular, the researchers compared the efficacy of BL to conventional approaches used in China to teach English as a second language. Compared to students taught in a face-to-face setting, BL students demonstrated higher academic accomplishments in ESL classes. BL has a favorable effect on the learning outcomes of students.

Following Akbarov, Gönen, and Aydoan's (2018) findings, most EFL students choose BL over conventional English instruction since it increases their willingness to study, enhancing the

learning process. The data also indicated that the participants considered the utilization of BL contributed to their English proficiency level increasing. Therefore, the researchers conclude that BL is an effective learning mode that may be utilized to improve the teaching and learning process as well as students' attitudes in an EFL environment.

In a study about BL, Ja'ashan (2015) concludes one of the drawbacks of BL is that it requires a considerable amount of time to plan and carry out English courses using the BL approach. The instructors are required to apply two distinct pedagogical approaches and learning activities: face-to-face and online. In his conclusion, the participants reported that BL is more suitable than in-person instruction and increases students' desire to study, but the study also reflects the students' negative impressions in some points as a waste of time, easy cheating, and social isolation...etc.

On the other hand, several studies have revealed that students experience worry and perplexity while dealing with the BL model in English classes (Burgess, 2008; Baharun & Porter, 2009).

The studies cited above suggest that students learning a foreign language could benefit from a more integrated educational strategy. The majority of English language learners have a favorable impression of the BL approach when it is used to instruct them in the English language. These positive perspectives originate from a wide variety of sources, including encouraging children to engage in self-directed learning and strengthening their linguistic talents in both sociable and exciting settings.

Research Questions

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

- (1) What are students' perceptions of blended learning for English courses?
- (2) What are students' negative attitudes toward blended learning for English courses?

Methods

BL approach has been adopted and implemented at Thu Dau Mot University since 2015, but it has not been working effectively in the Faculty of Foreign Languages when it comes to complaints from English-majored students.

Participants

The study was conducted at Thu Dau Mot University, Faculty of Foreign Languages, English major. One hundred and sixty-five students majoring in English from a cohort of 500 first-year students, who enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2021/2022, joined this study. All the participants have spent one semester experiencing the BL approach with different subjects, which is the first semester in the academic year 2021/2022.

Design of the Study

The research's emphasis is on students' perceptions and attitudes toward the usage of BL in English classes, and the mixed method is used to explore these attitudes. The mixed technique developed by Malik and Hamid (2014) has been modified to include both quantitative and

qualitative approaches to the data gathering and analysis processes. The research made use of a psychometric response scale called the Likert scale to determine whether respondents agreed or disagreed with a particular statement included in the questionnaire. The researchers will combine the Likert scale questionnaire, which was collected and evaluated objectively, with the usage of interviews, which were gathered and analyzed subjectively. The data received from the questionnaire may be validated with the use of an interview that is derived from Rachman (2015), Lee (1997), and Susikaran (2013). The use of interviews was also intended to achieve the goal of obtaining more information, which may also be obtained via the use of questionnaires (Harris & Brown, 2009).

The perspectives of students on BL are often studied using questionnaires, a typical kind of research instrument (Akkoyunlu & Soyulu, 2008; Kember, McNaught, Chong, Lam & Cheng, 2010; Blankson & Kyei-Blankson, 2008). The questionnaires included statements based on a closed-ended Likert scale (quantitative data). The results of the questionnaire received a score of five on the Likert scale (Strongly Agree- Agree- Undecided- Disagree- Strongly Disagree). Two sets of questionnaires were developed after conducting an in-depth analysis of students' perceptions and their negative emotions toward English courses delivered by BL approaches, which are adapted from Ja'ashan's (2015) study, as follows:

- Items (1-10) allow for the identification of the perceptions held by the students on the BL for English courses.
- Items (11-21) highlight students' negative attitudes about BL in relation to the English courses they are enrolled in.

Interviews using a semi-structured format were used to acquire qualitative data for the qualitative approach. Three open-ended questions are provided to study students' perspectives on BL in English courses: 1) Do you prefer BL to one-way learning (face-to-face or online learning)? 2) What is the most favorable perception regarding BL, in your opinion? 3) Do you have any suggestions to improve the BL experience? Adapting from Ja'ashan's (2015) study, the semi-structured interview is employed because it supports the sets of questionnaires by its qualitative results and suggests more recommendations that improve BL courses in the future. The interview results will be utilized as supporting reasons for the questionnaire results. Thus they will be included in the findings/results section in response to the study questions.

Data collection

In order to gather data from students located in various regions, an online questionnaire in English only was employed, and students were given the option to administer it to themselves. It was suitable for the scope of the study since the project needed to be completed in a limited period of time (about four months) and by a research team member (with supervisor support).

Clarifications were provided to students who filled out the questionnaire; questionnaires were filled out during English classes at Thu Dau Mot University that used the BL technique for sophomores majoring in English and enrolled in BL classes. To arrive at a final result and draw appropriate conclusions, the findings of the questionnaire were analyzed using the SPSS software.

From Chisnall's (1997) viewpoint, the non-response is a significant limitation of a research study; therefore, to minimize a non-response rate, the researchers were available when disseminating to the sample, and the students filled out the online questionnaire. This was done in order to reduce the non-response rate.

After obtaining the sample's questionnaire data, the results were statistically analyzed using SPSS version 20; reliability analysis and mean and standard deviation estimates were included in the statistical analysis.

The researchers randomly selected five individuals from the pool of 165 respondents who had previously shared their opinions in the interview sections that used the English language only. Due to the fact that several participants who joined the interview sections had their own personal business and certain scheduling difficulties, they were each questioned separately regarding the three interview questions at a time that was convenient for them. The researchers assured the respondents that their responses would not be used in any way other than for the purpose of the study, and they made it very apparent that the data would not be used for any other reason. Additionally, to efficiently conduct the finding outcomes during the interview, the researchers recorded the meeting to examine it afterward with the participants' agreement. After completing the interview, the researchers re-listened to the audio, input the data into Microsoft Excel, and then began to analyze and contrast the various participants' comments.

Validity and reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire has been determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The value of this questionnaire uses the calculation tool named Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 20 (SPSS 20). The reliability value of the questionnaire employed in this research varied from .787 to .791, suggesting that the instrument for collecting data is very trustworthy and reliable. The figures can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The Cronbach's Alpha for Each Category of the Questionnaire

Categories	Cronbach's Alpha	No of items
1. Students' perceptions of blended learning	.787	10
2. Students' negative attitudes toward blended learning	.791	11

Several scientific processes are described as follows:

- + Prepare the study's instrument with the aid of prior research.
- + Freshmen registering for the second semester of 2021/2022 were gathered.
- + The online questionnaire was delivered to students during class time and afterward collected.
- + Questionnaire data were gathered and evaluated for accuracy and clarity.
- + SPSS 20 was used to analyze the questionnaire responses for the final result and findings.

Results and discussion

Results from the questionnaires

Results from the questionnaires are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Highlights students' perception of BL for English courses.

Statements	SDA N	%	D N	%	NS N	%	A N	%	SA N	%	Mean
1. The combination of online and conventional classroom learning is more successful than delivering knowledge in one direction only	12	7	24	15	24	15	51	31	54	33	3.67
2. Blended learning incorporates dynamic, hands-on exercises	12	7	30	18	57	35	45	27	21	13	3.20
3. Blended learning improves my English language abilities	9	5	18	11	48	29	54	33	36	22	3.55
4. Blended learning allows me to be more engaged in the learning process	9	5	30	18	48	29	66	40	12	7	3.25
5. Blended learning involves collaborative participation and effort	27	16	42	25	48	29	36	22	12	7	2.78
6. Blended learning allows me to organize my study time effectively	15	9	30	18	36	22	54	33	30	18	3.33
7. Blended learning triggers my autonomous learning	15	9	30	18	45	27	57	35	18	11	3.20
8. Blended learning helps me more accessible to understand the materials	15	9	27	16	54	33	48	29	21	13	3.20
9. I can be motivated in English blended learning	21	13	27	16	42	25	51	31	24	15	3.18
10. I have fun and enjoy learning both online and offline	2	15	6	4	39	24	51	31	45	27	3.53

Question 1: 18 (33%) of the respondent marked (strongly agree) that combining online and traditional classroom learning works better than giving information in only one direction. Besides, some of them, around 17 (31%), agreed with the statement, but the percentages of those who were unsure and those who disagreed were equal at 8 (15%). With the descriptive statistics, the mean of this item was 3.67, which accounted for the highest one in the domain of students' perceptions of BL.

Question 2: The respondents of 15 (27%) agreed that BL includes active and hands-on exercises, and others (13%) strongly agreed with the statement. The majority of respondents, 19 (35%), were undecided, while 4 (7%) chose strongly disagree. The mean is (3.20) of BL incorporates practical, real-world experiences.

Question 3: The respondents 16 (29%) were undecided that their English language skills are enhanced via BL. Some respondents, 18 (33%), strongly agreed, while the minority of respondents, 3 (5%), strongly disagreed with the statement. The total mean of this item is (3.55) of students' English language skills benefit from BL, which ranked second highest.

Question 4: Almost half of the respondents, 22 (40%), agreed with the opinion that BL increases student engagement in the learning process, while a small percentage of 4 (7%) respondents strongly agreed with that. Furthermore, several respondents, 10 (18%), disagreed, but 16 (29%) of others were undecided about the statement. The mean of this item is (3.25).

Question 5: The highest percentage of the strongly disagree section in the domain of students' perceptions of BL is 9 (16%) of the opinion that BL requires joint effort and engagement. Some respondents, 14 (25%), reported disagreeing, whereas others, 12 (22%), did agree with the statement. The total mean of this item BL requires group work and participation is (2.78), which is the least significant.

Question 6: One-third of the respondents, 18 (33%), agreed with the view that BL helps students make good use of their study time, while some 10 (18%) disagreed with that. Additionally, 12 (22%) of the respondents were undecided. The mean of this item is (3.33)

Question 7: The statistics of those who strongly agreed and agreed with the statement that BL stimulates my independent study were 6 (11%) and 19 (35%), respectively. By contrast, the percentages of those who strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement were 5 (9%) and 10 (18%) in that sequence. The total mean of this item is (3.20), which is the same as the item that BL incorporates dynamic, hands-on exercises

Question 8: In the view that BL makes it easier for students to comprehend the subject, one-third of respondents, 18 (33%), were undecided. Some of the respondents, 7 (13%), chose the strongly agree section, whereas others, 5 (9%), marked the strongly disagree one. The mean of this item that BL makes materials more accessible is (3.20), which shares the same value as the other two items that are in questions 2 and 7.

Question 9: In terms of that motivation for English-language BL is within students' reach, the proportions of those who strongly agreed and agreed with the above statement were 8 (15%) and 17 (31%) in that order, while the percentages of those who strongly disagreed and disagreed with the view were 7 (13%) and 9 (16%) respectively. The total mean of this item is (3.18)

Question 10: The highest proportion of the strongly agree section in the domain of students' perceptions of BL is 15 (27%) of the statement that both online and offline, students do have fun and enjoy learning, whereas the mildest ratio of the disagree option in the same domain is 2 (4%) of the same view. 13 (24%) of the respondents were undecided. The mean of this section is (3.53) of the view that students like learning both in-person and online.

Table 3. Highlights students' negative attitudes about BL in relation to the English courses.

Statements	SDA N	%	D N	%	NS N	%	A N	%	SA N	%	Mean
11. Blended learning is challenged by the frustratingly slow internet access	3	2	18	11	54	33	60	36	30	18	3.58
12. I do not have an appropriate study space	18	11	39	24	60	36	45	27	3	2	2.85
13. A lack of learning facilities is an issue with blended learning (online learning devices are not guaranteed)	9	5	15	9	60	36	69	42	12	7	3.36
14. Lecturers have little/no interaction with students	9	5	24	15	39	24	54	33	39	24	3.55
15. Blended learning increases my demand for in-person encounters	18	11	36	22	63	38	42	25	6	4	2.89
16. Students' abilities to use information technology means and equipment are still inadequate	6	4	30	18	54	33	54	33	21	13	3.33
17. Blended learning may lead to cheating and other unethical behaviors among students	3	2	6	4	36	22	60	36	60	36	4.02
18. Blended learning materials lack organization	12	7	15	9	60	36	54	33	24	15	3.38
19. Students are frustrated and lack enthusiasm for blended learning	12	7	30	18	72	44	42	25	9	5	3.04
20. Less is learned in blended learning classes than in traditional classrooms	21	13	33	20	81	49	24	15	6	4	2.76
21. Blended learning makes me socially isolated	24	15	36	22	57	35	30	18	18	11	2.89

Question 11: In the view that BL is affected by infuriatingly sluggish internet connectivity, the figures of respondents who agreed and disagreed with the view were 20 (36%) and 6 (11%), respectively. Only 1 (2%) respondent strongly disagreed, whereas the other 10 (18%) respondents strongly agreed with the opinion. The total mean of this item is (3.58), which is considered the second highest.

Question 12: 1 (2%) of the respondents strongly agreed, while 6 (11%) strongly disagreed with the statement that students don't have a suitable study area. The majority of respondents, 20

(36%), were undecided. (2.85) is the total mean of this section.

Question 13: Regarding the domain of students' perceptions of BL, the most remarkable statistic in the agree section is 23 (42%) of the view that a shortage of learning resources is a problem with BL (online learning devices are not guaranteed). Furthermore, some respondents, 20 (36%), were undecided about the statement. The mean of this section is (3.36).

Question 14: In the opinion that instructors have little or no engagement with learners, the proportion of respondents who strongly agreed and were undecided about the view shared the same value at 13 (24%), while the majority of respondents, 18 (33%), agreed with the view. (3.55) is this item's total mean, which is also one of the highest.

Question 15: In the statement that BL boosts students' desire for face-to-face interactions, the percentage of respondents who disagreed was twice as noticeable as that of those who strongly disagreed, with 12 (22%) and 6 (11%) in that sequence. Besides, a small number of respondents, 2 (4%), strongly agreed with the view, while a large number of others, 21 (38%), were undecided. The mean of this section is (2.89).

Question 16: The data of respondents who were undecided and who agreed were equal at 18 (33%) in the opinion that students' ability to utilize information technology methods and equipment is still insufficient. Some respondents, 7 (13%), strongly agreed, whereas others, 2 (4%), strongly disagreed with the statement. (3.33) is the total mean of this item.

Question 17: In the statement that BL may lead to unethical conduct and dishonesty among learners, the ratios of respondents who strongly agreed and agreed shared the same value at 20 (36%). 1 (2%) and 2 (4%) of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the view in that order. The total mean of this section is (4.02) which is the greatest in the domain of students' perceptions of BL.

Question 18: In terms of materials for BL lack organization, the percentages of respondents who strongly agreed and agreed with the term were 8 (15%) and 18 (33%) in that sequence, while the proportions of those who strongly disagreed and disagreed were 4 (7%) and 5 (9%) in that order. (3.38) is the mean of this section.

Question 19: Some of the respondents, 14 (25%), agreed, but other respondents, 10 (18%), disagreed with the opinion that Students are dissatisfied with BL and lack motivation for it. Almost half of the respondents, 24 (44%), were undecided. (3.04) is the total mean of this item.

Question 20: Around half of the respondents, 27 (49%), were undecided about the view that BL courses teach less than regular classrooms. The proportion of respondents who strongly agreed and who agreed were 2 (4%) and 8 (15%), respectively, while the ratios of those who strongly disagreed and who disagreed were 7 (13%) and 11 (20%) in that sequence. The total mean of this item is (2.76), which is the most minimal in the domain of students' perceptions of BL.

Question 21: The responses in the strongly agree and agree sections accounted for 6 (11%) and 10 (18%), respectively, of the statement that BL isolates students socially, while the responses in the strongly disagree and disagree items occupied 8 (15%) and 12 (22%) in that order. The other respondents, 19 (35%), were undecided. The mean of this section is (2.89), which is equal to the mean of the view that BL increases my demand for in-person encounters.

Results from the interviews

The majority of participants in the interview to the first question, *Do you prefer BL to one-way learning (face-to-face or online learning)*, answered that they do prefer BL due to several reasons, as follows: "I have more time for studying and reading materials. Besides, it allows me not to go out much due to the widespread COVID-19 pandemic", and "BL helps me not to spend lots of money on transportation, and I can do more self-learning at home." In spite of that, only one student reported that "I like traditional learning because I do not feel motivated and I love to interact with other learners as well as lectures directly... I feel isolated somehow when it comes to combining these learning styles."

All interview results in the second question, *What is the most favorable perception regarding BL in your opinion*, were about the improvement of students' English proficiency in BL.

The last interview question, *Do you have any suggestions to improve the BL experience*, was asked of the interview participants. The qualitative results, however, include more fascinating recommendations. Responses to the idea that "I want the university to develop training sessions on utilizing virtual applications on computers before every BL course, so that I may learn how to utilize the online platform efficiently, which might be of great advantage to my studies." The provision of personal computers to the students was another option endorsed by a minority of respondents.

Discussion of results

In Table 2, the vast majority of respondents had a favorable opinion of BL when it comes to English courses. These findings demonstrate that the students are pleased with BL since it helped them develop their English language skills and assisted them in improving their English abilities. This lends credence to the results of a number of studies that discovered that students had favorable views about online teaching and learning. This is consistent with the findings of other earlier investigations, including Mohammed (2015), Aliweh (2011), Adas & Wafa (2011), Bendania (2011), Akkoyunlu & Soylu (2006), Tran & Nguyen (2022) and Dennis (2013). In contrast, there are some students who have presented their views as being opposed to the matter regarding collaborative participation and effort in BL. It can be explained that students and instructors may experience significant disruptions due to the implementation of distance learning. The incorporation of peer interaction into distance learning confronts both groups with an additional challenge, following Jacobs & Ivone (2020) and Miyashita (2021). One of the goals of BL is to offer learners chances for collaborative learning, which is believed to be a practical teaching approach in traditional classroom settings. Nevertheless, for some educators, a new problem arises when they are tasked with fostering peer contact as part of distance education.

Table 3 reveals that some students have adverse attitudes about BL when it comes to English classes, which come from the students themselves. The majority of the negative expressions of BL, in line with the responses of the participants, are statements of a lack of interaction between instructors and students, cheating or engagement in other unethical practices, and sluggish internet access. In accordance with the results of Taghizadeh and Hajhosseini (2020), the most

prevalent interaction pattern in BL classes was between students and teachers. This may be because the instructor answered all of the students' online queries and concerns, offered a timely and effective reply to their comments, and talked with them regarding course material through email, social networks, and in-person sessions. In line with the view that students' abilities to use information technology means and equipment are still inadequate, there is a lack of learning facilities, knowledge isn't any less than face-to-face knowledge, students are frustrated and lack enthusiasm, and these are the negative points that respondents are still primarily concerned about. Students' incapacity to employ information technology methods and equipment, a dearth of learning facilities, a lack of Internet connection, and a lack of competence to use information technology tools were recognized as the second most critical barriers in this study. These variables are related to the innate predisposition and desire of students to employ books rather than technology. Students are confused as to whether these limits provide a barrier or prohibit them from actively engaging in the usage of technology for educational reasons. This conclusion is consistent with what Alhawiti (2011) uncovered in his study when he concluded that low technological skills and infrastructure are the primary impediments that inhibit faculty members from embracing online education, and that does not even include the students. The findings also indicate that not having an appropriate study space is still a partial main problem in students' unfavorable attitudes. In line with the findings of Barrot, Llenares & Del Rosario (2021), the most difficult obstacle for students to overcome is the learning environment, specifically the distractions that they face at home (such as noise) and the restrictions that are placed on the amount of available learning space and facilities. In line with these findings, it seems that the difficulties associated with online education during the pandemic are distinct from the regular difficulties students had while participating in online education before the epidemic.

In the first interview question, Mohammad (2019) found that one of the challenges that BL faces is a lack of cooperation from students in order to finish a job that is based on the curriculum and uses the BL method, which indicates that learners must contend with the misunderstanding of their peers in order to finish an assignment. Following Vonderwell (2003) and Hoang et al. (2021), participants in online learning expressed a lack of connection with the instructor, particularly a "one-on-one" interaction with the teacher. In agreement with Yi and Cornelius (2004), learners who have participated in BL have indicated that a number of shortcomings, including an absence of a sense of online community and feelings of isolation, marred their experiences.

To explain why all interviews responded that BL improves students' English proficiency in the second interview question, in support of Banditvilai's (2016) assertion that BL may increase students' language abilities, the students who participated in the interview claimed that they might maximize their linguistic competency from their self-study activities by using online learning. This is due to the fact that offline classes often offer students with limited opportunities to practice their language skills, but the combination of offline and online classes typically provides students with more time to study on their own in order to improve their language skills.

In response to the third interview question, to maximize productivity and minimize wasted time throughout the educational process, it is essential that students attend computer classes to learn

how to utilize and operate programs like Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Even though the application of BL represents a much more significant change in basic technique than simply adding computers to classrooms, self-learning, understanding, and engagement can be enhanced through the implementation of BL. From the view of Beetham (2013), the use of technology allows for the efficient management of the teaching and learning of a foreign language.

Conclusion and recommendations

As has been presented earlier, the blended learning approach, which is a combination of online and conventional techniques, is a method that has the potential to be successfully implemented for the advancement of EFL education. It offers a flexible learning environment, encourages learners of EFL to engage in genuine language learning methods, and ultimately results in improved academic performance.

The results show that BL, which combines online class learning with traditional in-class learning, is more effective than using the traditional learning process. BL combines online class learning with conventional in-class learning. Additionally, it demonstrates that in BL, the information is obtained from more than one input. The results of this study also indicate that students admire BL due to the fact that it enhances their command of the English language and enables them to learn English in a more dynamic, effective, and exciting manner. The enjoyment of students in learning online and offline is expressed in the results.

The results also show that the students' unfavorable attitudes toward BL were principally cheating and other unethical behaviors among students. The findings demonstrated that the majority of students understood that examinations are designed to assess knowledge and that utilizing external resources while taking an online exam would be unethical. However, students believed that accessing external resources to do schoolwork outside of tests was permissible and ethical, which would be unfair to students who did not cheat, resulting in student dissatisfaction with BL. It was discovered that teacher-student disconnection or lack of engagement is one of the primary factors that affect the whole teaching and learning experience and ultimately determine the success or failure of the BL approach. In order to boost the use of online and offline channels by students and instructors, it is necessary to raise awareness and place emphasis on convenience and accessibility. In excess of that, internet connectivity and a lack of ability to use information technology are also significant problems. Since students' lack of technical abilities was the first obstacle to success from their viewpoint, this result is extremely important and should be carefully taken by institutions before and throughout the introduction of technology to EFL students. This conclusion should be considered by Thu Dau Mot University and other institutions before and during the introduction of technology to EFL students if they want EFL students to embrace technology in their education.

It is crucial to recognize that BL is still in its development at Thu Dau Mot University, especially in the faculty of foreign languages. It demands more study and advancement that addresses forms of BL from several perspectives, such as adequate infrastructure and training of teachers and students in successful instructional abilities.

The writers suggest resolving students' technical issues by having an online technician team support them, designing more appropriate training courses for students regarding the online software or learning platform used in English BL, and facilitating more structured group communication and collaboration via grouping and discussion forums capabilities such as Moodle, Edmodo, Google Classroom, and Canvas, etc., all of which should be translated into an action plan and a road map in order to increase the practicality of employing BL to generate supportive learning opportunities for language learners.

Irrespective of its contributions, limitations in this study can be listed as follows: 1) The study was conducted in only one semester in an academic year, 2) The study only focused on English-majored students, 3) Though the results are valid, they cannot be generalized to other institutions, 4) The study used an online questionnaire form which is limited in nature by the accuracy of the participant's response.

Towards these limitations mentioned above, future research in this field should: 1) spend at least one academic year to conduct similar research, 2) examine other different departments in the institution regarding students' perceptions and attitudes towards BL; 3) investigate distinct cases in the institution to make results more valid and reliable, 4) conduct a paper-based questionnaire for participants with researchers' observation to ensure the accuracy of responses.

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Biodata

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Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of Information and Communication Technology in Teaching English: Impacts of Teachers' Characteristics

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Abstract

This survey was done to uncover the EFL lecturers' attitudes (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components) towards the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching English at a university in Vietnam. In addition, the survey also investigated the influence of some teachers' demographic characteristics, including gender, prior ICT training, education level, age, and teaching experience on their attitudes. The author employed a survey questionnaire adapted from Albirini to collect research data. One hundred twelve tertiary EFL teachers answered questionnaires administered online via Google Forms. Quantitative methods and descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were utilized to analyze the collected data. Results indicated that teachers had positive attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English. In addition, gender, prior ICT training, education level, teaching experience, and age were found not to impact their attitudes. Finally, this study had some suggestions for future investigations into the attitudes of teachers concerning the use of ICT in English language instruction.

Keywords: English teaching, attitude, teachers' attitudes, educational technology, Vietnam

Introduction

The application of information and communication technology (ICT) in education has been widely spread due to its visible transformative effects in raising the teaching-learning quality, resulting in broad societal changes (Lim et al., 2013). Administrators, educators, teachers, and practitioners have been searching for innovative methods to enhance educational quality (Lowther et al., 2008; Weert & Tatnall, 2005). Many educational systems have been concerned about how ICT can be utilized effectively in instruction, which has triggered significant ICT facility investment across several nations, enabling their integration into the educational instruction process (Tilya, 2008). Many educational institutions are equipped with ICT tools to make it possible for their use in instruction (Drijvers, 2015). In some cases, however, the use of ICT has yet to yield the projected outcomes. Several studies indicated that teachers solely used ICT for administrative tasks not for their actual instructional activities (Mwalongo, 2012). In other instances, they added ICT to their conventional teaching methods (Mwalongo, 2012; Thorvaldsen et al., 2012) or used it at a limited level (Al-zaidiyen et al., 2010; Noori, 2019; Umar & Hassan, 2015).

Concerning foreign language education, many EFL teachers have employed ICT in their teaching practices with the conviction that ICT is a valuable instrument to improve the effectiveness of their instruction (Fu, 2013; Lam Kieu et al., 2021; Player-Koro, 2012; Yunus, 2007). However, several other criteria determine how successfully ICT is used in education instead of the availability of ICT infrastructure. Therefore, many research studies have made attempts to uncover the factors that can facilitate or hinder successful ICT implementation (Albirini, 2006; Dinh, 2015; Inan & Lowther, 2010; Pham et al., 2021; Player-Koro, 2012; Salinas et al., 2016). Of all the examined factors, these studies claimed that the most critical element in promoting ICT integration and averting opposition use was teachers' attitudes (TATT) towards using ICT. Some studies claimed that teachers' positive attitudes were positively correlated with their frequencies of ICT use and led to successful teaching practices, while the negative attitudes were the primary obstacle to their effective instruction (Albirini, 2006; Capan, 2012; Kizil, 2016). Hue and Jalil (2013) argued that these days "universities must promote the use of ICT" (p. 54) to satisfy students' needs, establish new bonds, innovate programs, and re-form conceptions of the learning environments' characteristics to facilitate innovation, experimentation, and lecturers' creativity.

Being the critical determinant of the successful ICT implementation in teaching, teachers' attitudes have been the research domain which calls for further investigations, especially prior actual deployment of ICT in specific teaching settings (Aydin et al., 2016; Bariu & Chun, 2022; Hue & Jalil, 2013; Jahanban-Isfahlan et al., 2017). Bariu and Chun argued that empirical studies needed to be conducted to evaluate teachers' attitudes to ascertain their influence on ICT implementation in higher institutions in Kenya. Similarly, Aydin et al. (2016) stressed, "the teacher's ICT attitudes, pedagogical beliefs, ICT skills, and training have gained currency and are under scrutiny in today's educational settings" (p. 375). Jahanban-Isfahlan et al. pointed out that though much research in developed countries has been conducted on teachers' attitudes toward ICT integration, there has been an inadequate examination of this topic in developing countries, and even fewer inquiries done among EFL teachers.

Teachers' attitudes are affected by several factors, including teachers' characteristics, ICT-related factors, institutional factors, and cultural factors (Ayub et al., 2015; Islahi & Nasrin, 2019; Liu et al., 2017). The inquiries into correlations between teachers' characteristics such as gender, educational level, teaching experience, prior ICT training, age, and teacher's attitudes towards ICT employment in teaching English have yielded contradictory results, and this issue is still in need of further investigation. Although research projects on teachers' attitudes towards the use of ICT have received substantial attention in global contexts so far, few studies have been carried out in Vietnamese settings, especially in higher education institutions. Therefore, this research was done to uncover the attitudes of EFL teachers towards using ICT in their teaching at a comprehensive university in Vietnam.

Literature review

Conceptualizing the use of information and communication technology in teaching English

Since its introduction in education, numerous researchers have attempted to define the use of ICT in educational instruction. Hew and Brush argued that it is whatever application of “computing devices such as desktop computers, laptops, handheld computers, software, or Internet in K-12 schools for instructional purposes” (Hew & Brush, 2007, p. 225). Similarly, Drent and Meelissen regarded it as the usage of educational tools including Internet-based technologies, digital cameras, and computers to facilitate learning outcomes (Davies & Hewer, 2012). By contrast, Inan and Lowther (2010) gave a more specific definition; that is, it denotes the exploitation of certain technological tools by teachers to plan and deliver their instructions, and technological applications to serve their students’ learning activities.

Concerning English language teaching, some researchers conceptualized ICT use in teaching for typical EFL instructional purposes. Levy, for instance, referred to it as the use of ICT applications and categorized them as corresponding to some specific objectives of EFL instruction such as the enhancement of abilities and knowledge in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, receptive skills, productive skills and intercultural insight for students (Levy, 1991). Davies et al. (2012) stated the term ICT encompasses computer technologies and web-based technologies, which are classified into generic software applications (e.g., computer-mediated communication applications, word processing apps, presentation software, web browsers, and Web 2.0 applications) and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) software applications which are beneficial to foreign language teaching. In summary, because ICT is a broad term, researchers used diverse terms to refer to ICT when defining the use of ICT in teaching. Therefore, research into the attitudes of teachers towards the use of ICT in teaching English has employed some popular terms such as the use of technology, instructional technology, computers, CALL, web-based technologies, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), digital technologies, technology-enhanced language learning (TELL), interchangeably to refer as attitude objects.

Conceptualizing teacher’s attitudes towards the use of information and communication technology in teaching English

In the social science domain, many studies have been devoted to conceptualizing the construct “attitudes” as well as their nature. Banaji and Heiphetz (2010) indicated that over the last century, different researchers have partially focused on particular aspects of the concept. Some authors concentrated on attitudes’ mental aspect and directive function (Droba, 1933; Morgan, 1934; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918). Other researchers defined attitudes with an emphasis on their more specific affective representations (Chave, 1928; Ewer, 1929). Several authors described the behavioral aspect (Bogardus, 1931; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). These definitions faced hard criticism; that is, attitudes have been mischaracterized as entities of some permanence (Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010).

In 1935, after scrutinizing 16 prior definitions, Allport gave his concept of attitudes which has been most cited so far. He stated, “An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual’s

response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (Allport, 1935, p. 810). More simply, Fishbein and Ajzen argued that an attitude represents a general feeling of an individual, which can be favourableness or unfavourableness towards some stimulus object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). These favorable or unfavorable feelings are the same as the positive or negative values in Bogardus’ definition or the same as the *affect for or against* a psychological object in the argument of Thurstone (Thurstone, 1932). However, Allport claimed that some attitudes were not readily categorized into either of these bipolar positions. He argued that it was difficult to reduce some attitudes such as tolerant, open-minded, and complacent attitudes to “*affect for or against*” an attitude object.

Several researchers defined attitudes based on their intra-attitudinal structure consisting of three components: affective, behavioral, and cognitive (Crano & Prislin, 2006; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Matteson et al., 2016; Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960). The cognitive component refers to knowledge or belief about something; the affective element is the feelings about something, and the behavioral part refers to acting in certain manners about something. Although attitudes haven’t had an agreed-upon definition, most researchers have agreed that an attitude refers to someone’s positive or negative judgment of specific attitude objects or stimuli. Rosenberg and Hovland proposed the Schematic Conception of Attitudes which includes all three components and their measurable presentations. The stimuli can be social matters, individuals, social groups, situations, or other attitudinal objects. After having discussed the above definitions, teachers’ attitudes towards the use of ICT might be conceptualized as a complex, multi-dimensional construct including affective, cognitive, and behavioral (conative) components or simply as teachers’ positive, neutral or negative feelings about performing certain target behaviors. The cognitive component consists of teachers’ factual knowledge or beliefs about using ICT in teaching English. The affective component denotes teachers’ emotional reactions (responses) to or preferences for using ICT in English instruction. The behavioral component involves teachers’ overt behavior directed towards using ICT in teaching English.

Prior research on EFL teachers’ attitudes towards the use of information and communication technology in teaching English

Several studies have pointed out that using ICT in instruction is still in its infancy in most developing countries, such as Vietnam and Tanzania (Dinh, 2015; Ndibalema, 2014). Hence, researchers have attempted to shed light on the current state of ICT adoption and the factors influencing the success of the adoption. Teachers’ attitudes have been the topic of much investigation among these factors. Many studies have been conducted to uncover their attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English and the factors affecting their attitudes. Rogers (2003) noted, “individual innovativeness [adoption of an innovation] was affected both by individuals’ characteristics and by the nature of the social system in which the individuals are members” (p. 26). However, Katz (1992) countered this claim with his argument that only certain sets of personalities were radically correlated with favorable computer attitudes. Therefore, when investigating EFL teachers’ attitudes, several studies also examined the associations between different teachers’ demographic characteristics such as

age, gender, educational level, teaching experience, and ICT training and their attitudes towards adopting ICT in their teaching.

One of the earliest studies on this topic taking the context of developing countries was done by Albirini in 2004. He investigated Syrian EFL high school teachers' attitudes towards using computers in education and found that they held positive attitudes towards ICT in education. The behavioral domain ranked first followed by the cognitive component and affective component. Albirini argued that those favorable attitudes demonstrated "their initiation into the innovation-decision process" (Albirini, 2004, p. 111). They appeared to "have gone through the "Knowledge and Persuasion stages" (Albirini, 2004, p. 111) and were "probably proceeding to the Decision phase" (Albirini, 2004, p. 111). These findings were in line with those of Jahanban-Isfahlan et al. (2017) when they examined the relationships between the instructional technology use of Iranian teachers in their English classrooms and their attitudes towards using these technologies and perceived levels of ICT competency. Concerning the effects of teachers' traits or characteristics on their attitudes, Albirini's study revealed that gender, age, teaching experience, income, and educational level were not associated with teachers' attitudes towards using ICT. In contrast, ICT training was significantly and positively correlated with their attitudes.

According to Golshan and Tafazoli's (2014) findings, teachers felt comfortable with technology, believed that technology could save time and effort, and desired the new TELL programs and tools. These findings reflected three components of teachers' attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English. The same investigation by Pinner (2012) indicated that an ample number of instructors used CALL because of their intrinsic motivation to do so or their awareness of its pedagogical values. They expressed their desire to use computers more during their lessons.

Ndibalema conducted a mixed-method analysis to examine the perspectives of 80 Tanzanian teachers on the use of ICT as an educational tool. He discovered that teachers in Tanzania adopted positive views about using ICT as a pedagogical tool but failed to incorporate it successfully into their instruction. Also, teachers believed that ICT could improve their teaching practice. Similar to Ndibalema's study, in research into the attitudes of Indonesian EFL teachers towards technology use in classrooms, Cahyani and Cahyono (2012) disclosed that all teachers were in favor of using technology in classrooms. Incredibly, teachers convicted that there should be more various types of technology in language classrooms and that it was advisable for the teachers to apply these types of technology to improve the language skills of students. These positive attitudes were attributed to teachers' beliefs that ICT can enhance teachers' teaching and students' learning. These beliefs represent the cognitive domain of their attitudes.

Zyad (2016) explored the views of Moroccan secondary EFL teachers towards implementing ICT and the obstacles preventing its widespread use for teaching purposes. He reported that teachers expressed a favorable attitude towards ICT implementation in classroom practices. Specifically, the respondents had positive feelings about ICT; the cognitive component, including two subcomponents – "perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness" (Davis, 1989, p. 319) - was generally positive, and the respondents were psychologically ready to use computers in their lessons providing that some requirements were met. In this study, he also

found that all the demographic attributes (teaching experience, school location, ICT training, age) were negatively correlated with teachers' attitudes except for ICT training duration.

In another inquiry into the attitudes of Turkish English teachers towards using mobile applications for English as second language instruction, Dogan and Akbarov (2016) pointed out that teachers had favorable opinions about using mobile devices in ESL classrooms. However, the number of teachers using mobile devices or other digital content in their classes was almost as many as those who did not. Santiago (2015) also found that all teachers revealed an optimistic attitude towards using technology, were in favor of using and willing to use it any time. The teachers' perceived usefulness of technology use in their lesson delivery and students' learning process, the ICT's role in the modern era, the support from the Department of Education, and the available technological resources influenced the attitudes of teachers towards using ICT.

Burkšaitienė and Selevičienė (2017) carried out a small-scale survey to uncover higher education instructors' attitudes towards Web 2.0 technologies and their actual application in the delivery of courses in General English and English for Specific Purposes. These two researchers found that a majority of Lithuanian teachers exhibited a positive outlook on Web 2.0 technologies and the uses of these technologies for teaching English. The results also demonstrated that teachers' work experience in teaching English and their academic qualifications significantly affected their evaluative opinions about the benefits of using ICT in teaching practices.

As seen from the study by Liu et al. (2017), teachers believing in constructivist pedagogy encompassed more favorable attitudes to accept technology in teaching English. Canals and Al-Rawashdeh (2018) investigated Jordanian EFL teachers' attitudes towards deploying online English language courses and the reasons for technology adoption in lesson deliveries. The study found that contradictory attitudes existed among these teachers. For instance, some evaluative statements for gauging teachers' opinions should have received very positive responses, especially when compared with negative ones. Teachers' readiness levels to use computers, their beliefs about technology application to language teaching, the view on students' psychological readiness for computer usage, and the training amount and contexts were the source of contradictory attitudes.

In the same way, Noori (2019) explored the attitudes of EFL lecturers from Afghanistan towards instructional technology as well as examined the relationships between lecturers' demographic properties and their attitudes towards instructional technology. He uncovered those teachers had highly positive attitudes. Gender differences, teaching experience, and educational qualifications were not significantly affected the formulation of teachers' attitudes. By contrast, this study showed that the age factor and prior computer training influenced teachers' attitudes significantly. Some other researchers also found a substantial link between gender and attitudes towards computer usage (Francis, 1994; Jones, 1998). Females felt less self-confident and enthusiastic about using computers than males (Francis, 1994).

Huang et al. (2019) investigated the attitudes of 14 EFL teachers from China towards technology use and the influencing factors on their acceptance of technology. The findings unveiled that these teachers generally upheld a favorable attitude towards technology

deployment in their teaching. Teachers' reliance on technology varied by their age and professional experience. Novices and young teachers considered themselves members of a younger generation that used technology in the classroom. By contrast, experienced teachers firmly responded that their in-depth understanding of the subject could make up for the absence of technology in the classroom.

Ahmed et al. (2020) also explored Yemeni EFL teachers' attitudes regarding using ICTs to teach English courses in higher education institutions. Findings revealed that EFL teachers held positive attitudes, and teachers' attitudes were not varied regardless of differences in gender, academic level, or computer competence. This result concurred with Hong et al.'s (2014) claim that no substantial variations between male and female teachers concerning their attitudes towards computers and computer use were uncovered. However, regarding teachers' computer competence, Hong et al. claimed a contradictory finding that teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes towards computers were significantly and positively correlated although this correlation was less than moderate level.

Concerning the specific Vietnamese context, some researchers also attempted to document the current state of Vietnamese teachers' attitudes towards using ICT in teaching. For instance, Hue and Jalil explored 109 lecturers' attitudes towards ICT integration in their teaching and learning process and their frequency of ICT use. These researchers found that despite recognizing the benefits of using ICT in teaching, teachers did not use ICT at an adequate level. Furthermore, the relationship between their attitudes towards and their actual ICT use in the classroom was slightly moderately positive. The authors also argued that "their findings on lecturers' attitudes towards ICT integration into the curriculum in the teaching and learning process can be connected to Rogers' (2003) theory of diffusion of innovation" (p. 62). Mai and Bao conducted a similar study in Vietnam. This study explored the perceptions and attitudes of both tertiary teachers and learners towards using a specific ICT application – Blogs – for writing English. The significant findings on teachers' attitudes were that they generally held a positive attitude towards adopting blogs into EFL writing. Besides, teachers also expressed her willingness to adopt blog technology in other subjects. Similarly, Nguyen and Nguyen (2021) conducted a study on elements influencing the adoption of some popular video conferencing tools like Google Meet, Zoom and Microsoft Teams for online instructions in response to the Covid-19 panemic. Their finding was that teachers' behavioral intentions (a component of their attitudes) to adopt video conferencing greatly influenced their actual use in online instructions, and they were "willing to use video conferencing to boost the standard of their teaching experiences" (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021, p. 12).

In summary, so far as most research showed that EFL teachers had favourable or positive attitudes towards using ICT to teach English. Some tailored all three components of attitudes such as Albirini's (2004) and Jahanban-Isfahlan et al.'s (2017). By contrast, some others employed specific constructs to represent the attitude components such as beliefs or perceived usefulness. Several studies employed Roger's theory of diffusion of innovation as their theoretical framework for gauging teachers' attitudes towards ICT use and discussing the phenomenon, proving that this theory is highly relevant to the current research topic. Besides, prior research yielded contradictory findings about the relationships between teachers' personal traits and their attitudes towards using ICT in teaching English. Finally, though most

studies were conducted in educational contexts, very few studies have been done in higher education settings. Therefore, this research was done to explore EFL tertiary teachers' attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English and to investigate how some selected demographic characteristics influenced their attitudes.

Research Questions

To obtain the research objectives, the present project sought to address two following questions:

1. What are the Vietnamese teachers' attitudes (affective, cognitive, and behavioral components) towards the use of ICT in teaching English?
2. What are the relationships between teachers' characteristics (teaching experience, gender, educational level, age, ICT training) and their attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The setting of this research is a comprehensive regional university comprised of 10 affiliated members (schools, colleges, and universities). Each member has autonomous rights, and the rector/ principal has legal rights to make decisions on finance, human resources, policies, etc. However, the whole system still has to follow the instructions and guidelines issued by the Government and the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training. To enhance English language teaching, the university had the directions to strengthen the use of ICT to innovate the instruction methodology and improve the teaching quality (University, 2015). So far, financial investments have been made to purchase computers, speakers, projectors, and interactive boards; and to install language laboratories, LMS and studios. However, these facilities still need to be expanded. For example, most member universities do not have language laboratories. By the time we conducted this study, only the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) was equipped with a studio for producing video lessons.

Some commercialized coursebooks such as the "Life" series, "Skillful" series, and "English for Medicine and Pharmacy" have been employed as official coursebooks for students. These coursebooks are partially designed based on the blended-learning model with their Learning Management System (LMS), which can provide teachers and students with ubiquitous online access to learning materials. In some cases, students are obliged to fulfill certain levels of online learning activities (e.g., 80%) to sit for the end-term exams. At the same time, in other instances, teachers have used online materials as a supplement and let students exploit them voluntarily.

Many EFL teachers have proactively used ICT in their teaching. They have used their personal computers, mobile phones, projectors, language labs, generic software applications (e.g., Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, and audio players), and specific software applications (e.g., Pronunciation Power, Lingo, and Audacity). Besides, they have exploited free websites to support their teaching and communications with students, such as <https://www.esl-lab.com>, <http://facebook.com>, and <https://quizlet.com>. In summary, teachers have been using various types of ICT for both compulsory and voluntary purposes.

In addition to investment in ICT facilities, the university has paid attention to improving the ICT competence of English teachers. Since 2012, it has sent teachers to attend ICT training courses and urged other teachers to utilize ICT. About one-fifth of them have been formally sent to attend such ICT training courses; others have acquired ICT skills on their own. The Departments/ Faculties of English sometimes organized workshops/ seminars on using ICT in teaching. Participating in ICT training courses or workshops, teachers have been introduced to new ICT applications and skills that they may adopt in their specific teaching contexts. However, their practices of using ICT have revealed that each teacher has their ways and level of competence in using ICT in their teaching. Many teachers have been confidently willing to use ICT in their teaching, while others seem to need help and may use it only perfunctorily. Therefore, it can be argued that for many English teachers, the use of ICT in teaching English can be considered an innovation, which means that their decision to use ICT in teaching English is supposed to follow “the Model of Five Stages in the Innovation – Decision Process” (Rogers, 2003, p. 396).

The population of EFL teachers (including the author) working at this University was 139 teachers. According to Creswell (2013), there are three techniques for selecting the participants: random, systemic, and convenience. While the two former techniques require some typical steps for obtaining specific numbers of participants to ensure representativeness and generalization, the latter is chosen due to the participant’s convenience and availability. Convenience sampling was selected for this study; the questionnaires were administered to all the teachers excluding the author. There were some reasons for the selection of this strategy. First, it is convenient to access all the teachers because the author had quite a good network with them. The population was not numerous, and these teachers and the author were colleagues. In addition, these teachers are interested in research projects conducted in their teaching context to get more insights into the current situation of their institutions to adjust their teaching practices. Hence, they were available, enthusiastic, and volunteered to participate in the survey when they were introduced to the study’s aims, significance, and measures to ensure research ethics (i.e., anonymity and data processing and storing) in a consent form. Finally, this study attempted to allow all the teachers to express their opinions about and experience using ICT in their teaching. The result was that 112 teachers voluntarily took part in the study by sending back their consent forms.

Most participants were females (88.4%; $n = 99$), and the rest were males (11.6%; $n = 13$). The mean score for age was 36.2 years old ($SD = 4.7$), ranging from 25 to 48 years old. The number of teachers aged 30 to 39 was highest (67.0 %; $n=75$), while the figure for the teachers aged between 20 and 29 was lowest (just 3.6%; $n=4$). 29.5% ($n=33$) of the teachers aged from 40 to 49. Regarding educational level, the teachers possessing doctoral titles constituted 19.6% ($n=22$), while the number of master's degree holders was more than fourfold, 80.4 % ($n=90$). None of them had bachelor's degrees. Regarding the English teaching experience at their current academic institutions, 34.8% of participants ($n=39$) had 6 – 10 years of teaching, and 42.9% of them ($n=48$) had been teaching for 11 to 15 years. 16.1% of the teachers ($n=18$) had taught English for 16 to 20 years, and the rest had a very long-time experience teaching (21 – 25 years). Finally, a majority of teachers (88.4%; $n=99$) had attended ICT training programs (workshops/ seminars/ courses) while the others had not.

Design of the Study

This was a part of more extensive research which employed an explanatory sequential design; that is, the quantitative phase is conducted before the qualitative phase is done (Creswell, 2013). In this phase, the quantitative data from the questionnaire survey were collected and analyzed to reveal teachers' attitudes towards the use of teaching English and the relationship between their attitudes and some selected demographic characteristics. In the next phase, the qualitative data from semi-structured interviews would be gathered and analyzed to get deeper insights into teachers' attitudes and provide some explanation for initial quantitative findings.

Data collection & analysis

Instrument

An adapted survey questionnaire based on Albirini's (2004) was used to obtain data for this investigation. The questionnaire had two parts: Part A – The demographic scale, gathered teachers' demographic information, including sex, age, year of teaching English, educational level, ICT training, and income; Part B – The attitude scale, was initially composed of 20 items (evaluative statements) to measure three attitude components: affective (items 1 – 6), cognitive (items 7 – 15) and behavioral (items 16-20). Twenty statements were designed on a 5-point Likert scale format with values 1 = “Strongly disagree”, 2 = “Disagree”, 3 = “Neutral”, 4 = “Agree”, and 5 = “Strongly agree.” The questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese to facilitate and ensure teachers' understanding of the statements. One rationale for adapting the questionnaire was that it was conducted in a higher education institution and had similar goals to the current study, which was to investigate Vietnamese EFL teachers' attitudes towards using ICT in teaching English. A pilot survey was conducted before the official one. In the pilot phase, 42 randomly picked teachers completed the questionnaire. Any points of misunderstanding or ambiguity were carefully considered, and the researchers made any required changes to the items. The calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficient revealed that the adapted questionnaire had a satisfactory Cronbach's alpha coefficient of over 0.70, which suggested that the survey items were reliable for the official survey (Hair et al., 2018; Pallant, 2011).

Data collection procedures

The study was conducted in a regional university as a case study in its nature. After obtaining permission from the leaders of the participating departments of English, the online survey questionnaire designed on Google Forms was administered to all 138 EFL teachers from affiliated members of the University via email. Some further steps (reminder emailing, telephoning, providing incentives, and sending reminder postcards) were employed to raise the rate of responses. After four weeks, 112 teachers responded to the survey, resulting in an 81% response rate, which is greater than the typical response rate for online surveys (44.1%) (Wu et al., 2022) and over the acceptable rate of response (Holtom et al., 2022), and which was “a good response rate cutoff for maintaining representativeness” (Ruel et al., 2016, p. 276).

Data analysis

Before analysis, the collected data were screened and cleaned. The data were then entered into SPSS software version 25 which provides advanced statistical analysis techniques (IBM, 2019). Quantitative data analysis was conducted in light of the research questions. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores, standard deviations and percentages were used to depict and recap the features of the massive data obtained from the respondents (Gay & Geoffrey, 2018). An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was done to explore the intra-structure of teachers' attitudes (cognitive, affective, behavioral attitudes and overall attitudes) towards the use of ICT in teaching English. Teachers' attitudes were characterized by mean scores on a 5-point scale on which 4.3-5 (Highly positive), 3.5-4.2 (Positive), 2.6-3.4 (Neutral), 1.9 – 2.6 (Negative), and 1.0-1.8 (Highly negative). Next, simple independent sample T-tests and One-way ANOVA were used to analyze the relationships between the listed factors (demographic characteristics) and teachers' attitudes towards using ICT in teaching English. After the findings of the study were sought, the data were kept in the author's personal computer using the encrypted folder and were deleted after five years.

Findings and discussion

Teachers' attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English

Exploratory Factor Analysis

To explore the factorial structure of teachers' attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English, EFA with the method of oblique rotation (Oblimin) and the factor loading of at least .30 was carried out on all 20 evaluative statements of the attitude scale. Before performing EFA, the data were checked to ensure their suitability for factor analysis. Specifically, after the examination of the correlation matrix, 14 coefficients of 0.3 and above were found. The value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was 0.831, which exceeded 0.6 (the recommended value) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013); Statistics showed that Bartlett's Test was significant (Pallant, 2011) (see Table 1). These findings supported the matrix of correlations' factorability.

Table 1.

Results of the KMO and Bartlett's test

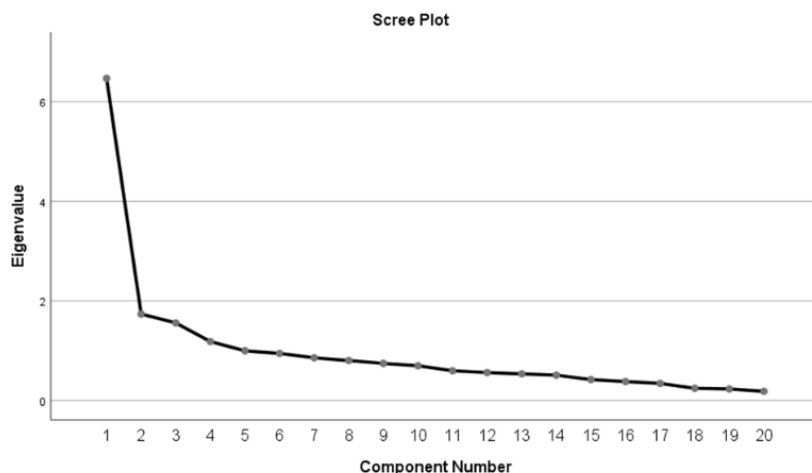
KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.831
Bartlett's Test	of Approx. Chi-Square	818.045
Sphericity	df	190
	Sig.	.000

Principal components analysis (PCA) showed that there were four components having eigenvalues exceeding 1 and these components accounted for 32.33%, 8.68%, 7.80%, and 5.92% of the variance, respectively. Before the factors were accepted, some additional criteria were employed such as the Scree plot which is an eigenvalue graph (Cattell, 1966) and parallel analysis (Horn, 1965). It is advisable to keep components which lies to the left of

debris or sharp break from linearity (Williams et al., 2010). The Scree plot (Figure 1) showed a prominent break after the third component.

Figure 1

Scree plot of initial factor extraction



A parallel analysis was carried out to additionally support the retainment of the components. The results showed that there were only three components having eigenvalues surpassing the random ordered values generated with a data matrix of the same size (20 variables x 112 respondents).

Table 2

Eigenvalues from PCA versus parallel analysis values

Component number	Actual eigenvalue from PCA	Random order from parallel analysis	Decision
1	6.467	1.8146	Accept
2	1.735	1.6613	Accept
3	1.558	1.5486	Accept
4	1.184	1.4497	Reject

According to Hinkin (1998), a parsimonious and simple structure for the scales is desired, and only the items that load strongly on a distinct appropriate component should be maintained. Therefore, some items that were low-loading, cross-loading, or freestanding were dropped out and some further PCA tests were performed after each item removal. Finally, 13 items were retained and loaded on three factors representing three attitudinal components and forming three subscales: affective subscale (three items), cognitive subscale (five items), and behavioral subscale (five items). One item (item 12) was initially supposed to load on the cognitive subscale but loaded on the behavioral subscale. Specifically, item 12 in the initial scale belonged to the subscale (items 7 - 15) measuring the cognitive component and was expected to load on this subscale after PCA was performed. Yet, it did not load on this group but loaded together with items 17 - 20 (the behavioral subscale) with a significant loading of 0.54. When re-examining the construct this item measured, it was found that it expressed the teachers' experience using ICT (behavior – the act of getting information). Therefore, item 12

was decided to constitute the behavioral subscale. The Cronbach alpha values for the remained items were over 0.7 suggesting that the consistency among the items was internally acceptable (see Table 3).

As can be seen from Table 3, 52.7% of the total variance was explained by the three components, of which component 1, component 2, and component 3 contribute 31.1%, 10.9%, and 10.7%, respectively. The three factors were interpreted in a way that was consistent with earlier research on the structure of teachers' attitudes towards the use of ICT in English education. The Oblimin rotation technique aided in interpreting these three components. The rotation revealed the presence of a parsimonious and simple structure with three components, revealing some strong loadings and most variables loaded markedly on two components. Data from 13 retained items were analyzed descriptively to reveal teachers' attitudes towards the use of ICT in their teaching. Table 4 illustrates the distribution of participants' responses on their use of ICT in teaching English.

Table 3

Results from a Factor Analysis of the TATT towards the use of ICT in teaching English

TATT items	Factor loading			Cronbach alpha
	1	2	3	
Factor 1: Behavioral component				
17. If I had the money, I would buy an ICT application.	.78			.74
19. I would like to learn more about ICT.	.75			.74
20. I have the intention to use ICT in the near future.	.72			.72
18. I would use ICT as much as possible.	.63			.73
12. ICT is a fast and efficient means of getting information.	.54			.74
Factor 2: Cognitive component				
8. My university would be a better place with ICT.		.74		.73
14. ICT can enhance students' learning.		.70		.73
7. ICT saves time and effort.		.70		.73
13. I think I would need ICT in my classroom.		.61		.73
9. Students must use ICT in all subject matters.		.42		.76
Factor 3: Affective component				
2. I feel comfortable when using ICT.			.77	.72
1. I am not scared of using ICT.			.72	.78
4. I like talking with others about ICT.			.70	.73

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Table 4*Distribution of participants' responses on the use of ICT in teaching English*

TATT items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Percent (%)				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Factor 1: Behavioral component							
17. If I had the money, I would buy an ICT application.	4.0	0.6	0	1.8	10.7	69.6	17.9
19. I would like to learn more about ICT.	4.2	0.5	0	0	7.1	69.6	23.2
20. I have the intention to use ICT in the near future.	4.3	0.5	0	0	1.8	64.3	33.9
18. I would use ICT as much as possible.	4.2	0.6	0	0.9	8.9	64.3	25.9
12. ICT is a fast and efficient means of getting information.	4.5	0.6	0.9	0	0.9	49.1	49.1
Factor 2: Cognitive component							
8. My university would be a better place with ICT.	4.1	0.7	0	0.9	15.2	56.3	27.7
14. ICT can enhance students' learning.	4.2	0.6	0	0	7.1	67.0	25.9
7. ICT saves time and effort.	4.3	0.8	0	1.8	14.3	41.1	42.9
13. I think I would need ICT in my classroom.	4.4	0.6	0	0.9	2.7	56.3	40.2
9. Students must use ICT in all subject matters.	3.2	0.8	0	20.5	44.6	33.0	1.8
Factor 3: Affective component							
2. I feel comfortable when using ICT.	4.3	0.7	0	1.8	8.9	50.9	38.4
1. I am not scared of using ICT.	3.7	1.3	11.6	10.7	4.5	39.3	33.9
4. I like talking with others about ICT.	4.0	0.7	0	1.8	20.5	62.5	15.2

As illustrated in Table 4, teachers expressed their positive or highly positive attitudes towards using ICT in teaching English, illustrated by the mean score of over 4.0 for most of the items. Especially, teachers highly agreed with five items depicting their intentions to use ICT in the near future ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 0.5$), ICT's efficiency in getting information ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 0.6$), and ICT's benefits of time and effort savings ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 0.8$), teachers' belief about the need for ICT in classrooms ($M = 4.4$, $SD = 0.6$), and teachers' comfortable feeling when using ICT ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 0.7$). Also, as depicted in Table 4, the respondents had firm intentions of using ICT when 87.5%, 92.8%, and 90.2% of them agreed or highly agreed on purchasing an ICT application if they had money, learning more about ICT, and using ICT as much as possible, respectively. Participants believed that ICT would better their university and enhance students' learning. However, teachers expressed neutral attitudes towards the compulsory use of ICT in all subject matters ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 0.8$). On the other hand, 73.3% and 77.7% of teachers reported that they were not scared of using ICT and liked talking about it with others.

Table 5*TATT towards the use of ICT in teaching English*

Scale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Highly Negative	Percent (%)			Highly Positive
				Negative	Neutral	Positive	
Cognitive	4.0	0.4	0.0	4.8	16.8	50.7	27.7
Affective	4.0	0.7	3.9	4.8	11.3	50.9	29.2
Behavioral	4.2	0.4	0.2	0.5	5.9	63.4	30.0
Overall attitude	4.1	0.4	1.0	3.2	11.3	55.6	28.9

Table 5 presents teachers' intra-structural attitudinal components and overall attitudes towards using ICT in teaching. As is clear from the table, teachers' general attitudes towards using ICT in teaching English were positive ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 0.4$), and were manifested within the cognitive ($M=4.0$, $SD = 0.4$), affective ($M=4.0$, $SD = 0.7$) and behavioral components ($M=4.2$, $SD = 0.4$).

Relationships between teachers' characteristics and their attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English

To examine the differences in teachers' attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English concerning gender, prior ICT training, and educational level, the overall attitude scores of teachers were compared using independent-sample t-tests. Table 6 presents the tests' results comparing the mean scores for respondents' attitudes concerning demographic variables (gender, prior ICT training and educational level).

As depicted in Table 6, the males and females' mean scores were not significantly different ($t(110) = 1.071$, $p = .287$). Likewise, there was no significant difference in the mean scores between respondents who had prior ICT training and those who did not ($t(110) = -.756$, $p = .451$). Regarding educational level, the mean scores between master's degree holders and doctor's degree holders were not significantly different ($t(110) = -.297$, $p = .767$).

Table 6*Comparison of TATT towards the use of ICT in teaching English in terms of gender, prior ICT training, and academic qualifications*

Demographic characteristics		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> (110)	<i>p</i>
	Female	99	4.054	.378			
Prior ICT training	NO	.638	13	3.993	.383	-.756	.451
	YES		99	4.078	.381		
Educational level	Master	.182	90	4.063	.396	-.297	.767
	Doctor		22	4.090	.315		

To examine the difference in teachers' attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English in terms of age and teaching experience, OneWay ANOVA tests were conducted. Regarding age, the Levene value showed equal variances between groups ($p = 0.39$). Table 7 illustrates that no statistically significant differences were revealed between the three age groups' mean scores as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(2,109) = 0.27, p = 0.79$).

Table 7

One-Way ANOVA comparing TATT towards the use of ICT in teaching English in terms of age

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.069	2	.035	.236	.790
Within Groups	15.985	109	.147		
Total	16.054	111			

Concerning teaching experience, the Levene value showed equal variances between groups ($p = 0.98$). Table 8 indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the four groups' mean scores due to teaching experience as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(3, 108) = 1.58, p = 0.19$).

Table 8

One-Way ANOVA comparing TATT towards the use of ICT in teaching English in terms of teaching experience

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.677	3	.226	1.584	.197
Within Groups	15.377	108	.142		
Total	16.054	111			

Discussion

The findings demonstrated that Vietnamese EFL lecturers embraced positive attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English, which was consistent with Albirini's study, which reported that teachers held positive attitudes towards ICT in education. The present findings also align with Jahanban-Isfahlan et al.'s findings that an overall positive attitude towards educational technology was observed among Iranian teachers. These positive attitudes exposed that the lecturers initially approached the stages of innovation-decision (Rogers, 2003). Moreover, it seemed that they also had gone through the Knowledge and Persuasion stages (Rogers, 2003), and were expectedly moving onto the step of making decisions (Rogers, 2003). These arguments concur with the conclusions found by Jahanban-Isfahlan et al. who also speculated that their participants' favorable attitudes towards TELL showed their initial progress into the innovation-decision procedure and that teachers had by-passed the Knowledge and Persuasion stages (Rogers, 2003), and were most likely moving on the Decision phase (Rogers, 2003). Teachers were strongly willing to adopt ICT in their teaching, which was manifested by the high mean score for their behavioral intention to use ICT in their teaching ($M = 4.2$).

Concerning the associations between teachers' characteristics and their attitudes, the results suggested that gender and education level did not affect EFL teachers' attitudes towards the

use of ICT in teaching English. These results concur with the findings in past research (e.g., Ahmed et al.'s, Albirini's, Hong et al.'s and Noori's studies). This may be because, as tertiary teachers, male and female teachers have equal chances of accessing the ICT facilities, hence allowing them to develop positive attitudes towards using ICT. However, in terms of gender, this finding casts doubts on those findings in Francis's and Jones's studies, which reported that gender and attitudes towards computers were significantly related. Similarly, in terms of educational level, the current finding is contradictory to that of Burkšaitienė & Selevičienė (2017). According to these authors, teachers' academic qualifications significantly affected the perceived benefits of using ICT in teaching practices. Next, our research revealed that there was no relationship between the teachers' attitudes and their prior ICT training, which is not in line with the findings of Albirini, Noori, and Ziad. Albirini and Noori found a similar result: ICT training was significantly and positively correlated with teachers' attitudes while Ziad reported that ICT training was negatively correlated with teachers' attitudes.

Regarding age, several previous studies (e.g., Noori's and Ziad's studies) asserted that age significantly correlated with teachers' attitudes, which is contradictory to the finding of this research. For example, Ziad found that Moroccan EFL secondary education teachers' attitudes towards ICT implementation were negatively correlated with their age. Ziad argued that the latent cause for the age's impact on teachers' attitudes might be that teachers between 26 and 30 years old were born and grew up in the era of technology; thus, they would be optimistic about using technology in their specific pedagogical settings. Lastly, this study showed that teachers' teaching experience did not correlate with their attitudes towards using ICT in teaching English. This result is not inconsistent with the findings of Albirini and Noori, but does not agree with the findings of Huang et al., Burkšaitienė and Selevičienė and Ziad. Ziad argued that the younger the EFL teachers are, the more certain it would be that he or she adopt technology for teaching. Burkšaitienė and Selevičienė also reported that teachers' work experience in teaching English significantly affected their perceived benefits (the cognitive component) of using ICT in teaching practices.

Conclusion

This study investigated tertiary EFL teachers' attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English and the relationships between some teachers' demographic characteristics with their attitudes. The results indicated that teachers had positive attitudes towards using ICT in teaching English demonstrated in the three aspects of attitudes. Significantly, the high value for behavioral intention to use ICT indicated that in mental and neural manners teachers had been ready to use ICT in their teaching. Furthermore, the findings on the intra-attitudinal structure of teachers' attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching English supported the research into social attitudes in the existing literature, especially those employed Rosenberg and Hovland's Schematic Conception of Attitudes and Roger's theoretical model as their conceptual frameworks. Specifically, the findings on teachers' attitudes first provided empirical evidence confirming the existence of the intra-structure of attitudes with three components which can be measured through verbal statements of feelings and beliefs or knowledge and verbal statements about intended behavior.

Additionally, the findings shed light on some constructs in the models. Specifically, while the

stimuli in Rosenberg and Hovland's model generally refer to any attitude object, it could refer specifically to the use of ICT in teaching English. This study also contributed to Roger's model that at the persuasion stage, when the attitudes are formed, these attitudes can be measured in three aspects: cognitive, affective and behavioral. Methodologically, the combination of the two models can pave the way for researchers to examine individuals' attitudes to using ICT, which individuals can be any social group.

This study was conducted in a regional university in Vietnam and revealed no differences in teachers' attitudes regarding gender, age, educational level, teaching experience, and ICT training. While there was consensus with some previous studies, the current study also yielded conflicting results. This implies that further studies in different contexts should be conducted to re-examine these relationships and consolidate the existing findings in this field of study in developing countries.

This study retained some limitations in terms of the methodology and scope. Methodologically, using quantitative research to investigate the teachers' attitudes, which were argued to be a complex, multi-dimensional construct, would not provide an in-depth insight into the phenomenon. Therefore, it is suggested that a mixed method approach combining quantitative and qualitative techniques should be employed for the studies on teachers' attitudes. Besides, this study focused only on the impacts of teachers' characteristics, which also failed to provide a comprehensive view of the teachers' attitudes concerning other factors such as ICT-related, institutional, and cultural factors. Therefore, it is recommended that studies with extended scopes should be carried out to fulfill this limitation.

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Biodata

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Toys to Tools: A Glimpse into Mobile Phones in the EFL Classroom – A Case Study

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Abstract

Mobile technologies, particularly cell phones and smartphones, are presented as an appealing opportunity to progress in the teaching-learning process, contributing to remarkable success while minimizing learning difficulties. This paper was based on the findings of a laborious research project including 71 students from three classes at the College of Foreign Economic Relations (COFER) in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. A comprehensive survey, a face-to-face interview, and careful observation with a student focus group were used to conduct the extensive investigation. The findings revealed a generally positive attitude toward this technology, which meets the needs and preferences of the students. The study has three distinct goals: (1) to thoroughly investigate some of the new challenges and deep joys associated with cell phones in EFL classrooms; (2) to fully consider both the practical and more fundamental philosophical issues at hand. Finally, a thorough discussion (3) provides a plausible explanation for the unexpected results as well as broad directions for future research.

Keywords: *mobile phones, digital immigrants, challenges, pleasures, philosophical issues*

Introduction

The mobile landscape

According to the UNESCO 2013 Report, mobile technology is present even in areas with limited access to schools, books, and computers. With their falling prices, mobile phones are becoming the preferred mode of communication for most of the population, who understand how to use mobile devices even in economically depressed areas (UNESCO, 2013). Annual mobile phone subscriptions surpassed fixed-line subscriptions worldwide in 2002. In 2013, the number of mobile devices connected to the Internet outnumbered desktop computers and laptops. At the beginning of 2013, it is estimated that mobile phones had reached 96 percent of the global market and 128 percent in developed countries. In developing countries, mobile device penetration is currently estimated to be 89% (ITU, 2013).

In many countries, adults own more than one mobile device per person (Statista, 2016). The Economist refers to this phenomenon as "the new nomadism" (Woodill, 2011: Kindle location 127). More than 100 countries have more mobile phone users than their population. Globally, approximately 7.5 million mobile phones and tablets are in use. According to survey results, 25% of mobile phone users expect to own a second mobile device in 2016. (Cisco, 2012). These trends, however, are changing and shifting dramatically: China surpassed the United States in terms of active smartphones and tablets in February 2013 but ranked only sixth in terms of

growth, trailing Colombia, Vietnam, Turkey, Ukraine, and Egypt. Almost all teenagers (93.6% of those aged 13 to 15 and 99.0% aged 16 to 18) owned cell phones. Adults on average, check their devices every six minutes (Farago, 2013).

Globally, there are approximately 4 billion mobile phone users. 1.08 billion people use smartphones on a regular basis, while regular phones are used by 3.05 billion people (listening, calling and texting). Up to 950 million of these people use non-SMS phone types sparingly. While watching television, 86 percent of mobile phone users access the Internet directly. According to statistics (<https://frankwbaker.com/mlc/media-use-stosystem/>), 61 percent of mobile phone users play games, 55 percent use weather apps, 50 percent use general search and mapping, 49 percent use social media frequently, 42 percent listen to music, 36 percent read the news, and 33 percent watch movies... Every day, mobile devices generate over 200 million video views. It is now estimated that 1.5 billion mobile phones exist (Prensky, 2004). According to Gartner, Canalys, and other market research (cited by Van Grinsven, 2004), global smartphone sales will reach 170 million units within four to five years, up from just over 20 million units this year. "There's an app for that," as the app revolution has swept the world, has quickly become a tech buzzword/mouthpiece (Charles and Aaron, 2014). Furthermore, learner-centered teaching of out-of-the-box learning fundamentally transforms students from passive learners who only achieve superficial learning to deep learners who gain a profound understanding of the concept (James, 2017).

Smartphones penetration in Vietnam

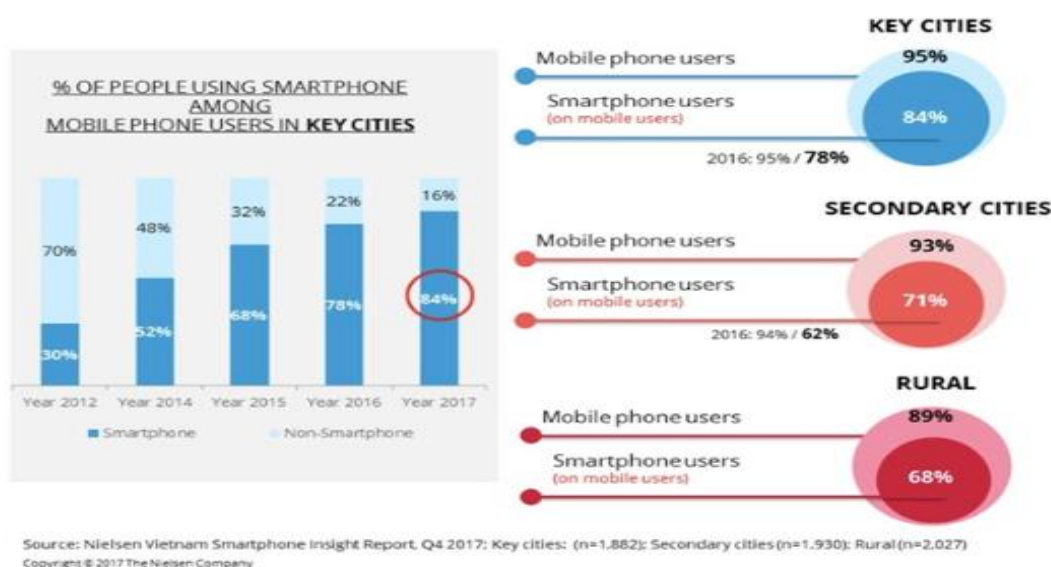


Figure 1. Percentage of smartphone users in Vietnam from 2015 to 2022 (in millions)*

This statistic, beyond doubt, proves the random number of smartphone users in Vietnam between 2015 and 2022. The number of smartphone users in Vietnam was estimated to be 28.77 million in 2017. This means that less than a third of the current population uses a smartphone, and this figure is expected to rise to two-fifths (40 percent) by 2021. According to a recent systematic meeting survey, more than seven in ten (71%) smartphone users in Vietnam use their phones primarily for taking photos or filming, while 70% listen to music intently and nearly half (54%) watch the news frequently.



Figure 2. An example of mobile pedagogy (original artwork by Martyn Ford) (Kukulski-Hulme et al., 2007)

To use or not to use: Mobile phones at the tertiary level?

Mobile learning (M-learning), according to educators, is the field that studies how mobile devices can significantly contribute to learning (Batista, 2011). M-learning frequently involves the use of mobile technologies, either alone or in conjunction with other information and communication technologies, to enable connected learning at any time and from any location (UNESCO, 2013). According to Hawkins, inventor of the Palm Pilot: "One day, two or three billion people will have cell phones, and not all of them will have PCs... At that point, cell phones will become their digital life" (Stone, 2004). As a result, the continued presence and significant relevance of such devices in everyday life have influenced educational research (Pachler et al., 2010). While there is little current literature on cell phone use in the classroom, some pioneering research has shed some light on the subject. This is thought to be a broad, fast-moving and contentious hot topic. However, the impact of handheld devices on the foreign language teaching and learning process cannot be overstated, as they help to diversify activities by improving applications to accommodate different learning styles. As a result, mobile phones have limitless potential to make learning more public, collaborative, and relevant (UNESCO, 2012).

Literature review

Mobile phones in formal education: Strengths and Weaknesses

Several landmark studies have found that using mobile phones for language learning is beneficial. The undeniable maximum benefit of using mobile devices in education is the overwhelming advantage of creating sheer enjoyment and unrestricted access to electronic resources. Thornton and Houser (2005) correctly conducted an intriguing study of three language studies on mobile learning to pinpoint the effect. Their intended audience consists of Japanese university students. The research was primarily carried out by exchanging emails on mobile phones in order to collect vocabulary lessons on mobile phones and then by using video-enabled mobile phones to improve English-speaking skills. Over the course of two weeks, five

individual lessons were delivered three times per day. In the control study group, language learners who received emails or text messages over the phone performed better on the tests than the paper-based group. Hence, students thought that using cell phones while learning was "a valuable teaching method" (p.217).

Ally et al. (2007) critically reviewed a number of studies on the optimal integration of mobile phones into foreign language teaching and learning activities and made on-the-spot observations demonstrating that mobile phone use promotes optimal learning performance. Chen et al. (2008) conducted a linguistic study on the additional benefits of mobile phones as a major lexical contributor for English learners in Taiwan. Their research concluded that students are deeply concerned about cell phone use due to their unlimited access to material and extraordinary ability to practice regularly anytime and anywhere.

This is consistent with the findings of Kukulska-Hulme (2009), who investigated the numerous benefits of mobile phones in mission-based learning, specifically how to integrate what is taught in the classroom with learning outside the classroom. Accepting a mobile phone in the classroom encourages students to have an instant intimate connection to their learning since they are especially effective in fostering collaborative learning in small groups. Students, for example, can visit various educational websites that combine learning with fully interactive games, as well as websites that promote interactivity. Kukulska-Hulme (2009) also suggested using the phone's SMS feature to expand learners' vocabulary significantly.

In the same view, this fits with the findings by Wills (2010), who highlighted the extra convenience of a phone that provides students with 24/7 access to study materials, sends systematic observations to teachers, and carefully manages extracurricular activities. Stockwell (2010, 2012) and Ballance (2012) compared the value that PC and power cell phones immediately serve as lucrative sources for invoiced CALL tasks in a zealous and extensive discussion. Bibby (2011) thoroughly investigated user preferences in language learning between PCs and mobile phones. Mobile phones appear to outperform stationary desktops for mid-length workouts. Darmi et al. (2013) conducted another meticulous study in which they discovered the profound impact of cell phone use on the broader vocabulary of EFL learners. The study almost concluded that intermediate EFL learners who used mobile devices improved their vocabulary proficiency. The study also assumed that gender had no effect on students' vocabulary retention.

Mobile phone use has been shown in studies to have a positive and significant impact on education in general and foreign language learning in particular. Dang (2013) conducted a scientific study on Vietnamese learners' attitudes and experiences with mobile phones when enthusiastically supporting English learning. This study's findings revealed that most students use mobile phones to learn English, and they anticipate the proliferation of these mobile devices in the future. The study also aims to change negative attitudes toward phone use in schools. Albion (2014), in the same vein, conducted a broader review than previous studies on cell phone use in the real-world context of language learning. They reported that learners enthusiastically welcomed the seamless integration of mobile phones into second-language teaching and that it made a significant contribution to improving language skills and related language areas.

Similarly, Kanchana and Saha (2015) investigated how smartphones can be integrated into learning to assist ESL students in India. They came to the conclusion that incorporating cell phones into the teaching process was a wise decision. With their easy internet access and readily available learning apps, mobile phones broaden the scope of teachers' interactions and provide unparalleled experiences by stimulating learners' curiosity and autonomy. Teachers, on the other hand, must redesign their teaching and learning methods to be more effective. According

to Pearson's (2015) study, another potential factor is that students believe they know more about using mobile devices for studying than teachers do. At Aljouf University in Saudi Arabia, Nalliveettil and Alenazi (2016) investigated students' perspectives on using mobile phones for English study. The survey method was used to collect data from a sample of 52 English undergraduate students, and the positive results demonstrated that the students achieved good academic results as a result of study support via mobile phones.

Salameh (2017) conducted a language study on hiring Saudi students to acquire current knowledge and skills via the Facebook website. His study participants were positive and enthusiastic about the use of Facebook to acquire knowledge (Salameh, 2017). He discovered that Facebook's potential for student education was truly limitless. It is possible to improve learners' knowledge and master students' skills using vast secondary resources to help learners achieve the highest academic achievement.

Due to a lack of evidence, this remains a contentious topic. Several studies' cross-sectional analyses show that mobile phones are a high-risk factor for foreign language teachers. Furthermore, according to some studies, students use cell phones when they do not want to participate in face-to-face classroom interaction or when they are bored with teachers and their lessons (Narendran et al., 2017; Olufadi, 2015). Like this widely held belief, mobile phones have numerous serious technological limitations (Batista, 2011). However, it must be admitted that, even with smartphones, selecting the right applications requires some technical knowledge because many applications only run on specific operating systems (Batista, 2011). Machado (2012) countered that it is necessary to impose strict restrictions on mobile phones in order to "slow down" students from the hustle and bustle of daily life. According to Weimer (2015), students described themselves as "addicted" to their phones and unable to "unplug," which fueled a real fear of the negative consequences of constantly texting and posting.

Furthermore, unrestricted access to profitable information sources such as Email, the Internet, and games can be both engaging and distracting (Patient and Bere, 2013; Rahman et al., 2013; Tossell et al., 2015). According to reports from users who are frequently confronted with derogatory remarks being truncated online (Common Sense Media, 2012), their use in the classroom can pose a risk that causes unwanted distractions for students. According to studies, students who texted in class frequently took poorer notes, retained less information, and performed poorly on tests (Kuznekoff and Titsworth, 2013). People who multitask on a laptop, such as taking notes, texting, and surfing Facebook, performed worse on tests than those who did not use their phones (Sana et al., 2013). It has also been vigorously argued that students who did not use smartphones in the class wrote 62 percent more updates on short notes and scored more than half as well on a multiple-choice test (Kuznekoff and Titsworth, 2013). Mobile phone use in education is thus a complex contemporary topic that highlights both interesting aspects and minor drawbacks that must be taken seriously. In the Vietnamese context, studies on the use of mobile phones as a multipurpose tool for both EFL teachers and students are lacking in key contemporary literature.

Research questions

The article demonstrates the viability of mobile phone presence in the Vietnamese EFL classroom. As a result, the topic of this article is whether there is agreement among Vietnamese students on how to view mobile phones as an effective learning tool. The primary goal of this study is to gather student opinions on the benefits of using mobile phones in foreign language classes. To accomplish this, the study sought to identify:

1. How often do students use cell phones for academic and non-academic activities?

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of using cell phones in the classroom?
3. How do students feel about using cellphones for schoolwork?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

A total of 71 students were invited to participate in the study. Among them, 62 were studying Bachelor of Financial Accounting, 8 were Foreign Languages, and one was studying Bachelor of International Trade at a college in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (Table 1). Most of the respondents were seniors (98.59%). A minority were college sophomores (1.41%).

Table 1. Breakdown of survey respondents by course

Financial Accounting	62
Foreign Languages	8
International Trade	1
Total	71

The present study involved the participation of 71 undergraduate students enrolled in the General English 2 course at the College of Foreign Economic Relations in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. During the three-credit course, 71 freshmen from non-English majors took part in the research. This group of students is studying at a university in Ho Chi Minh City. Their levels of English are varied, but they are mostly pre-intermediate. The recruitment of participants at the College of Foreign Economic Relations was conducted through email outreach to participants in restricted chat groups, advertising to participants in seminar presentations, and direct referrals from course instructors to their students. Interested participants can contact the researcher by Email.

Design of the Study

A 15-question survey, originally designed to reflect valuable ideas from the literature, was displayed as a 15-question SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis survey to collect data on student cell phone use in EFL classes. A total of ten full-time and senior business students were invited to take part in an outstanding pilot survey. The survey questions have been rewritten based on the feedback to make the objective clearer. The thoroughly revised questionnaire was then distributed to the students via a hyperlink in an explanation email. The frequency with which students used their cell phones to take notes, browse classroom materials, message friends, post on Facebook, and organize their social lives was tracked. Respondents provided responses to related questions, such as how much they consented to use mobile phones during school hours. The same was done with the questions about the Negatives, Opportunities, and Threats. Finally, they were asked to suggest other advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, or risks of cell phone use in the classroom and provide personal comments on anything else they wanted to add about the subject. Once completed by students at the author's university, the questionnaire will be processed using the free Stata software. The survey results are based on information provided by 71 students. Following that, the pilot's ten students will form a cohesive group to discuss the results and determine what was deemed acceptable and not mentioned concerning cell phone use in the classroom. The respondents were anonymous, and they were given pseudonyms.

Data collection & analysis

In order to collect students' opinions on the use of mobile phones in foreign language classes, a small-scale descriptive study was carried out. The Stata software automatically calculated answers to the questions. Besides, 71 student respondents submitted freely constructive text comments, which the author then systematically sorted according to keyword-based topics. Along with that, a survey questionnaire was designed to collect data. The questionnaire addressed issues such as i) proprietary or non-exclusive ownership of mobile phones; ii) years of experience with mobile phones in educational institutions; iii) appropriate training for the educational use of mobile phones; iv) attention-distracting cell phone application in EFL; v) constructive suggestions for the use of smartphones in education.

This paper examines students' interests in using their own smartphones to support their learning. The research was conducted through a combination of online surveys, observation, and interviews with ten undergraduate students. Data was collected in the first stage using an online survey, which was then disseminated via Email, social media, and groups devoted to mobile technology. The first section of the assessment incorporated a series of demographic inquiries to obtain information regarding the subjects' ages, gender, educational attainment, and employment history. In the second section, the efficacy of mobile phone use was evaluated using queries on a Likert scale. To determine the validity of the study, an initial online survey was created and distributed to the COFER students via a chat group on the social networking site Zalo. After establishing the validity of the research, an extensive questionnaire was created and sent to the main target group of university undergraduate students. The questionnaire's first section sought to collect demographic information regarding respondents' gender, age, current level of education, and smartphone ownership. The survey examined the respondents' smartphone usage patterns in relation to their responses to the following question. The five-point Likert scale was used to evaluate cell phones' effectiveness as a learning tool. Using the aviation lexicon, an interview tool was used to gather information about participants' encounters. Ten student interviews were conducted to supplement the quantitative survey data and develop the findings using an open-ended, qualitative method. An observation tool was developed to guide the observation process and analyze the data to identify patterns and trends. Researchers should consider how their findings relate to existing literature and their implications for future research or practice.

Results and discussion

Findings of the Verbal Data

Profile of participants

The main participants in this study were college students. The researcher undertook the questionnaire survey in order to thoroughly examine the students' overriding impressions of the students regarding the use of mobile phones for real-world learning. The following tables show the student demographics. The researcher built up detailed information about students by gender, age and level.

Table 2. Students' information by gender

Gender	Total	Percentage
Male	5	7.25%
Female	64	92.75%
Did not answer	2	
Grand total	69	100.00%

Table 2 provides information about the gender distribution of a group of 69 students. Five students are male, accounting for 7.25% of the group, while 64 are female, making up the majority at 92.75%. Two students omitted gender information. The total number of participants in the group, which is 69, is represented by the grand total. The table provides an overview of the gender distribution within the group and highlights the significant majority of female students in this context.

Table 3. Students' information by age

Age	Total	Percentage
19	5	7.04%
20	62	87.32%
21	4	5.63%
Grand total	71	100.00%

Table 3 provides information regarding the age distribution of a group of 71 students. The table provides demographic information for three age groups, 19-20, and 21-year-old, as well as the number of students in each group. The total number of students consists of 5 students aged 19 years or younger, representing 7.04% of the group. The majority of the group consists of 62 students aged 20 years or younger, representing 87.32%. The remaining group consists of 4 students aged 21 years or younger, representing 5.63% of the group. The total number of students in the group is 71. The table provides an overview of the group's age distribution and identifies a significant proportion of students who are 20 years of age or older within this particular context.

Table 4. Students' information by level

Level	Total	Percentage
Year 1	0	0%
Year 2	1	1.41%
Year 3	70	98.59%
Grand total	71	100.00%

Table 4 provides information regarding the composition of a group based on their academic level. The table shows three levels, Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3, and provides the number of students per level. Although no students are in Year 1, only one student is in Year 2, which represents 1.41% of the group. The majority of students, 70 in total, are in Year 3, accounting for 98.59% of the group. The total number of participants in the group is expressed as a percentage. The table provides an overview of the student population's educational attainment and demonstrates that the majority of students are in their third year of study in this particular context.

Table 5. Cellphone ownership

Do you have a smartphone?	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
No	4	5.63	5.63
Yes	67	94.37	100.00
Total	71	100.00	

Table 5 presents information about smartphone ownership in a group of 71 individuals. The table presents two possible responses to the question 'Do you own a smartphone?': 'No' and 'Yes.' The table provides an overview of smartphone ownership within the group, and highlights that most individuals own a smartphone. The table indicates that 4 out of the group's total population do not possess a smartphone, representing 5.63% of the total population. It was precisely observed that the majority of individuals, 67 in total, possess a smartphone, representing 94.37% of the group. The cumulative percentage column indicates the total number of individuals who responded to the question, and in this case, it indicates that all individuals in the group responded to the question. Each row represents the total number of individuals within the group, which is 71.

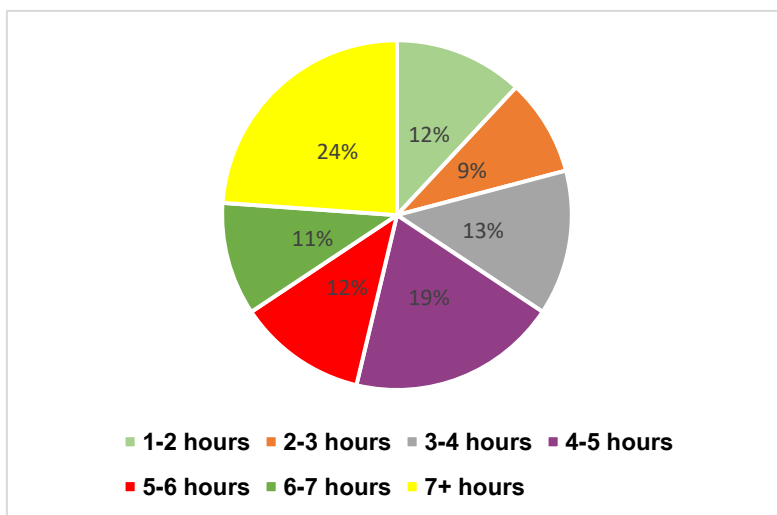


Figure 3. Number of times students report checking their phones on a given day

The findings indicate that many students use extensive smartphones throughout the day. As shown in this Figure 3, it is apparent from the data that the highest percentage of reported phone checks falls within the 7+ hours category, accounting for 23.88% of the total. The second-highest percentage, 19.40%, is found within the 4-5 hour range, suggesting that students engage with their phones for a shorter but still significant duration. A percentage of 13.43% follows closely in the 3-4 hour range, indicating a moderately high level of phone usage during that time period. Both the 1-2 and 5-6 hour ranges exhibit an equal percentage of 11.94%, suggesting that these durations account for a relatively consistent proportion of reported phone checks among students. The 6-7 hour range demonstrates a percentage of 10.45%, indicating a slightly lower level of phone usage compared to the previous time intervals.

Table 6. Perceptions of college students about using mobile phones for education/learning

Statements	yes	no
A. Look up course schedule	69	1
A. Look up announcements	66	3
B. Email faculty/classmates	61	10
C. Read lecture notes	58	13
D. View lecture recording	12	57
E. Watch educational film	58	13
F. Do library/literature searches	28	39
G. Surf the web for research materials	69	1
H. Share notes with classmates	69	2
I. Take photos of my work	53	18
J. Make videos of my work	10	61

Table 6 reveals college students' perceptions about using mobile phones for educational purposes. The table contains ten statements (A-J) describing different educational/learning activities and indicates the percentage of respondents who responded with a yes or no answer. The table indicates that the majority of students responded positively to statements A, B, G, and H, with 69 students answering 'Yes' and only a few responding 'No.'" For statement C, 61 students overwhelmingly answered 'yes,' while ten respondents overwhelmingly answered 'no.'" For statement E, 58 students responded affirmatively, and 13 responded negatively." The majority of responses to statements D, F, and J were negative, with a higher proportion of students responding with a 'No' than a 'Yes.' Statement D, which relates to viewing lecture recordings, received 12 affirmative responses and 57 negative ones. Statement F, which focuses on conducting library/literature searches, received 28 yes and 39 no responses. Lastly, statement J, which is about making videos of their work, received 10 "Yes" responses and 61 "No" responses. According to Seabra (2013), mobile phones have a camera-like function that allows users to take and post pictures. They also have tremendous resources for recording video and audio, navigation, and GPS sensors.

Table 7. How often do respondents use mobile devices for the following in a typical college class?

	Very often	Often	Not very often	Never	Total
Note-taking	14.08%	33.80%	39.44%	12.68%	100%
Searching for lesson materials	49.30%	40.85%	8.45%	1.41%	100%
Texting friends	14.08%	29.58%	45.07%	9.86%	99%
Facebook posts	5.63%	11.27%	25.35%	57.75%	100%
Organizing your social life	4.23%	5.63%	43.66%	46.48%	100%
Looking up new words	64.79%	30.99%	1.41%	2.82%	100%

Table 7 provides information about the frequency with which respondents use mobile devices for various activities during a typical college class. The table contains five distinct activities, including note-taking, searching for lesson materials, texting friends, posting to Facebook, and organizing social life. Each activity is divided into four categories: "very often," "frequently,"

"not very often," and "never." As shown in Table 7, just over four-fifths (89%) of the sample said they used cell phones often or very often to search for course materials, while more than two-fifths (47%) took electronic meeting notes regularly or very frequently. However, a substantial number took part in extracurricular activities often or very often: 43% texted, 16% on Facebook, and 9% organized their social life. According to the table, note-taking is the most frequent activity among the respondents, with 14.08% indicating they use their mobile device "Very often," followed by 33.80% who use it "Often," 39.44% who use it "Not very often," and 12.68% who never use it. Another popular activity is searching for lesson materials, with 49.30% of respondents indicating they use their mobile device "very often," 40.85% who use it "Often," 8.45% who use it "Not very often," and 1.41% who never use it. The respondents indicate that texting friends is less popular among them, with only 14.08% indicating that they use their mobile device 'very often,' 29.58% indicating that they use it 'frequently,' 45.07% indicating that they use it 'not very often,' and 9.86% indicating that they never use it. Only 5.63% of Facebook users say they use their mobile device very often, 11.27% say they use it often, 25.35% say they don't, and 57.75% say they don't. The least popular activity among the respondents was organizing social life, with only 4.23% using their mobile device very often, 5.63% using it often, 43.66% using it not very often, and 46.48% never using it. Finally, looking up new words is an activity that 64.79% of respondents use "Very often," 30.99% use it "Often," 1.41% use it "Not very often," and 2.82% never use it.

Table 8. Survey results on the advantages of using cell phones in class: Ranking order

Answer choices	Responses
Vigorously promotes group learning, peer support and networking	56
Availability of open access materials (for all)	49
Social media motivates interaction and friendships among students	42
Mobile devices are widespread and exploited by students	41
Provides access to current learning	39
Acts as an alternative textbook, and enhances learning beyond the classroom	25
Qualifies students for the future application of mobile technologies	21
Distant and blended learning accessible if the learner wishes, when the learner wants	17
Other: Shares educational information with friends	1
Total respondents	71

Table 8 presents the survey results on the advantages of using cell phones in class. The respondents were asked to rank their opinions on the benefits of using mobile devices in a classroom setting. The table shows the ranking order and the number of responses for each option. The most highly ranked advantage was "vigorously promotes group learning, peer support, and networking," with 56 respondents choosing this option. ST2 suggests: "*The use of communication tools such as messaging, video conferencing, or collaborative platforms can foster teamwork and enhance the quality of collaborative efforts*". An additional advantage was "the availability of open access materials (for all)", with 49 respondents selecting this option. ST19 said: "*Students are provided with access to digital libraries and book-sharing platforms*

that offer open-access books". The other advantages of using cell phones in class, in descending order of ranking, were "Social media motivates interaction and friendships among students" (42), "Mobile devices are widespread and exploited by students" (41), "Provides access to current learning" (39), "Acts as an alternative textbook, and enhances learning beyond the classroom" (25), "Qualifies students for the future application of mobile technologies" (21), and "Distant and blended learning accessible if the learner wishes when the learner wants" (17). ST6 highlights: *"Using mobile phones may allow students to complete schoolwork more efficiently by accessing information and resources quickly and easily"*. ST26 said: *"Mobile phones provide access to various educational apps and platforms that offer interactive learning experiences"*. Only one respondent chose the "Other" option, which was "Shares educational information with friends." ST13 affirms: *"Students can share links, educational content, and engage in discussions with their friends and followers fosters a learning community and knowledge sharing"*. After that, students will be polled to gauge their level of satisfaction with using mobile devices in class and whether it truly supports students' learning. According to the findings, 45 percent agree to varying degrees, 23 percent disagree or strongly disagree, and the remaining 32 percent are neutral.

Table 9. Drawbacks to using mobile phones in the EFL class

Content	%
Cell phones mitigate the class's attention to themselves and others	69%
The teacher and/or teaching were mind-numbing, unattractive, or both	61%
Module materials not designed for cell phone viewing	48%
Teachers use cell phones during meetings but prohibit students from doing so in class; this is not reasonable.	48%
Bringing your own device can lead to theft	44%
Mobile phone addiction	44%
Debate about the use of cell phones in class has a bad effect on the current learning environment and teacher-student relationships	39%
Other: largely waste of time and money	7%
Total respondents	100%

Table 9 presents the drawbacks to using mobile phones in the EFL class. The table shows the different answers and the percentage of respondents who agreed with each statement. The statement with the highest percentage of agreement was "cell phones mitigate the class's attention to themselves and others" with 69%. ST5 states: *"The ringing, vibrating, or emitting of notification sounds from mobile devices can impede the flow of a class. This can disrupt both the phone user and those nearby, causing a distraction and hindering the learning process"*. This was followed by "Module materials not designed for cell phone viewing" with 61% agreement, and "The teacher and/or teaching were mind-numbing, unattractive, or both" with 48% agreement. ST1 highlights: *"Long documents with dense text, such as research papers, textbooks, or extensive reading assignments, may be difficult to read on a small cell phone screen. The need for frequent scrolling and zooming may hinder comprehension and hinder focus on the content"*. ST8 notes: *"Students may turn to their mobile phones to alleviate boredom"*

or engage through social media, games, or other forms of entertainment if the teacher primarily delivers one-way lectures without encouraging student participation or interaction. Just under more than two-fifths (44%) of the respondents also admitted that they firmly believed they were adamant that they were cell phone addicts and used them compulsively. ST6 affirms: "Students with a strong dependence on mobile devices often feel the need to engage in frequent phone use, even in potentially disruptive or inappropriate situations. During lectures, it is possible for individuals to engage in a constant glance at their mobile device, even when engaged in conversation". Only a small percentage of respondents (7%) mentioned that using mobile phones in class was a waste of time and money. ST4 mentions: "The use of mobile devices for non-educational purposes during class, such as browsing social media, playing games, or texting, may hinder students from achieving their educational objectives. This distraction of attention can be seen as a waste of valuable class time and a missed opportunity for focused learning".

Table 10. Where respondents normally use a mobile phone for learning activities

	Regularly	Often	Rarely	Never	Total
In the library	1.43%	11.43%	20.00%	67.14%	100%
In the lecture hall	10.00%	70.00%	14.29%	5.71%	100%
During tutorials	5.63%	43.66%	36.62%	14.08 %	100%
Off campus	25.86%	17.24%	8.62%	48.28%	100%
On the bus	1.52%	19.70%	22.73%	56.06%	100%
At home	59.15%	33.80%	7.04%	0%	100%

Table 10 provides information on where respondents normally use their mobile phones for learning activities. The table shows the percentage of respondents who use their mobile phones regularly, often, rarely, or never for learning activities in six different locations: the library, the lecture hall, during tutorials, off-campus, on the bus, and at home. The results indicate that the majority of respondents engage in mobile phone-based learning activities at home, with 59% indicating a regular use of mobile devices for learning purposes. The majority of respondents indicated that they frequently engage in mobile phone-based learning activities during lectures. A smaller percentage of respondents reported using their mobile phones for learning activities during tutorials (43.66% often, 36.62% rarely), off-campus (25.86% regularly, 17.24% often), in the library (11.43% often, 20.00% rarely), and on the bus (19.70% often, 22.73% rarely). Surprisingly, it is interesting to note that a significant proportion of respondents reported never using their mobile phones for learning activities in the library (67.14%) and during tutorials (14.08%). This suggests that some students may not find mobile devices useful for learning in these settings.

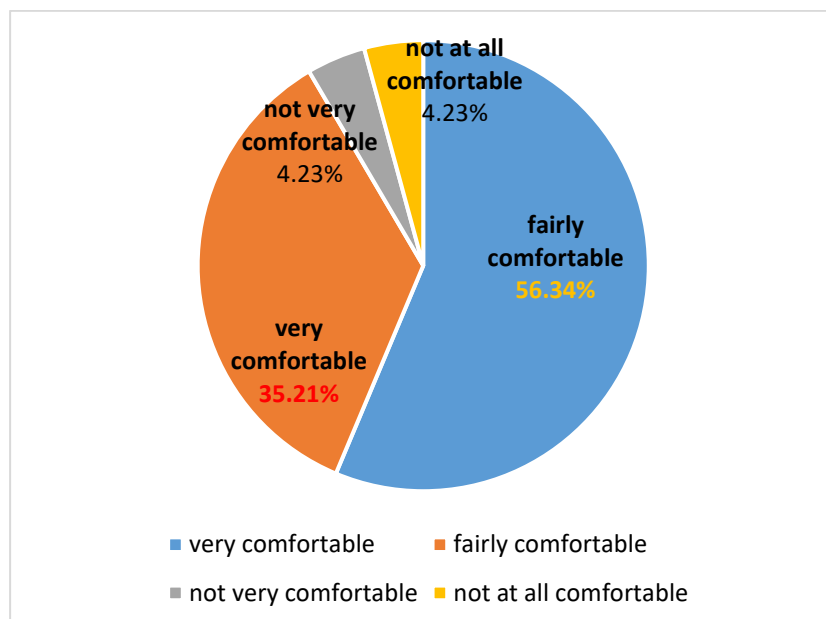


Figure 4. Level of comfort with the mobile phone use

As shown in Figure 4, it appears that the majority of respondents, approximately 56.34%, are comfortable with mobile phone use. This indicates that they have a high level of ease, familiarity, and satisfaction when using their mobile devices. Additionally, approximately 35.21% reported feeling comfortable with their mobile phone use. The level of comfort indicated is moderate, although not as strong or confident as those who occupy the 'very comfortable' category. These individuals may still be able to navigate their mobile devices effectively, but they may encounter occasional challenges or have areas where improvement is needed. Around 4.23% of respondents indicated they are uncomfortable with their mobile phone use. This suggests that they may encounter difficulties or lack confidence in operating their mobile devices. Certain features or functions might be confusing or challenging for them, which could lead to a less satisfying user experience. Furthermore, 4.23% of respondents expressed a lack of confidence in their mobile phone usage. These individuals may struggle significantly with using their mobile devices and may require additional guidance, training, or support to enhance their comfort level and overall user experience.

Analysis

Part One: Type of Respondents (Questions 1 to 4 from the survey) Of the respondents, 92.75% said they were female, and 7.25% were male. All survey respondents were from the Ho Chi Minh College of Foreign Economic Relations, doing an Intermediate Level of Business Communication in Fall 2020.

Part Two: Procedure and Practice, 67 out of 71 students (94.37%) reported owning at least one mobile phone. The number of students using mobile phones from 1-2 years is 50 (70.42%), 10 students (7.1%) have used mobile phones for 3-4 years, 5 students (7.04%) have been using it for 5-6 years and 2 students reported using it for more than 6 years.

Part Three: Students' attitudes towards mobile phone use More than a third of 36.6% of respondents agreed that mobile phones positively aided their learning, compared to 37.6% of

those who answered neutrally. Of these, just over a quarter (26.9%) of the respondents agreed that mobile phones help them plan their study in more detail, compared to 24.7%.

Part Four: Challenges Q13. *Does your teacher encourage you to use cell phones in and out of the classroom?* The majority of survey participants answered "yes". Surprisingly, some students said that teachers positively encourage them to use mobile devices to look up new words or when the teacher cannot explain some technical words or terms. The ST5 shared: *"I love using my mobile phone when I am looking up new words, writing essays, texting, taking photos and sharing lessons with classmates"*. In addition, students also use phones as a study aid, as the ST15 confirmed: *"I use it to warn of approaching homework deadlines"*. This has much in common with what can be found in the contemporary literature on the use of mobile devices as primitive tools for essay writing, note-taking, and report writing (Thornton & Houser, 2005). In addition, most respondents indicated that their teacher had utterly forbidden them to use cell phones in class. The ST23 found: *"Teachers often ban the use of cell phones during class hours because they see it as a great danger to students"* when they have a million-to-one chance. Also, another ST40 was quick to claim that none of his teachers *"supported [him] or even mentioned using cell phones to learn English because they think phones easily distract students from studying"*.

Q.14 *Are there any cell phone features that are not applied in the classroom that you would like to use during English learning?* Respondents gave satisfactory answers to this question. The ST45 hoped: *"The phone has many functions to support my learning such as recording, filming, searching, storing and having several useful software to support foreign language learning"*. However, it is amazing that Kiernan and Aizawa (2004) argued that their photo and video capture capabilities limit modern phones, as they are clearly not suitable for learning foreign languages. This is because these two functions are moving from verbal communication to images.

Q.15 *What do you think are the great hindrances students face when using cell phones in the EFL classroom?* There are technical and social limitations. Technical restrictions can be recognized by keywords such as size and small font. This is consistent with what Kiernan and Aizawa (2004) have pointed out about the disadvantages of learning on mobile devices, such as restrictions on word count, quantity of visible language and message length. Thornton and Houser (2005) also clearly stated that the small screen of mobile phones is one of the limitations of mobile learning. Furthermore, serious social limitations can be found in students who do not use [cell phones] seriously. Some students play games or listen to music, making class noisy and uncontrolled. In addition, some teachers do not allow mobile phones to be used in class because students pay little attention to the lesson.

Limitations and Direction for Future Research

Some important limitations of this study can be named as follows. Firstly, numerical data, obtained from 71 undergraduate students majoring in Economics at a college in a given country, therefore have a small sample size and are limited by the broad context. The results can therefore be seen as illustrative rather than representative (James, 2017). In addition, this study was mainly based on constructive feedback from students studying English for Specific Purposes. In addition, this article has not suggested workable solutions using the software on the phone, nor has it systematically examined the ideal amount of time to use the phone to increase the effectiveness of learning English. Most importantly, this paper should be repeated over and over again to critically examine and fully clarify the downside of the coin, teacher awareness and the barriers to it. Furthermore, the qualitative research that led to the selection of this study is one of the research's possible weaknesses, since it is frequently plagued with

wrong turns and mistakes. To make this report as meaningful as possible, I considered it important to emphasize some of the study's primary limitations, which are as follows:

- Missing data: As previously said, when I began the data analysis step, I observed that the answer from Google Docs was not what I expected. As a result, the chance to obtain reliable data was lost.
- Member checks: Due to the length of time between data collection and analysis in the study, I was only able to conduct one member check with the participant. However, this was beneficial since the participant affirmed the account was distinct and trustworthy.

Conclusion

Studies of cell phone use in the EFL classroom and language education are not a diverse topic. However, the topic of solutions to increase the feasibility and efficiency of using the phone as a useful learning tool never got too hot. Much research has been done in this area which has facilitated the use of cell phones in the classroom as a "*universal learning tool*" (Kiernan and Aizawa, 2004, p.80) and as a valuable teaching method (Thornton and Houser, 2005). Therefore, this study aims to pave the way for serious consideration and encouragement of the active use of cell phones in the EFL classroom. In addition, it is fundamental that the use of cell phones in the classroom indirectly frees up some organizational and institutional resources such as computer rooms and laboratories, especially for Email and internet use (Kiernan and Aizawa, 2004). The research results show that students support the use of mobile phones in foreign language classes and consider them an available and very practical tool to support learning. A very large majority of the participants were comfortable with mobile use in the EFL class.

Final thoughts

For most modern students, mobile technology has become their preferred tool. The message is heartfelt: teachers and students are at the heart of learning and teaching. No phone, no matter how powerful, can completely replace the true role of teachers in the classroom (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2007).



(Source: Internet)

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Biodata


Phan Thi Anh Nga, a peripatetic teacher, prolific writer, and good speaker, empower educators to think outside the box and critically examine their established practices by asking, "*What is best for my students?*" For over fifteen years, she has been inspiring researchers and teachers of all levels with the enormous power and real joy of the teaching and learning process. Phan began her career as a university-level teacher at the Hue University of Foreign Languages from 2005-2017. Now a classroom teacher at the Vietnam Aviation Academy - HCM city, Vietnam. She has taught students of all mixed language backgrounds and abilities. Her many interests include Professional Development, English for Specific Purposes, and Technology in Teaching and Learning English and all of which require genuinely creative thinking.


ChatGPT as a Grammar Checker for Japanese English Language Learners: A Comparison with Grammarly and ProWritingAid

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Abstract

The introduction of ChatGPT by OpenAI in November 2022 has garnered much discussion and debate. The technology's potential, which generates conversations in real-time using machine learning and natural language processing methods, has led to fears of job displacement (Lowrey, 2023) and student cheating (Mitchell, 2023; Cotton et al., 2023). However, the technology has not only brought fear, but also great expectations on the potential of the technology as a helpful educational aid (Ceres, 2023) and in expanding human potential (Hoffman, 2023). In this article, the use of ChatGPT is explored as a way to help students understand and improve their English grammar in comparison with Grammarly and ProWritingAid. A short text by a Japanese university is analyzed using Grammarly, ProWritingAid, and ChatGPT. The results found that, overall, ChatGPT provides the most helpful and best overall solution in helping Japanese English Language Learners (ELLs) with their grammar. Based on the results of the ChatGPT analysis, the application was introduced to first-year Japanese university students in a paragraph writing assignment. Questionnaire results on how students felt about the use of ChatGPT as a grammar-checker are presented.

Keywords: grammar checkers, ChatGPT, Grammarly, ProWritingAid, English

Introduction

Grammar check software has been available for quite some time. Grammarly was first released in 2009 (Lytvyn, 2022) and ProWritingAid in 2012 (Blogging Tips, n.d.). The development of grammar-checking software has allowed for the ability to detect errors in writing and provide corrective feedback automatically and efficiently (Yang Hye Jin, 2018). Over the past ten years, the popularity of these programs has increased, with Grammarly now having 30 million users ("About Us," n.d.). Both language learners and native speakers have found the use of such software to help improve their writing skills and gain increased confidence in their writing (O'Neill & Russell, 2019).

Literature Review

Many researchers (O'Neill, 2019; Perdana & Farida, 2019; Dizon & Gayed, 2021; Wang & Zhong, 2022) have investigated the use of Grammar check software as a helpful aid for English language learners (ELLs) in improving their writing skills. Tran and Nguyen (2021) found that the use of the grammar checker ProWritingAid benefited students in terms of improvement in the quality of their writing as well as confidence. According to Ghufroon and Rosyida (2018), ELLs often struggle with grammatical accuracy in their writing. Based on his experience in teaching Japanese university students for over the past 20 years, the author supports this finding, as many students make common grammatical mistakes in areas such as the use of articles, verb agreement, and tense. The author's experience supports Tokunaga's finding (2021) that there is a widely held, clichéd, and inaccurate belief that Japanese learners of English possess high grammatical accuracy. Japanese ELLs may find grammar correction software a helpful resource since errors can quickly and easily be located in a text, making it easier for learners to recognize and correct them (Fitriana & Nurazni, 2022). ELLs may additionally become better aware of the conventions of English grammar and punctuation, which can be beneficial for their overall language development as well as confidence (Cavaleri & Dianati, 2016). Based on a systematic review to examine the applications of grammar checkers in academic writing, Perdana and Farida (2019) found that such tools can be useful for detecting errors and providing corrective feedback. Ghaemi and Bayati (2021) came to a similar conclusion, with their research indicating that grammar-checking software benefitted EFL learners' writing ability and overall language development. An investigation by Chen & Pan (2022) into the impact of using grammar correction software on the writing performance of Chinese EFL learners also showed a positive effect on the learners' grammatical accuracy and fluency.

The autonomy and independence of ELLs may also be developed through the use of grammar check software (Cavaleri & Dianati, 2016; John & Woll, 2020). The use of technology in English language learning to foster autonomy, which can enhance student confidence, determination, and learning skills, is encouraged by Pham (2022). Grammar check software may be incorporated as part of a process writing approach at the draft stage before final submission. This may lead students to be less dependent on a teacher to check simple mistakes such as missing articles, verb agreement, and spelling, which they would be able to correct on their own before final submission. This would allow students to reflect on their writing to improve before final submission. Often it has been the case that students only receive grammar and spelling feedback after their writing assignment's final submission. This type of feedback at this stage may only end up receiving a cursory glance from students who may feel no further need to apply the feedback since the assignment, in their eyes, has already been completed. This may not be as deep a learning experience as when using a grammar checker to reflect on the errors found before submitting a final draft.

Teachers also benefit from the use of grammar checkers as considerable time is saved in not needing to correct and give feedback on basic grammatical errors and spelling mistakes when a grammar checker could easily be used to check such items (Tonicic, 2020; Al-Ahdal, 2020). According to Nguyen et al. (2022), the amount of time available to lecturers influenced their choice of focusing on correcting common mistakes as the most popular method of written corrective feedback (WCF) at Van Lang University. Having students use a grammar checker to check for common mistakes would allow teachers the time to evaluate student writing on a more holistic level rather than individual linguistic elements. The ability to convey ideas and meaning, the

organization of the writing, and the use of language, voice, and tone could be concentrated upon, giving students deeper and more meaningful feedback.

Student use of grammar checkers questionnaire

Before the availability of ChatGPT in November 2022, during the spring semester of 2022, students were encouraged to use grammar checkers when working on the final draft of their writing assignment. The author introduced students to Grammarly, ProWritingAid, Quilbot, Whitesmoke, and Ginger. Students were told that they might try any of the mentioned grammar checkers or any other that they come across in an internet search. Based on previous experience in using grammar checkers and a review of the literature (John & Wolf, 2020; Wang, 2022), the author cautioned students that they should not consider the resulting analysis as being infallible and as carefully considering whether the feedback is appropriate to the intended context of their writing.

At the end of the spring term, a short questionnaire was given to students regarding their experience in using grammar checkers. The questionnaire was administered ethically by explaining the purpose of the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary. The responses were collected anonymously. The replies were as follows:

Table 1. *The Use of Grammar Checkers by Japanese University Students (N=68)*

Question	Yes	No	Other
1. Was the grammar checker helpful?	66 (97.06%)	1 (1.47%)	1 (1.47%)
2. Was the grammar checker easy to use?	65 (95.59%)	2 (2.94%)	1 (1.47%)
3. Did the grammar checker find many mistakes?	59 (86.76%)	7 (10.29%)	2 (2.94%)
4. Did the grammar checker help you understand your mistakes?	61 (89.71%)	5 (7.35%)	2 (2.94%)

Results of the short questionnaire indicate that nearly all students found the use of grammar checkers helpful and easy to use. Although a large majority of students felt that the grammar checkers found many mistakes and helped them understand them, some students did not agree with this. In the case of not finding many mistakes, it may be that the student's writing was already sufficiently correct to begin with, or the number of errors was few. In the case of not helping to understand mistakes, it may be that the grammar checkers gave insufficient explanations as to why there were mistakes, or the explanations were unclear.

Comparison of Grammarly, ProWritingAid, and ChatGPT

Based on the results of a short questionnaire administered in the spring semester of 2021, students found the use of grammar checkers to help find grammar mistakes as well as be easy to use. The launch of ChatGPT in November 2022 sparked the author's interest in how it may be used as a grammar checker and how it would compare to other available grammar checkers. In the following section, a comparison is made between the more established grammar checkers Grammarly and ProWritingAid with that of ChatGPT, which is not strictly speaking a grammar checker, but whose functionality allows it to be used as one.

Wahyuda's (2022) comparison of Grammarly with ProWritingAid found that both could significantly improve the writing accuracy and fluency of the participants. Grammarly was found to be more effective for lower-level students, while ProWritingAid was found to be more appropriate for higher-level students. Although ChatGPT is not strictly speaking grammar check software, it can check grammar and provide advice in a similar way to that of Grammarly and ProWritingAid. The grammar checkers, along with ChatGPT, will be used in assessing a writing assignment by a first-year Japanese university student to determine their effectiveness and usefulness.

The use of the student's writing assignment in comparing the grammar check software with ChatGPT was conducted in an ethical manner through informed consent. The purpose and steps of the experiment were clearly explained to the student, including that their privacy and anonymity would be respected. To ensure that the student had a comprehensive understanding of the experiment, their consent to use their assignment as part of the analysis was requested, and they willingly consented. The following is the original student text used in the analysis:

I experienced a big earthquake when I was an elementary school student. Then, it was very dangerous that things that were around me fell in. Also, it cracks in the ground and causes power outages. I thought of two things to solve these problems. First, we should equip suitable things, that is water and preserved foods, etc. Second, we should know the evacuation route. Because it is too late after the disaster occurs, and there is a possibility of injury due to delay in evacuation.

Grammarly

Grammarly's interface consists of a simple and straightforward single page comprising of a text editor window, a sidebar with a list of potential errors, and a results section that summarizes all the errors found. The errors are divided into categories such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Clicking on each error brings up a detailed explanation of the mistake, as well as suggested corrections. The free version of Grammarly offers grammar and spelling checking along with basic reports and writing suggestions. The premium version offers a more advanced set of features, including plagiarism detection, advanced reports, and over 400 additional grammar rules (Grammarly, n.d.). The latest pricing of the premium version may be confirmed by visiting the Grammarly website. For the analysis, the premium version was used.

Results of Grammarly analysis

Grammarly found the following ten issues, with the suggestions below:

1. ~~have~~ - Incorrect verb forms. The verb to have appears unnecessary here.
2. ~~big-~~ a big - Determiner use (a/an/the/this, etc.). Correct article usage
3. ~~an elementary~~ - an elementary - Determiner use (a/an/the/this, etc.). Change the article.
4. ~~thing~~ - things - Incorrect noun number. Fix the agreement mistake.
5. ~~outage~~ -outages - Incorrect noun number. Fix the agreement mistake.
6. .First - Improper formatting. Add a space.
7. ~~thing~~ - things - Incorrect noun number. Fix the agreement mistake.
8. is- as - Confused words. Correct your spelling (suggested the word ‘as’).
9. ~~etc.~~ - ,etc. - Comma misuse within clauses. Add a comma.
10. ~~evacuation~~ - the evacuation. Determiner use (a/an/the/this, etc.). Correct article usage.

Grammarly indicated most of the simple mistakes in the text correctly. The explanations were short but easily understandable. However, it did not give any suggestions for the mistakes found in the sentence parts “very dangerous that thing that is around me fall in,” and “we should equip suitable thing.”

ProWritingAid

ProWritingAid can be installed by using the Google Chrome extension. Once installed, users will be able to use ProWritingAid directly in the browser. It was initially unclear how the extension is to be used when analyzing text, which made its use slightly more confusing than that of Grammarly.

The ProWritingAid interface is similar to that of Grammarly. However, the interface is more detailed and includes a toolbar with a choice of options and customization settings. The text editor, where users can paste their text, is in the middle of the screen. The results are shown on the left side of the screen. As with Grammarly, the user can simply copy and paste their text into the window. The software scans the text and provides feedback on issues such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, readability, and style. An overall score is provided, as well as scores for each type of error and an overview of the document’s readability and style. It also provides a summary of the errors, including the number of errors, the type of errors, and the number of words affected. The results it gives are potentially more comprehensive and detailed than those of Grammarly.

ProWritingAid offers several different pricing options. The free version offers basic features such as in-depth text analysis, style and readability checks, and writing improvement suggestions. The Premium additionally offers unlimited word count, advanced style improvements, customizable writing suggestions, citations, and collaboration. The latest pricing for the Premium version may be confirmed by visiting the ProWritingAid website. The Premium version was used for the analysis.

Results of ProWritingAid Analysis

An analysis of the student text resulted in the finding of six errors. These were:

1. a - a possible wrong determiner
2. power - a missing determiner
3. .(period) - The punctuation mark '.' may require a space after it. Consider adding the space.
4. is - Possible verb agreement error
5. etc. - Consider adding a comma before 'etc'
6. evacuation - Possible missing determiner.

ProWritingAid found the same but fewer issues than Grammarly despite the greater range of and detail of analysis offered. It also missed the same mistakes as Grammarly had, as described in the previous section. The impression given by ProWritingAid was that it was more suited to the analysis of longer passages to which its larger range of check options could better be applied. In comparison to Grammarly, it seemed slightly less capable of finding errors in short texts. The explanations given in the suggestions were less clear and direct than in Grammarly.

ChatGPT

ChatGPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) is an AI-powered natural language processing (NLP) platform. It uses a combination of machine learning and natural language processing to generate human-like responses. Its abilities are far beyond that of a grammar checker. It can write blogs, summarize text, write advertisements, and even code. Its range of capabilities has been met with both a sense of apprehension as well as excitement, as mentioned at the beginning of the article. For the purpose of this article, its application in assisting Japanese ELLs with their grammar will be described in comparison with Grammarly and ProWritingAid.

The ChatGPT interface is simple and intuitive. The main page consists of a text box where users can enter their prompts or questions and a 'send' button to activate a response. Chat GPT is available as a free service during times of low demand. It also has a paid version that offers access at times of high demand, faster response speed, and priority access to new features. The free version was used for the student text analysis. Although there were times of high demand when the software could not be used, these periods were short in duration, usually only lasting a few minutes.

Results of ChatGPT Analysis

In analyzing the student text, the following prompt was used, followed by pasting the student text: *What grammatical, spelling, or vocabulary mistakes are in the following text?:*

ChatGPT found seven issues in the student text. The output was as follows:

1. "I experienced a big earthquake" because "I have experienced a big earthquake" should be corrected. The reason is "a" should be used before "big" to indicate that the earthquake was a single, specific event.
2. "when I was an elementary school student" because "when I was an elementary school student" should be corrected. The reason is "an" should be used before a word that starts with a vowel sound

(e.g., "an elephant," "an apple").

3. "it was very dangerous because things around me were falling" because "it was very dangerous that thing that is around me fall in" should be corrected. The reason is "things" is the plural form of "thing" and should be used to describe more than one object, and "was falling" is the correct verb tense to describe events that happened in the past.

4. "cracks in the ground appeared" because "it cracks in the ground" should be corrected. The reason is "appeared" is a more appropriate verb to describe the development of cracks in the ground.

5. "we should equip ourselves with suitable things such as water and preserved foods, etc." because "we should equip suitable thing that is water and preserved foods, etc." should be corrected. The reason is "ourselves" should be included to indicate that the subject of the sentence (we) is performing the action, "things" is the plural form of "thing" and should be used to describe more than one object, and "such as" is a more appropriate conjunction to introduce a list of examples than "that is".

6. "because it is often too late after a disaster occurs" because "because it is too late after the disaster occurs" should be corrected. The reason is "often" is a more appropriate adverb to describe the frequency of events than "always" or "never," and "occurs" is the correct verb tense to describe events that happen in the present.

7. "and there is a possibility of injury if there is a delay in the evacuation" because "and there is a possibility of injury due to delay in the evacuation" should be corrected. The reason is "if" is a more appropriate conjunction to introduce a condition than "due to."

The ChatGPT analysis found fewer errors, but this was primarily due to Grammarly and ProWritingAid automatically including formatting and punctuation errors in the initial analysis. A subsequent follow-up prompt, "What are the formatting and punctuation errors in the following" was given to ChatGPT to further analyze the student text, which found additional errors. In order to focus on the main purpose of the article in terms of checking grammar, the formatting and punctuation errors found will not be discussed. The grammar mistakes found were described in much more detail than that of either Grammarly or ProWritingAid. The explanations regarding errors are clearer and direct, making the specific reasons behind why they are considered to be errors much more understandable.

ChatGPT not only provides more detailed explanations but for lower-level Japanese English language learners, it is possible to have the explanations translated by ChatGPT so that the student may easily understand them. The following prompt was used followed by pasting the analysis in English: *Translate the following explanations into Japanese, but only translate the explanations so that a Japanese person can understand their mistakes:* Below is a translation of the analysis given by ChatGPT:

1. 「I have experienced big earthquake」は、「a」を「big」の前に使用することで、地震が単一の特定のイベントであることを示し、「I experienced a big earthquake」であるべきです。
2. 「when I was a elementary school student」は、母音音から始まる単語の前に「an」を使用することで、「when I was an elementary school student」であるべきです。
3. 「it was very dangerous that thing that is around me fall in」は、「things」が「thing」の複

数形であり、複数のオブジェクトを表すために使用されるべきであり、「were falling」が過去のイベントを表すのに適した過去形であるため、「it was very dangerous because things around me were falling」であるべきです。

4. 「it cracks in the ground」は、「appeared」が地面に割れ目が現れることを表すのに適した動詞であるため、「cracks in the ground appeared」であるべきです。

5. 「we should equip suitable thing that is water and preserved foods etc.」は、「ourselves」を含むことで、文の主語（we）が行動を行うことを示し、「things」が「thing」の複数形であり、複数のオブジェクトを表すために使用されるべきであり、「such as」が例を示すために「that is」よりも適した接続詞であるため、「we should equip ourselves with suitable things such as water and preserved foods, etc.」であるべきです。

6. 「because it is too late after the disaster occurs」は、「often」が「always」や「never」よりも頻度を表すのに適した副詞であり、「occurs」が現在起こっているイベントを表すのに適した現在形であるため、「because it is often too late after a disaster occurs」であるべきです。

7. 「and there is a possibility of injury due to delay in evacuation」は、「if」が条件を導入するために「due to」よりも適した接続「and there is a possibility of injury if there is a delay in evacuation」であるべきです。

The subsequent investigation demonstrated that prompts need not only to be in English; they may also be given in Japanese. The prompt ‘次のテキストの文法、スペル、語彙の間違ひは何ですか?’ (‘What are the grammatical, spelling, and vocabulary mistakes in the following text?’) resulted in an English output similar to that described above. When the Japanese prompt was appended with ‘日本語で答える’ (‘answer in Japanese’), the output was similar to the translated version previously described.

As ChatGPT requires the use of prompts, teachers should provide students with example prompts, not only to use ChatGPT correctly but also so that all students receive similar types of responses and feedback from the software. Teachers may also ask students to submit the responses received as part of the process of writing approach as well as to see if the responses are appropriate. The teacher may then add any further suggestions to the responses, which the students can use in writing their final submission. After trying the examples, students may experiment with the creation of their own prompts, depending on the requirements of the analysis, such as checking further for formatting, punctuation, and sentence structure.

The fear with the use of ChatGPT may be that students skip entirely the use of the software only for grammatical analysis and have a text written entirely by ChatGPT of which it is fully capable (Jimenez, 2023). This may be prevented by having students submit drafts of their writing before using the software. ChatGPT may be used as part of a process writing approach. This may begin with brainstorming, writing an outline, writing one or more drafts, and then having their draft checked using ChatGPT as a grammar and writing checker. This process writing approach may be part of a portfolio submitted by a student. By ascertaining each of these steps along the process writing approach process, the teacher may be able to see the steps that the student has gone through in reaching their final submission, thereby circumventing cheating in having the final submission

written by ChatGPT rather than through their own effort.

Introduction of ChatGPT to Japanese university students

Based on a comparison of ChatGPT with Grammarly and ProWritingAid as grammar checkers and considering the potential use of ChatGPT in a classroom setting, the application was integrated into a paragraph writing assignment at the beginning of the new semester to assist in checking student writing. The participants were first-year Japanese university students.

For the first assignment of the new semester, the students were asked to compose a paragraph. Prior to beginning their writing, the structure of a paragraph was explained, including the importance of a topic sentence, supporting sentences with details, and a concluding sentence. A model paragraph was provided as an example. Next, the students brainstormed ideas for their own paragraphs and created outlines for their topic sentences, supporting sentences with details, and conclusions. The students were then instructed to complete their paragraphs for the next class.

In the subsequent class, students engaged in a peer review activity to assess and give feedback on each other's paragraphs. Following the peer review activity, ChatGPT was introduced to the students as a tool to conduct a further check of their written work. The instructions for the sign-up process were explained to the students. This was followed by how to use prompts to have their paragraphs reviewed. To facilitate this, the following model prompt was given to students to copy and paste:

For the following paragraph, 1. Check the spelling, grammar, and format. What spelling, grammar, and formatting mistakes were found? 2. Explain all the spelling, grammar, and formatting mistakes in detail:

The students were instructed to copy and paste their paragraph following the above prompt and then click the 'send' button to view the results. The students were told that after viewing the results, they could have them translated to Japanese by copying and pasting the prompt "Translate the following to Japanese," followed by copying and pasting the English explanation and then clicking the 'send' button.

Questionnaire related to the use of ChatGPT to check writing

Students were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their experience in using ChatGPT to check their writing. The questionnaire was administered ethically by explaining the purpose of the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary. The responses were collected anonymously. The close-ended and open-ended responses are given in the following sections.

*Close-ended responses*Table 2. *Japanese University Students' Use of ChatGPT: Multiple-Choice Responses (N=69)*

Question	Yes	No	Other
1. Was ChatGPT easy to use?	62 (89.86%)	7 (10.14%)	0 (0%)
2. Were the prompts easy to use?	59 (85.51%)	8 (11.59%)	2 (2.9%)
3. Did ChatGPT help you correct your paragraph?	66 (95.65%)	3 (4.35%)	0 (0%)
4. Did ChatGPT find many mistakes?	65 (94.20%)	3 (4.35%)	1 (1.45%)
5. Did you translate the English explanation to Japanese?	62 (89.86)	7 (10.14%)	0

Open-Ended Responses

a. Explain your answers to questions 1 and 2.

1: "It is easy to use."

2: "ChatGPT suggested many corrections immediately. Honestly, I think it makes writing paragraphs easy."

3: "Only sending my paragraph was very helpful to check it."

4: "ChatGPT is easy to use because I only need to use a prompt."

5: "It is so useful."

6: "ChatGPT is very accurate and easy to use."

7: "Input and the answer come out immediately."

8: "You can easily correct and translate."

9: "I only have to copy and paste to check the spelling and grammar."

10: "ChatGPT is easy to use and very enjoyable."

11: "ChatGPT is easy to use, just like talking to a human."

12: "ChatGPT was easy to use, and the prompts are easy to use."

13: "I used ChatGPT for the first time, so it is a little difficult for me to use it."

14: "After the teacher's explanation, I could use it."

15. "I was surprised by ChatGPT. I never used it before."
16. "I used ChatGPT for the first time, so I feel it is a little difficult."
17. "I could use ChatGPT. Copy and paste is easy."
18. "It is very easy to use."
19. "I think ChatGPT is easy once I get used to it."
20. "Using ChatGPT was not difficult."

b. Explain your answers to questions 3 and 4.

- 1: "I found my mistakes."
- 2: "It taught me native speaker grammar."
- 3: "I thought it was understandably accurate."
- 4: "I thought it was a very useful function for practicing English composition."
- 5: "The use of space was pointed out."
- 6: "I understood how my paragraph was viewed from a third-party perspective."
- 7: "ChatGPT pointed out spelling and grammar mistakes and gave me better answers."
- 8: "By simply sending an English sentence you have created, you will be able to create a more persuasive English sentence by not only pointing out spelling and grammatical errors but also adding information such as details about the topic."
- 9: "I found I made a lot of mistakes by using ChatGPT, so it was useful."
- 10: "I think it was so accurate."
- 11: The fixed sentences were more accurate and concise. Fortunately, my writing had only minor mistakes, so I rewrote it a bit."
- 12: "ChatGPT explained not only my mistakes but better expression."
- 13: "Answers by ChatGPT are easy to understand."
- 14: "It was very helpful for me to add and correct things I didn't understand."
- 15: "ChatGPT found 11 mistakes."

c. If you answered *Yes* to question 5, was the translation easy to understand? If you answered *No*, what is the reason why you didn't translate the explanation?

- 1: "The translation was easy to understand."
- 2: "Yes, it is easy to understand and fun."
- 3: "I can understand it easily."
- 4: "Very easy to understand!"
- 5: "Yes, it was easy to understand for Japanese speakers."
- 6: "I didn't translate the explanation because I want to read it in English to study."
- 7: "It's not easy to understand."
- 8: "Answers translated to Japanese were fluent."
- 9: "Easy to read in natural Japanese."
- 10: "Easy to understand with no difficult words."
- 11: "Perfect! Amazing!"
- 12: "I really understand the translation."
- 13: "I could understand without translating."
- 14: "The English of the AI was easy to understand."

The results of the questionnaire overwhelmingly indicate that students found ChatGPT easy to use and very helpful in checking their paragraph writing for spelling, grammar, and formatting mistakes. Students were able to find many errors even after a peer check was conducted. Almost all students found the indicated errors to be easy to understand, particularly with the option to have the English explanations translated, which some students did not require or preferred to only use the original English explanation for further English study.

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, Grammarly, ProWritingAid, and ChatGPT all offer the opportunity for ELLs to have their writing checked for grammatical mistakes to improve their writing. Grammarly, ProWritingAid, and ChatGPT can be used to check for errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Grammarly and ProWritingAid give explanations and advice, which is short but helpful, with ProWritingAid being less direct and clear than Grammarly and ChatGPT. The visual interfaces of Grammarly and ChatGPT are straightforward and intuitive. ProWritingAid is a more sophisticated grammar and spelling checker than Grammarly. It has a more complex visual interface, with multiple tabs and menus for different types of checks. It also offers detailed explanations and advice, as well as features such as text comparison and style guides. The use is more complex than Grammarly and English language learners may find it more difficult to pick up. Grammarly is better suited for shorter pieces of writing and ProWritingAid for longer pieces due to its greater range of check options. ChatGPT provides far more detailed and clearer explanations than that of either Grammarly or ProWritingAid. The free versions of Grammarly and ProWritingAid may be adequate for simple checks. With Grammarly, however, before having used the premium version, it was found that requiring login details led to receiving constant emails to upgrade. This led the author to be reluctant to recommend Grammarly to students. It was suggested to students to use an alternative email address where they would not mind receiving spam. There may have been a way to unsubscribe from such emails, but it was felt that it shouldn't have had to reach this level. This was far less of an issue with ProWritingAid, and such email solicitations were never received from OpenAI's ChatGPT.

In conclusion, grammar check software has the potential to help English language ELLs improve their writing skills and become more aware of English conventions. The results of a short questionnaire showed that most students found grammar checkers to be helpful and easy to use. Grammar checkers can be beneficial for both students and teachers. They can help ELLs become more autonomous language learners by allowing them to correct their own mistakes before submission. This allows students to engage in a deeper learning experience while teachers save time by not having to correct basic grammar and spelling mistakes. Grammar checkers can also help teachers provide more meaningful feedback by allowing them to focus more on higher-level elements of writing. In comparing Grammarly, ProWritingAid, and ChatGPT, ChatGPT would be the most highly recommended due to the detail of its analysis and easy-to-understand explanations, as well as the added benefit of translating explanations into Japanese. This would make it particularly ideal for lower-level Japanese ELLs. Based on the comparison results, ChatGPT was introduced to first-year Japanese university students as part of a paragraph writing assignment. Students found ChatGPT to be easy to use and highly effective in finding errors in their paragraph

writing assignments.

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A Phenomenological Inquiry of Code-Switching Among College Students

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Abstract

Code-switching is the use of two languages in discourse to convey the intended message. The study investigated the phenomenon of code-switching during oral participation, specifically the experiences and contexts of the purposively selected students of ABC College in Cagayan de Oro City. The Phenomenology Design was employed in this study to explore the participants' actual experiences to identify the essence of human experiences. This study included six students from different programs of ABC College who experienced code-switching. The analysis was done using Creswell's (2007) simplified version of Moustakas's modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data. The finding of the study showed that the participants switched between codes during oral participation to support their communication skills and to feel more comfortable and confident in participating. The findings demonstrated that the phenomenon of code-switching as used by the students tended to come out when they were asked, wanted to express themselves more, encountered difficulty using the English language, were afraid to commit grammar errors, had difficulty recalling, lacked vocabulary, and when teachers allowed them to switch codes. This implies that the participants' experiences and contexts of code-switching during oral participation are reasons for code-switching. Thus, this study recommended facilitating the use of code-switching during oral participation in moderation for students to practice proficiency in their second language, English.

Keywords: Code-switching, Oral Participation, Phenomenological Inquiry

Introduction

Code-Switching refers to the utilization of two or more languages within a sentence or discourse. It is a phenomenon observed in bilingual and multilingual societies where it is a natural merging of languages during a conversation that often occurs between speakers who commonly have two or more languages to better communicate and convey ideas meaningfully.

Bullock and Toribio (2012) stated that code-switching is the simultaneous use of two or more languages in a discourse by multilingual people. This suggests that when people choose to communicate and participate in a conversation, they use a specific code, whether it be a particular language, dialect, or style, as resources to find more effective ways to communicate. Similarly, Moghadam et al. (2012) and Jamshidi and Navehbraim (2013) added that code-switching is the process of shifting from one language to another in a conversation.

Code-switching is the method of altering language in a conversation as a communication strategy to convey the intended message. The researchers observed that individuals code-switch for several reasons. In a classroom setting, students code-switch to share their thoughts and ideas if they cannot express them using a specific language. As a result, they explain their ideas during conversational situations and oral recitations by combining their first language and the English language. This phenomenon is considered an empirical gap that this study seeks to fill by inquiring about the lived experiences and contexts of students who are code-switching during oral participation.

Based on the foregoing observations of the researchers, studies supported the idea that code-switching is a phenomenon that happens in a multilingual society where people communicate using two or more languages by alternating them during a conversation to convey the intended message. Furthermore, the phenomenon of code-switching during oral participation has been favored as it makes for more interactions and engagements in the classroom setting, especially when learners have trouble speaking using the English language (Jamshidi & Navehbraim, 2013; Subon & Tarmin, 2021; Bhatti et al., 2018; Liwasni et al., 2015). In the Philippine setting, Villanueva, L., & Gamiao, B. (2022) found that code-switching is a big help in facilitating better teaching and learning in Philippine college classrooms. The aforementioned studies have observed that code-switching is used for several reasons, most commonly as a communication strategy and by language users at times when they are having trouble speaking a specific language.

In Cagayan de Oro City, students in multilingual classrooms are mixing two or more languages if they find difficulty expressing their ideas in the English language during oral participation. Hence, this study aimed to investigate the phenomenon of code-switching in a classroom setting during an oral discourse. Specifically, it intends to explore the experiences and contexts of the lived experiences of the students who are code-switching in the classroom during oral participation in ABC College.

Literature review

This study assumed that code-switching is one of the communication strategies used by students to support their oral participation, where they mix two or more languages to convey and explain their thoughts and ideas if they cannot express them well in English. This assumption is supported by Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory (1968) and the Theory of Semilingualism by Hansegard (1968).

Accordingly, Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory (1968) holds that people interact with their culture and society to form the social worlds they live in by engaging in experiences and reflecting on those experiences which knowledge is created through language use and social interaction, making it a shared experience. Another theory that supports the argument of this study is the theory of Semilingualism by Hansegard (1968) which suggests that one has half the knowledge of both his first and second languages. This means that the speaker understands the fundamentals of the language but falls short in other areas of linguistic competence, such as vocabulary size, grammatical correctness, unconscious language processing, language creation,

mastery of language functions, and meaning.

Moreover, Vygotsky's Social Constructivism theory and Semilingualism theory are used as a foundation of this study in looking at the experiences that influence an individual's language learning, how learners acquire, experience, and use language in interacting with the world, specifically their peers and teachers in a classroom setting which interactive situations influence others to use and develop their language and widen it. Furthermore, the Semilingualism theory is used as a foundation in this study, assuming a likeness to the nature of code-switching, a phenomenon that occurs in a multilingual society where language users speak and communicate using two or more languages in a discourse to convey a message and the occurrence of the combined half knowledge of the first and second language used by an individual for various reasons. It was also believed that individual's code-switch because of language deficiencies, leading them to switch languages to express themselves better. Thus, the aforementioned theories are utilized as a foundation of this study as it provides further explanation of how an individual experience language through social interaction as they interact with others in a classroom set-up and in any context.

Research Questions

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

1. What are the experiences of college students who are code-switching during oral participation?
2. What are the contexts of the lived experiences of college students who are code-switching?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The participants of this study were six (6) college students from different programs of a private catholic college in Cagayan de Oro City. Following Polkinghorne's (1989) selection of participants, phenomenological researchers interviewed six college students who had all gone through similar experiences. The participants of the study are selected based on the criteria: students that are not known by the researchers, are recommended by teachers who code-switch during oral discourse, know the nature of the study, and are engaged in oral participation in responding to questions on learning their course subjects. Moreover, the participants are selected using the purposive sampling method wherein the researchers purposely selected individuals from the population based on the criteria to gather the experiences of the chosen participants that can supply the important information to meet the study's goals.

Design of the Study

This study used a Phenomenology Design, an approach in studying experiences wherein researchers identify the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). In this study, phenomenology uncovered the experiences and contexts of the lived experiences

of college students who are code-switching using the Cebuano/Visayan and English languages during oral participation.

Data collection & analysis

The researchers asked permission from the Dean of every program in ABC College, Cagayan De Oro City to elicit responses from the purposely selected students through a letter for legal permission. After the approval, the researchers go through the data gathering of the study to collect responses from the participants during the scheduled semi-structured interview via Google Meet to further investigate the use of code-switching during oral participation. Before conducting the interview, the researchers first gave an informed consent form to the selected respondents of the study. Once consent was granted, the researchers introduced the study to the participants, and were then gathered in a private live video conference where an in-depth interview was administered to gain more in-depth responses regarding their code-switching practices during an oral discourse in class. The duration of the interview lasted for 40-45 minutes each participant. To protect the data of the participants, recordings of the collected responses that are stored digitally are deleted.

The research instrument used in this study is a self-made research question that experts of the field validate for a scheduled semi-structured interview in investigating the phenomenon of code-switching of the participants. The research instrument included questions for interviews to further gain in-depth data about the lived experiences of the participants of the study who are code-switching. These questions include: (1) While attending your online classes, do you have experiences where you are code-switching? (2) Can you share more about these experiences? (3) How does it feel when you are code-switching? Is it fulfilling? Do you feel uncomfortable? (4) What are the situations that encourage or force you to code-switch? (5) What pushed you to code switch? (6) Can you share more about your lived experiences in that context?

Analysis of the responses was done using Creswell's (2007) simplified version of Moustakas's modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data. This analysis involved the following: description of experiences with the phenomenon, bracketing, the listing of significant statements, coding and clustering of significant statements to form themes, producing textural descriptions of experiences, the building of structural descriptions, and combining descriptions of essences. The analysis allows researchers to explore the respondents' experiences, perspectives, and opinions on code-switching.

To ensure the transparency of this research study, the Trustworthiness framework of Lincoln and Guba's Four-Dimensions Criteria (1985) which includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, was observed. For credibility, the researchers assure participants that the interview is solely conducted for research purposes only and ensure a prolonged engagement to instill confidence that the findings based on participants' perspectives are accurate, reliable, and realistic. For transferability, the researchers see to it that the detailed descriptions of the participants' lived experiences and contexts of code-switching are captured. For dependability, the researchers ensure that the study's process is traceable and thoroughly recorded. For confirmability, the researchers ensure that interpretations and findings are unmistakably drawn from the data, necessitating a justification for the researcher's conclusions

and interpretations and that data were double-checked during data collection and analysis and were returned to the participants for verification.

Results/Findings and discussion

Four themes emerged in the findings. These are academic preparedness, language barrier, emotional burden, and pedagogical culture. These themes are based on the cluster of sub-themes as shown in Table 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Table 1 shows the extracted statements from the narratives of the participants, coded and clustered as sub-themes. The sub-themes and the implied meanings are considered significant in the foundation of the four main themes.

Table 1. College Students' Experiences and Contexts of Lived Experiences of Code-Switching During Oral Participation

Main Themes	Sub-themes	Significant Statements	General Description of the Theme
Theme 1: Academic Preparedness	Expression and Delivery of Ideas	<i>...code switching is the best way to express my ideas ... I can absolutely understand what I am saying and I can express my thoughts and opinions...</i> (Participant 2, Transcript 6, Lines 239 – 241)	Expression of ideas, illustrating answers, expounding thoughts and opinions caused participants to code-switch.
	Grasping of Information	<i>...code switching has impacted my way of learning as it allows me to understand our discussion...</i> (Participant 5, Transcript 21, Lines 953 – 954)	Code switching aids better in understanding and grasp of information as well as being understood.
	Mastery of Topic	<i>...if I know the topic, I can express and answer using the English language straight but if I am not knowledgeable on the topic, then it pushes me to code switch.</i> (Participant 4, Transcript 23, Lines 1047 – 1048).	Code-switching is due to the full grasp of the topic and the anxious mind of stating wrong and misunderstood concepts in explaining an unfamiliar topic in class.
	Fulfillment	<i>...it is fulfilling for me because I can freely express my ideas.</i> (Participant 1, Transcript 1, Lines 42 – 44)	Fulfillment is a feeling of satisfaction once ideas and answers are expressed by switching codes.

Data to identify the participant's experiences and context of the lived experiences of code-

switching were obtained from semi-structured interviews. Participants were given pseudonyms (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6) for confidentiality purposes.

Theme 1: Academic Preparedness (*Expression and Delivery of Ideas, Grasping of Information, Mastery of Topic, Fulfillment*)

Academic Preparedness is one's way of switching codes in expressing ideas and grasping of information during oral participation. This theme includes the Expression and Delivery of Ideas, Grasping of Information, Mastery of Topic, and Fulfillment.

Expression and Delivery of Ideas

Expression and Delivery of Ideas is a manifestation that pushes participants to code-switch from the English language to Cebuano/ Visayan language. According to Alang and Idris (2018), students enjoy the class more, feel more at ease, and feel like they learn more about the subject with code-switching. It was believed that the practice of code-switching in the classroom had enhanced students' accomplishment in terms of subject knowledge since they are better able to learn new vocabulary and respond to the lecturers' questions making them express and explain their ideas more effectively compared to using the target language. These were similarly expressed by Participants 2 and 3 regarding their use of code-switching. "...code-switching is the best way to express my ideas ... I can absolutely understand what I am saying and I can express my thoughts and opinions..." (P2, Transcript 6, Lines 239 – 241). "...I can express my thoughts and opinions if I do code-switching to the Visayan language, unlike English only..." (P3, Transcript 9, Lines 386 - 387).

The participants expressed that code-switching helps them to express their ideas more clearly. This is supported by the study of Caparas and Gustilo (2017), which stated that code-switching improves speakers' comfort level when speaking and encourages spontaneous expression. The responses revealed that switching between codes allowed participants to communicate things they could not express thoroughly in the target language.

Grasping of Information

Grasping of Information is an instance that led participants to switch codes which makes it easier for those who don't speak English to understand the subject. Arumugam et al. (2017), stated that code-switching increased academic debate in group conversations and gave restricted students room to better grasp the topic. Participants 3 and 5 mentioned that when they code-switch, both they and their listeners can grasp what they are attempting to convey. Participants 3 and 5 specifically shared that they switch codes for better understanding "...I code-switch to better express and have a better understanding." (P3, Transcript 9, Line 389). "...code-switching has impacted my way of learning as it allows me to understand our discussion..." (P5, Transcript 21, Lines 953 – 954).

Code-switching has a positive effect on the students' understanding as it is efficient in the classroom and brings students self-confidence and a sense of comfort (Promnath & Tayjasa, 2016). In addition, the use of code-switching allows low-proficient students to follow the lessons better than merely using English.

Mastery of Topic

Code-switching is due to certain circumstances in terms of the participants' knowledge and mastery of the topic being discussed in the class. Liswani (2015) stated that the mother tongue was used in English-medium classrooms for classroom administration, analysis, clarifying faults, and assessing comprehension. He said it was a tool that aids students in understanding and internalizing their lessons. Participant 2 stated "*...it's a little bit of pressure for me because you have to be fluent in your answer.*" (P2, Transcript 6, Line 268) "*...If I know the topic, I can express and answer using the English language straight, but if I am not knowledgeable on the topic, then it pushes me to code-switch.*" (P4, Transcript 23, Lines 1047 – 1048).

Nordin et al. (2013) emphasized that code-switching aids students' comprehension. This seemed to be helpful for students who are prone to code-switching due to a lack of English language proficiency and do not major in English. In order to communicate effectively, individual constantly switch back and forth between their first and second languages.

Fulfillment

Fulfillment is the feeling the participants feel every time they alternate two languages as they feel satisfied and feel great. All of the participants admitted that code-switching is fulfilling for them. Below are the participants' responses:

"...It is fulfilling for me because I can freely express my ideas..."

(P1, Transcript 1, Lines 42 – 44)

"...code-switching is the best way to express my ideas...I can absolutely understand What I am saying and I can express my thoughts and opinions..."

(P2, Transcript 6, Lines 239 – 241).

"...It is fulfilling since I can express my thoughts thoroughly...and it is really Comfortable to use our first language..." (P3, Transcript 9 -10, Lines 419 – 422).

"...It is fulfilling for me because it enables me to express my thoughts and opinion..."

(P4, Transcript 15, Lines 661 – 663)

"...It is fulfilling because it allows me to express myself and be understood..."

(P5, Transcript 20, Line 933)

"...it is fulfilling because it allows me to answer the questions of my professor explicitly..." (P6, Transcript 25, Lines 1170 – 1171).

The responses by the participants imply that their use of code-switching made them express their ideas thoroughly, which made it fulfilling. This was supported by Liwanag and Labor (2016), which stated that students' use of their first and second languages interchangeably in conversation is perceived as fulfilling relational and referential functions and promotes effective communication. It allows students to build confidence levels as well as to be active

participants during oral recitation.

The findings showed that code-switching helps students increase communication skills, express themselves, grasp information, and boost their confidence level. Nevertheless, this also helped them to enjoy it more without thinking of language use.

Table 2. College Students’ Experiences and Contexts of Lived Experiences of Code-Switching During Oral Participation

Main Themes	Sub-themes	Significant Statements	General Description of the Theme
Theme 2: Language Barriers	Difficulty Explaining in English	<i>...I encountered difficulties explaining using the English language and I better explain my thoughts if I code switch...</i> (P5, Transcript 19, Lines 851 – 852)	Code-switching is due to encounters of having difficulty explaining and elaborating ideas and answers in the English language when asked randomly and unprepared during oral participation.
	Grammar Conscious	<i>“...there are times that I am afraid of committing grammar errors...”</i> (Participant 3, Transcript 9, Line 396)	Code-switching is due to the conscious awareness of the target languages' sentence and grammar structure and construction which can cause embarrassment if an error is made.
	Insufficient Vocabulary	<i>...I code switch because I cannot understand some terms of definitions because they are very deep...</i> (Participant 2, Transcript 7, Lines 309 – 310).	Code-switching is due to experiences of having limited vocabulary in the target language and understanding of the unfamiliar and newly encountered words in English they don't know about.
	Term Memory	<i>...if there are terms that I forgot ...where I forgot the terms and cannot explain everything properly if I use the English language. If I can't explain it, it is mostly the Visayan explanation that we provide...</i> (Participant 6, Transcript 27, Lines 1242 – 1243).	Code-switching is due to the inability to recall accurately a word or a sentence that takes too long to finally find the correct and appropriate words when speaking in the English language.

Data to identify the participant’s experiences and context of the lived experiences of code-switching were obtained from semi-structured interviews. Participants were given pseudonyms (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6) for confidentiality purposes.

Theme 2: Language Barrier (*Difficulty Explaining in English, Grammar Conscious, Insufficient Vocabulary, Term Memory*)

Language Barrier refers to the encountered limitations on the participant's ability to use the English language; sub-themes are Difficulty Explaining in English, Grammar Conscious,

Insufficient Vocabulary, and Term Memory.

Difficulty Explaining in English

Explaining in English is a manifestation of the participants' struggle to communicate with the English language alone. There is no doubt that learning English is a difficult process, and its effectiveness depends on a variety of factors. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, English language-learning venues for frequent practice are typically considered as a requirement (Nguyen, 2021). According to Rahayu (2015), students encounter difficulty in expressing themselves using the English language because they have varied educational backgrounds, which makes them experience difficulty utilizing the target language on a daily basis. Similarly, participants 1 and 5 shared that “...I do code switch, especially if I can't explain the topic further in English.” (P1, Transcript 1, Lines 10 – 11) “... I encountered difficulties explaining using the English language and I better explain my thoughts if I code-switch...” (P5, Transcript 19, Lines 851 – 852).

The utilization of code-switching at times of encountering difficulty in explaining using the English language is an indication that code-switching is useful in continuing to express ideas. Naveed (2014) revealed that code-switching from the target language to the first language of participants was useful for expressing ideas continuously, especially at times when faced with difficulty communicating using the target language.

Grammar Conscious

Grammar consciousness stems from being not fluent in English in sharing. Speakers using the English language as a second language when giving their speech feel as though they will be judged (Hopwood, 2018). This is normally the participants' experience when they answer questions and be embarrassed once a grammatically wrong statement is made. As shared by Participants 2 and 3, “...I will feel really pressured if I think that my grammar is not straight or it's not fluent...” (P2, Transcript 6, Lines 260 – 261)

“...there are times that I am afraid of committing grammar errors...”

(P3, Transcript 9, Line 396). He further stressed that he is not good at English, which makes him feel afraid, and this makes him code-switch. “I'm weak when it comes to grammar, the structure of grammar, and spelling, and I'm really afraid of that.” (P3, Transcript 13, Lines 576 – 577).

The participants stated that they felt anxious when using the English language because they were worried about making grammatical mistakes. Noura (2019) stated that students code-switch for issues faced like vocabulary, difficulty in expressing ideas using the English language, making mistakes, consciousness in grammar construction, and stopping speaking. Code-switching during oral participation helps students become more motivated, feel less anxious, and improve their communication skills.

Insufficient Vocabulary

There should be more attention paid to the role that vocabulary and pronunciation play in English (Vo & Cao, 2022). Participants' experience in code-switching stems from a lack of communicative competence, such as vocabulary size, grammatical correctness, unconscious

language processing, and language creation. Muthusamy (2020) stated that the main reason why students switch codes is due to their inability and incompetence in the second language. The participants expressed that they do not know what a particular word means as well as the translation of the Cebuano/Visayan word of the English language, which pushes them to switch codes. Below are the participants' responses:

"...There are some words that I can't totally understand...so I had to code-switch and translate them into Visayan..." (P2, Transcript 6, Lines 245 – 247)

"...I code-switch because I cannot understand some terms of definition because they are very deep..." (P2, Transcript 7, Lines 309 – 310)

Memory et. al, (2018) explained that students are more engaging in class discussions when they are free to use the language as they lack vocabulary and are not fluent enough in the target language. Code-switching in classroom settings promotes engagement as students are free to communicate using the language they are comfortable expressing without minding the linguistic conventions.

Term Memory

Term Memory is an instance when an individual speaks using another language in a discourse. According to Roxas (2018) "Loss of Words" is the most important reason why students transfer between two languages. Participant 5 stated that *"...there's this one word that I cannot state because I cannot remember it so I decided to code-switch..."* (P5, Transcript 20, Lines 917- 918). Participant 6 expressed that *"...I forgot the terms and cannot explain everything properly if I use the English language. If I can't explain it, it is mostly the Visayan explanation that we provide."* (P6, Transcript 27, Lines 1242 – 1243)

When participants encountered problems in expressing their ideas in English such as being unable to recall relevant words in the target language, they continued to speak by switching codes. This is supported by Argellan et al. (2019) who stated that the absence of at least one word in either dialect can trigger code-switching in a variety of contexts.

Table 3. College Students' Experiences and Contexts of Lived Experiences of Code-Switching During Oral Participation

Main Themes	Sub-themes	Significant Statements	General Description of the Theme
Theme 3: Emotional Burden	Diffident	<i>...there are times that I am not comfortable enough and don't have enough confidence to speak in English, and I answer using the Visayan language so that I can really express myself thoroughly because if it is English, there are times that I am afraid of committing grammar errors...</i> (Participant 3, Transcript 9, Lines 393 – 396)	Diffident is a feeling of having no confidence in speaking the English language which resulted in switching languages during oral participation.
	Fear	<i>...Sometimes I want to speak in English, but I am pressured because I am also afraid of my grammar. That's why I prefer to switch codes.</i> (Participant 3, Transcript 9, Lines 413 – 415).	Fear is a feeling of worry, nervousness, and pressure if asked randomly to speak using the English language.
	Bothersome	<i>...at the same time unhelpful because it cannot train my skills in speaking in English...</i> (Participant 6, Transcript 26, Lines 1175).	Bothersome is an uncomfortable feeling towards code-switching due to the school's standards, the teachers' expectations and consciousness of what other listeners may say if participants code-switch.

Data to identify the participant's experiences and context of the lived experiences of code-switching were obtained from semi-structured interviews. Participants were given pseudonyms (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6) for confidentiality purposes.

Theme 3: Emotional Burden (*Diffident, Fear, Bothersome*)

Emotional Burden is tension in speaking when asked by teachers to express oneself in front of the class. This theme includes the sub-themes Diffident, Fear, and Bothersome.

Diffident

Diffidence is commonly the feeling of the students who lack the confidence to speak using the target language. Wahyuningsih and Alandi (2020) disclosed that the lack of appropriate vocabulary, poor grammar, poor pronunciation, and a lack of exposure to English outside of the classroom are issues of the students in an English classroom. This is confirmed by Participant

3 who expressed, “...there are times that I am not comfortable enough and don't have enough confidence to speak in English, and I answer using the Visayan language so that I can really express myself thoroughly because if it is English, there are times that I am afraid of committing grammar errors...” (P3, Transcript 9, Lines 393 – 396). “...I am not very good in English and I am afraid of speaking English...but I don't see myself as having the confidence to speak in English, so I prefer to do code-switching” (P3, Transcript 9, Lines 405 - 407).

This clearly suggests that when an individual feel uncomfortable when required to speak and never feel quite sure of themselves when speaking in the English language pushes them to switch codes. Nordin et al. (2013) claimed that code-switching is important in helping learners be more confident and comfortable in the classroom, especially if they are in the process of mastering the English language. It shows that code-switching could boost students' confidence in speaking English in a classroom and thus influence them to be more actively engaged in classroom activities.

Fear

Fear is one of the negative emotions that have the potential to distract students' learning efforts in learning English. According to Lou (2012), the classroom environment, student characteristics, and the target language are the primary factors of foreign language learning anxiety. A similar concept was expressed by Participant 3 who stated that they became hesitant and pressured to speak the required language because they were afraid of making errors in class. “...Sometimes I want to speak in English, but I am pressured because I am also afraid of my grammar. That's why I prefer to switch codes.” (P3, Transcript 9, Lines 413 – 415).

Moreover, students were made to feel ashamed, afraid, and pressured by their teacher's way of making them speak English language and not accepting responses in the Cebuano/Visayan language. Negative feelings caused teachers to lose control, yell, and speak carelessly, which led them to stop speaking during class and switch codes just to explain what the teacher wanted to hear (Makhwathana, R.L., et al., 2017). This is confirmed by Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Below are the participant's responses:

“...if we commit code-switching, stops us, and then he or she will remind you that you really have to speak in English...” (P3, Transcript 3, Lines 673 – 674),

“...because of her strictness, I am pushed to code-switch because I feel nervous because I am thinking that what if I am going to say next is wrong...” (P6, Transcript 6, Lines 1621 – 1622)

The shared experiences of the participants clearly indicated that they face fear when it comes to speaking English. Code-switching is a tool used by bilinguals that expands the opportunity for emotional support with those who speak the same language (Opra, 2012). The students' code-switch because they feel that it is more comfortable and that they are more proficient, especially when they are pressured or anxious.

Bothersome

Code-switching is also noted to bring discomfort in terms of discussing and explaining certain concepts in the classroom setting. The level of mastery of students has become a source

of concern. Students tend to switch languages because their language ability is not equal to that of their teachers (Üstünel, 2016). As stated by participants 5 and 6 “...*It is uncomfortable in a way that it makes me feel guilty to code-switch knowing the standard of the teachers...*” (P5, Transcript 20, Lines 935 – 936). Participant 6 added, “...*at the same time unhelpful because it cannot train my skills in speaking in English...*” (P6, Transcript 26, Lines 1175).

Code-switching negatively impedes the improvement of proficiency in the English language among students who are code-switching. Students speaking in their native language even though they were encouraged to speak in English hindered their mastery (Garcines & Alvarez, 2017; Mokgwathi & Webb, 2013). Furthermore, the study contends that code-switching is both a boon and a bane in the classroom. When used properly, it can be beneficial; however, when used excessively, it is detrimental to English language learning.

Table 4. College Students’ Experiences and Contexts of Lived Experiences of Code-Switching During Oral Participation

Main Themes	Sub-themes	Significant Statements	General Description of the Theme
Theme 4: Pedagogical Culture	Teacher Influence	<i>...there are teachers who make you feel comfortable interacting in her class by code-switching...</i> (Participant 1, Transcript 1, Lines 91 – 92)	Teachers Influence is an attitude by teachers agreeing with the use of code-switching in explaining thoughts and ideas in the class during discussion.
	Teacher Strategy	<i>“...since I cannot speak only one language. So mostly, I code switch if my teacher questions us...”</i> (P2, Transcript 6, Lines 277 – 278)	Teacher Strategy is a technique by teachers in the class and is a situation faced during participation in an oral discourse that led to code-switching when asked randomly by teachers in the class and if aren't able to explain in the class using the English language.

Data to identify the participant’s experiences and context of the lived experiences of code-switching were obtained from semi-structured interviews. Participants were given pseudonyms (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6) for confidentiality purposes.

Theme 4: Pedagogical Culture (*Teacher Influence, Teacher Strategy*)

Code-switching is an experienced result of the students based on the teacher’s calmness and the pressure they are giving. This theme includes Teacher Influence and Teacher Strategy.

Teacher Influence

Relationships between teachers and their pupils are influenced by the emotions they feel and display in class. The joy of teaching and good feelings of affection toward pupils can foster good relationships with them and supportive instructional methods (Frenzel, 2021). The calm aura of the teacher is a manifestation of the participants to resort code-switching better to share their ideas and thoughts in mixed languages.

P1 mentioned “...*there are teachers who make you feel comfortable interacting in her class by code switching.*” (P1, Transcript 1, Lines 91 – 92)

Participant 2 also expressed that it's their teachers who push them to code-switch for them to enhance their thoughts upon participating orally. “...*she let us express ourselves and my answers through code-switching in participating in class.*” (P5, Transcript 5, Lines 1342 – 1343).

According to Songxaba et al. (2017), teachers believe that code-switching is the most effective strategy for promoting comprehension, interaction, and understanding in the classroom setting, that is why teachers will no doubt use code-switching as a strategy in the classroom.

Teacher Strategy

As a result of students frequently taking a long time to consider what they want to say, code-switching may also speed up oral presentations (Mokhtar, 2015). This means that the students code-switch to make their presentation of answers effective and to prevent stuttering in the target language during oral participation. Participant 2 stated that “...*since I cannot speak only one language. So mostly, I code switch if my teacher questions us...*” (P2, Transcript 6, Lines 277 – 278). Participant 6 added, “*During oral participation, especially if there are questions that require us to answer using the English language by our professors, I am forced to code-switch...*” (P6, Transcript 27, Lines 1220 – 1221).

According to Ho and Nguyen (2021), engagement of learners is crucial for effective teaching and learning. To maximize student motivation, teachers must differentiate their methods of instruction. To engage students more effectively, Huachizaca et al. (2022) mentioned that interaction between students and teachers, and peers help. However, to have genuine inventive growth in education, the institution must shift when needed considering the situation. When teachers call students randomly in oral participation, students tend to be mentally blocked, leading them to code-switch to continue expressing ideas in the Visayan language than the English language. This finding is supported by Olivera (2021), who claimed that the practice of code-switching has a good impact on raising and enhancing their confidence and involvement during English sessions. Students are found to switch codes because they feel anxious and think the teacher will call them at any time to answer questions that must be answered in English.

Overall, the findings showed that the participants switch codes during oral participation mainly to express, explain, and elaborate their ideas thoroughly despite the language constraints, pressure and teaching strategies encountered upon participating.

Conclusion

This study inquired about the lived experiences and context of college students who switch codes in explaining their thoughts during oral participation. The findings of this study showed that the lived experiences and the context of the core-switching students mainly revolve around expressing ideas to better elaborate and explain thoughts. This finding is supported by the study of Nasution & Siregar (2021) and Noura (2019), which stated that code-switching can be used as a strategy to increase students' speaking confidence as most students switch to other languages for a variety of reasons and issues like lack of vocabulary, difficulty in expressing ideas using the English language, and anxiety.

Based on the findings of the study, it is inferred that the main reason behind the code-switching of the participants during oral participation was: academic preparedness, language barrier, emotional burden, and pedagogical culture. Code-switching is a communicative strategy during oral participation for them to express their ideas thoroughly; to address the lack of vocabulary and difficulty encountered using the target language in the social world. This finding confirms and contributes to Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory which asserts that people create meaning through the interaction of their experiences. Hooked with the theory of Semilingualism by Hansegard (1968), the findings of this study entail that the college students identified code-switching as a communicative tool in expressing ideas during oral participation despite the language deficiencies encountered such as vocabulary size, grammatical correctness and unconscious language processing. The participants may have different narratives of their experiences in code-switching during oral participation, but their range of switching codes in a discourse in expressing their ideas is grappling with their pace and purposeful decision from the limits of human knowledge to their vast real experiences. Some essential recommendations can be drawn from the study beyond inferences. For one, code-switching is an experience of struggle during oral participation where participants encounter difficulty explaining a word in the target language. Hence, this calls for teachers to support the use of code-switching during oral participation but in moderation for students to practice English proficiency as it is one of their second languages.

Since the study was done virtually due to the restrictions of COVID-19, certain limitations were observed, such as the settings and the data gathering. For this reason, phenomenological research does not produce findings that represent the experience of the entire population of college students. The researchers recommend future researchers to conduct a similar study in the setting of face-to-face to compare the existing findings.

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