22nd AsiaTEFL

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2024

EQUITY
Diversity and
Inclusivity in ELT

Chiang Rai Rajabhat University
THAILAND

22ⁿᵈ AsiaTEFL

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2024
CHIANG RAI, THAILAND

F o r e w o r d

Adding another essential piece to the AsiaTEFL puzzle, the 22nd AsiaTEFL International Conference was held from November 15 to 17, 2024, at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University (CRRU) in Chiang Rai, Thailand. Under the timely and relevant theme "Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity in ELT," the conference welcomed a broad community of English language teaching professionals, scholars, and practitioners from across Asia and beyond to exchange ideas, share research, and examine current practices.

With over 700 presentations delivered across thematic strands, and participation both onsite and online, this year's conference emphasized academic depth, practical relevance, and inclusive access. The program featured keynote speeches, symposia, panel discussions, workshops, and poster sessions that explored key developments and challenges in English language education across varied contexts.

The papers presented in these Proceedings represent a range of perspectives and methodologies—each offering insight into the evolving landscape of English language teaching. These contributions continue to shape ongoing conversations about policy, pedagogy, and classroom practice.

We extend our sincere thanks to all presenters, reviewers, and participants for their contributions to this year's program. Special recognition is due to the organizing committee, volunteers, and institutional partners whose efforts made this event possible.

We hope this volume serves as a useful reference and a catalyst for further dialogue and action in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion in the field of English language education.

Warm regards,
Natthaphon Santhi, Ph.D.
Conference Chair
22nd AsiaTEFL International Conference 2024

Contents

Contents

An Analysis of Informatics Students' Foreign Language Anxieties in Project-Based Learning Class

Vinindita Citrayasa
Elisabeth Marsella
Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta, Sleman, Indonesia

Abstract

This study investigates the levels of foreign language anxiety (FLA) among Informatics students engaged in an English course utilizing a project-based learning (PBL) approach. Employing a quantitative research method, data were collected from 401 students of the Informatics department using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire. The instrument consisted of 33 Likert-scale statements, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The findings reveal that the primary sources of anxiety among students in the PBL setting are negative evaluation and communication apprehension. The results suggest that students are more concerned with peer judgment and making mistakes in front of others rather than the inherent difficulty of learning English. This indicates that the social dynamics in the classroom, particularly interactions with peers and perceived expectations, influence their anxiety levels. However, the study also identifies a subset of students who experience minimal anxiety and even exhibit enthusiasm toward language learning, suggesting that individual differences play a role in how students perceive and respond to the PBL environment. These findings highlight the need for educators to address classroom social interactions and foster a supportive atmosphere to mitigate anxiety to help students manage FLA more effectively and enhance their engagement in learning English PBL classes

Keywords: *foreign language anxiety; project-based learning; ESP*

Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has played a crucial role in helping students from non-English-speaking countries acquire language skills tailored to their academic, professional, and personal needs. By focusing on practical communication within specific fields, ESP courses are designed necessarily to meet the students' needs in learning English. The main concerns of ESP lie not only in the linguistic aspects but also in the students' nonlinguistic aspects, such as confidence in using the language in real-world interactions in academics and their future career opportunities. Therefore, ESP courses are designed to ensure students acquire English skills that are immediately applicable to their studies and future careers by integrating subject-specific content with language learning. To achieve the success of ESP courses, educators must adopt appropriate teaching methodologies that align with students' specific needs and learning contexts.

ESP has evolved considerably due to shifting trends in approaches and methodologies within English language teaching (Kırkgöz & Dikilitas, 2018). The essential approach of ESP is learner-centered that the development of the learning tasks should match the students' academic and professional needs. Especially for non-English speaking countries, educators are urged to create more authentic learning tasks to facilitate meaningful, integrated, and communicative languages practices. To communicate effectively, the ESP courses should

also aim to enhance students' emotional and psychological readiness in areas such as confidence, motivation, and preparedness (Arnó-Macià, Aguilar-Pérez, & Tatzl, 2020; Hu & Chen, 2022; Jafari Pazoki & Alemi, 2020). Project-based Learning (PBL) is considered an effective method for accommodating ESP students' learning needs. PBL integrates subject knowledge content and language through projects. Students become the center of learning while the teachers become facilitators. This approach allows the students to experience real-world tasks to communicate in English practically. In addition, PBL fosters students' active and interactive language learning through group projects, discussions, and presentations (Kokotsaki, Menzies, & Wiggins, 2016; Nkem Iwe, Chidi-Onwuta, & P.C Chikamadu, 2022; Putri Astawa, Putu Artini, & Kerti Nitiasih, 2018). Consequently, students are facilitated to enhance soft skills such as creativity, teamwork, collaboration, negotiation, and problem-solving skills (Dmitrenko, Dolia, & Nikolaeva, 2020; Lavrysh, 2016; Lazareva & Kovtun, 2017).

Despite its potential benefits, PBL implementations may also uncover challenges. Foreign language acquisition is inevitably connected to emotions and worries and negative emotions or reactions are commonly experienced by foreign language learners (P. D. MacIntyre, 1999). That typical emotional reaction is called foreign language anxiety (FLA). Argaman & Abu-Rabia, (2002) proposed that language anxiety is a central factor that influences the abilities of foreign language learners in all areas. Previous studies suggested that FLA has quite insidious effects (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) and that it has become one of the focuses of second language acquisition research. Scholars have attempted to investigate the types and causes of FLA and strategies how for coping with them. (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) propose three dimensions of FLA, namely communicative anxiety, negative evaluation anxiety, and test anxiety. According to MacIntyre & Gardner (1991), there are trait anxiety, state anxiety, and specific situation anxiety. Researchers have extensively studied and measured foreign language learning anxiety from various perspectives, revealing its unavoidable connection to the overall success of foreign language acquisition (Teimouri, 2018; Zhang, 2019; X. Zhao, 2023). However, other scholars state the opposite findings revealed FLA correlates negatively to students' academic performance (Andrea, 2021; Botes, Dewaele, & Greiff, 2020; Dikmen, 2022; H. Zhao, 2022). The different result spectrums still reveal the existence of FLA and the various findings according to the contexts and settings of the studies. In fact, there have been continual investigations seeking the causes and the strategies to reduce FLA (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2021). Studies have shown that PBL can be an effective pedagogical approach to mitigate FLA by fostering a supportive and interactive learning environment. For instance, PBL encourages cooperative learning, which has been found to significantly reduce anxiety (Djabali & Zidouni, n.d.; Samarji & Sabbah, 2024). For instance, by shifting the focus from individual performance to group collaboration in an online setting (Miguel & Carney, 2022; Wang & Zhang, 2021), and both onsite and online learning (Bozkurt & Aydin, 2023). The decrease of FLA in group collaboration arises when it is done with less control from teachers (Romanov & Snigurova, 2021). Besides, an investigation was done to compare the FLA in PBL online and face-to-face classes, and the finding revealed that the online PBL learners had lower anxieties compared to onsite learners (Lin, 2017; Mandeville, Ho, & Lindy A. Valdez, 2017; Moslemi et al., 2024).

Existing research highlights the benefits of PBL in fostering active participation, critical thinking, and language acquisition. However, there is limited understanding of the anxiety levels of FLA in PBL that influences students' emotional responses. In addition, there is still limited research that focuses on the ESP context. Few are found specifically concerning Informatics students. In fact, Informatics students have various differences, characterized by the typical students, their motivation to learn English, and their emotional responses, such as confidence or anxiety level.

Since elevated levels of anxiety can significantly impede learners' participation, cognitive engagement, and overall performance, there is an urgency to conduct a study to measure the Informatics students' anxiety in PBL classes. Given these insights, it is imperative to conduct further research on the specific dynamics of FLA in Informatics students within PBL settings, describing the level of foreign language anxieties. Addressing this gap is crucial. The early identification of the students' emotional responses in typical teaching and learning settings, such as PBL, allows educators to tailor support strategies, foster a more inclusive and encouraging learning atmosphere, and ensure that all students are equipped to succeed in their specialized fields. By exploring the intersection of FLA and PBL, this study seeks to provide valuable insights not only for helping the students but also assisting educators and curriculum developers to design and conduct their PBL classes accordingly.

Method

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate and analyse the levels of foreign language anxiety (FLA) among Informatics students enrolled in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes with Project-Based Learning (PBL) setting. The main purpose of the study was to measure students' anxiety levels using a structured questionnaire to analyze the students' FLA in the PBL-based learning environments. The use of a quantitative approach allows for the systematic collection and statistical analysis of numerical data, providing measurable insights into students' language anxiety. The participants in this study were 401 Informatics students enrolled in onsite ESP courses at a higher education institution. These students are engaged in a PBL-based learning environment, which focuses on small and big group discussions, group presentations, and project-driven activities. The primary research instrument used in this study is the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by (Horwitz et al., 1986). To this date, it is still probably a widely recognized tool to assess students' anxiety levels in foreign language learning contexts. The FLCAS consists of 33 statements, each rated on a five-point Likert scale, with the following response options: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5). Table 1 displays the details of the questionnaire items.

TABLE 1. Questionnaire Items

No	Statement
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.
6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.
12	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
14	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
16	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.
17	I often feel like not going to my language class.
18	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.
25	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.
28	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.

33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

Among the statements in FLCAS, there are nine negatively worded items. The items are number 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32. They are reversed in the calculation and overall score to describe respondents' anxiety levels. The FLCAS generally measures three subscales, namely communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Communication apprehension is related to fear of speaking in a foreign language. Fear of negative evaluation means anxiety about being judged by others. Test anxiety deals with nervousness related to language assessments. To ensure the instrument's suitability for our specific context, the reliability and validity tests using SPSS had been conducted in prior. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a value of 0.724 for the 33-item scale, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Construct validity was assessed through item-total correlation analysis, with all 33 items demonstrating significant positive correlations with the total score ($p < .001$). These results confirm the validity of the FLCAS for measuring foreign language anxiety in our study population.

The data collection process involves administering the FLCAS questionnaire to all 401 participants. The questionnaire was distributed in digital format via Microsoft Forms. To facilitate the accessibility, the link was shared with ESP classes by posting it to the Microsoft Teams classes near the end of the semester. The data were then compiled and measured using statistical features in Microsoft Excel. The analysis was conducted by focusing on the mean. The findings were ranked from the highest to the moderate and the lowest means to indicate the students' FLA.

Result

This section presents the results of the FLCAS questionnaire, and the following are the findings that are categorized into three levels: high, moderate, and lower anxiety levels. Table 2 displays the overall statistical findings in based on the means scores.

TABLE 2. The Means of Questionnaire Responses

No	Statement	
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	3.259
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.	2.027
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.050
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	3.145
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.	2.474
6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	2.581
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	3.853
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	2.057
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	3.608
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	3.875
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	2.222
12	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	3.249
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	3.120
14	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	3.073
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	3.125
16	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	3.441
17	I often feel like not going to my language class.	2.040
18	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.	2.935
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	3.047
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.147
21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get	2.716
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	2.055

23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	3.698
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	3.584
25	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	3.085
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	2.888
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.182
28	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	2.294
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	3.282
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	2.808
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	3.117
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	2.192
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.354

High Anxiety Level

In this first category, the statements with mean score above 3.5 are grouped. Table 3 shows that the statements indicate a significant level of anxiety among students. These statements highlight areas where students feel the most nervousness and self-doubt when engaging in FLA in the PBL ESP class that they joined.

TABLE 3. High Anxiety Level

Item Numbers	Statements	Mean
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	3.875
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am	3.853
23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	3.698
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	3.608
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	3.584

The mean scores for each statement indicate a consistent pattern of concern about performance, comparison with peers, and apprehension about speaking in class. The highest mean score (3.875) corresponds to the statement, "I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class." This suggests that students place considerable importance on their performance in the course, likely due to internal pressures such as expectation and character or external pressures such as family or academic pressures. The fear of failure can lead to increased stress levels, which may hinder language acquisition and overall learning experiences.

Closely following this is the statement, "I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am," with a mean score of 3.853. This finding indicates that students frequently engage in social comparisons, often perceiving themselves as less competent than their peers. This can be linked to imposter syndrome, where students doubt their abilities despite evidence of their progress. The belief that others are naturally more skilled can discourage learners from actively participating in class or attempting challenging language exercises. Similarly, the statement, "I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do," received a mean score of 3.698. This further supports the notion that students experience heightened self-doubt when assessing their speaking abilities. Since speaking is a critical component of language learning, these feelings of inadequacy can hinder oral participation and engagement.

The statement, "I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class," yielded a mean score of 3.608. This suggests that impromptu speaking activities can be a significant source of anxiety for students. The fear of making mistakes, struggling to find the right words, or being judged by peers can contribute to this panic. Lastly, the statement, "I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students," received a mean score of 3.584. This highlights the role of social anxiety in foreign language learning. Many students may fear embarrassment or judgment from their classmates, leading to reluctance in speaking activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that foreign language anxiety is driven by concerns about failure, peer comparison, self-doubt, and public speaking apprehension. These findings suggest that students experience the highest levels of anxiety when comparing themselves to others, fearing failure, and being put on the spot in classroom interactions.

Moderate Anxiety Level

In this second category, the statements with mean scores between 3.0 and 3.49 are grouped. Table 4 shows that the statements indicate a moderate level of anxiety among students. Moderate anxiety responses suggest a noticeable level of nervousness but do not indicate extreme distress. Students in this category experience discomfort but may still be able to manage their anxieties with support.

TABLE 4. Moderate Anxiety Level

Item Numbers	Statements	Mean
16	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	3.441
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance	3.354
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	3.282
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	3.259
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.182
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.147
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	3.145
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	3.125
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	3.120
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	3.117
25	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind	3.085
14	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	3.073
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.050
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	3.047

According to the finding, the moderate level of anxiety is driven by concerns about failure, peer comparison, self-doubt, and public speaking apprehension. Further findings indicate that even when well-prepared, students still feel anxious about language class (mean score 3.441). This suggests that preparation alone does not eliminate anxiety. Additionally, many students (mean score 3.354) feel nervous when asked unexpected questions, which could indicate a reliance on memorization rather than a deep understanding of the language. The data also reveals that students feel uneasy when they do not understand every word spoken by the teacher (mean score 3.282), and they often lack confidence when speaking (mean score 3.259). Nervousness and confusion while speaking (mean score 3.182) further underscore the challenge of oral participation. The physical symptoms of anxiety, such as heart pounding (mean score 3.147) and trembling (mean score 3.050), indicate the intensity of students' fear.

Concerns about being left behind due to the fast pace of the class (mean score 3.085) and apprehensions about being corrected (mean score 3.047) suggest that students may benefit from more flexible pacing and constructive feedback mechanisms. Additionally, the fear of being laughed at by peers (mean score 3.117) and embarrassment when volunteering answers (mean score 3.120) highlight the impact of social anxiety in language learning.

Lower Anxiety Level

Statements in this category suggest minimal anxiety or positive attitudes toward language learning. Students who fall into this range likely feel more comfortable and confident in their language classes. The responses in Table 5 reveal a lower level of anxiety. Most students students experience minimal anxiety and even express enthusiasm for learning new languages.

TABLE 5. Lower Anxiety Level

Item Numbers	Statements	Mean
18	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.	2.935
21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	2.716
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	2.888
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.	2.474
6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	2.581
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	2.222
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	2.192
28	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	2.294
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	2.808
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.	2.027
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	2.0552
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	2.057

One of the most notable findings is that students generally feel confident when speaking in their foreign language class, with a mean score of 2.935. This suggests that many students have a certain level of comfort when expressing themselves in the target language. Confidence in speaking is crucial for language acquisition, as it encourages active participation and practice, which are essential for improvement. However, it is also important to recognize that confidence levels may vary among students, with some experiencing apprehension despite the overall positive trend. Conversely, the statement "The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get" received a mean score of 2.716. This indicates that a significant number of students experience confusion as they engage in test preparation. This could be attributed to the complexity of language rules, memorization of vocabulary, or the pressure associated with testing.

A related finding is that students feel more tense and nervous in their language class compared to other subjects, with a mean score of 2.888. While this does not indicate extreme anxiety, it does suggest that language classes present unique challenges that may not be as prevalent in other subjects. Language learning involves spontaneous thinking, speaking, and listening, all of which can contribute to nervousness, particularly if students fear making mistakes. To alleviate this stress, educators can create a supportive and encouraging classroom environment where errors are viewed as part of the learning process.

Interestingly, the willingness to take additional foreign language classes received a mean score of 2.474. This suggests a relatively positive attitude towards language learning, implying that many students are open to expanding their linguistic skills. This enthusiasm may stem from a recognition of the benefits of bilingualism, such as improved cognitive abilities, cultural understanding, and career opportunities. However, for those who are hesitant, addressing their concerns through engaging and relatable course materials could enhance motivation.

Distractions during language class appear to be a moderate concern, with a mean score of 2.581 for the statement "During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course." While this is not an overwhelmingly high score, it does indicate that some students struggle to maintain focus. Distractions may come from a lack of interest, difficulty understanding the material, or external factors. Another key observation is that students generally do not understand why some individuals get upset over foreign language classes, as indicated by a mean score of 2.222. The statement "I would probably feel comfortable around native

speakers of the foreign language" had a slightly higher mean score of 3.192. This suggests that while students may anticipate and expect comfort and confidence to speak with native speakers.

The statement "When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed" received a mean score of 3.294, indicating a generally positive outlook towards attending class. This suggests that many students experience enjoyment in the language lessons with PBL setting and may even look forward to them. However, the perception of being overwhelmed by grammar rules remains a concern, with a mean score of 2.808. Mistakes in language class do not appear to be a major source of worry, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.027 for the statement "I don't worry about making mistakes in language class." This indicates that many students are willing to take risks and learn from their errors, which is a positive sign for language acquisition. Similarly, the level of pressure to prepare for language class is moderate, with a mean score of 2.055, and students generally feel at ease during tests, with a mean score of 2.057. While some students may experience test anxiety, these findings suggest that for the most part, language assessments in English PBL classes are not overwhelmingly stressful.

Discussion

Fear of Negative Evaluation is the Highest Anxiety Factor

According to the findings, fear of negative evaluation appears to be the most significant among the three FLA subscales. It is indicated by the highest mean scores in related statements. Students expressed strong concerns about failing their foreign language class (mean score 3.875) and the belief that their peers are better at languages than they are (mean score 3.853). These high scores suggest that many students feel a sense of inadequacy compared to their classmates. This aligns with the common psychological phenomenon known as social comparison, where learners constantly evaluate their proficiency relative to others (Van Yperen & Leander, 2014). When students perceive themselves as less capable, it can lead to lower confidence and increased anxiety, ultimately discouraging active participation (Akbari & Sahibzada, 2020; Morales-Rodríguez & Pérez-Mármol, 2019; Woodrow, 2011). However, in another investigation done by (Joshi, 2022) social comparison is an effective factor in education.

Additionally, students fear teacher correction (mean score 3.047) and are concerned that peers will laugh at them when they speak (mean score 3.117). These findings suggest that students view language learning as a performance rather than a learning process, where mistakes are seen as failures rather than opportunities for growth. This fear likely discourages students from volunteering answers, engaging in discussions, or practicing the language in real-world settings. The high fear of negative evaluation may discourage students from taking risks in language learning (Rafek, Ramli, & Hassan, 2018). Therefore, teachers should create an environment that normalizes mistakes and emphasizes progress rather than perfection (Glory & Subekti, 2021). PBL class setting should emphasize a cooperative atmosphere by reducing competitiveness.

Communication Apprehension

Communication apprehension, the fear of speaking in a foreign language, is another dominant trend in the data. Students reported feeling self-conscious when speaking in front of others (mean score 3.584), panicking when asked to speak without preparation (mean score 3.608), and experiencing nervousness even when well-prepared (mean score: 3.441). The high anxiety around spontaneous speaking tasks indicates that many students lack confidence in their speaking abilities. This could be due to limited practice opportunities, a fear of making mistakes, or a belief that they must speak perfectly to be understood. The mean score for feeling confident when speaking suggests that confidence levels are generally low among learners. Another notable trend is that students feel uneasy about being called on unexpectedly, with a mean score of 3.147 for heart pounding when called upon. This suggests that speaking anxiety is not only linked to a lack of preparation but also to the general pressure of speaking in front of others (Listyani & Kristie, 2018; Rosmayanti, Ramli, & Rafiqa, 2023; Tarigan, Nasution, Hasibuan, Nurmayana, & Siregar, 2024).

The finding implies that communication apprehension can significantly hinder language development, as speaking practice is essential for fluency . Teachers then can incorporate more structured speaking exercises, such as paired conversations or role-playing, to gradually build confidence (Listyani & Kristie, 2018; Rosmayanti et al., 2023; Tarigan et al., 2024). In addition by reducing emphasis on perfection and encouraging fluency over accuracy can help alleviate speaking anxiety.

Test Anxiety and Social Anxiety Factors

Test anxiety, while significant, appears to be less overwhelming compared to communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. However, it still plays a considerable role in students' language learning experiences. The mean score for anxiety about language tests (3.441) suggests that even well-prepared students experience nervousness. This could be due to the pressure of recalling vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation under time constraints. Additionally, students reported feeling nervous when teachers asked unexpected questions (mean score 3.354), indicating that oral assessments contribute to their stress. Interestingly, the statement "The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get" received a relatively lower mean score (2.716), implying that studying does not necessarily lead to heightened anxiety. This suggests that students who prepare well generally feel more secure, but the pressure of assessment itself remains a source of stress.

Since test anxiety is lower than other FLA subscales, it may be managed through effective study techniques and test-taking strategies. Teachers can incorporate alternative assessments and provide students with clear expectations and study guides, which may help alleviate stress related to assessments (Cardozo et al., 2023; Cho & Hayter, 2021).

Conclusions

The finding shows that FLA experienced by Informatics students in PBL class are significantly related to negative evaluation and communication apprehension. They become the most significant sources of anxiety, with test anxiety being secondary. This suggests that social dynamics in the classroom, including peer comparisons and fear of mistakes, play a larger role in students' anxiety than the actual difficulty of learning a language. However, some students experience minimal anxiety and even express enthusiasm for learning new languages. Addressing these anxieties through supportive teaching strategies, peer encouragement, and confidence-building exercises could improve students' overall experiences and performance in language classes. Language instructors should focus on creating a supportive and non-judgmental classroom environment where students feel safe to make mistakes. Strategies that can be done are reducing competitive grading structures and incorporating cooperative learning activities can help lower social anxiety. Besides, positive reinforcement and praise for participation should be more encouraged rather than just accuracy, which can boost students' confidence.

This study is still limited to prove that the recommended strategies would be working to lessen the students' FLA. Therefore, an experimental study need to be done to see the proven strategies that can lessen the FLA before and after treatments in the English PBL classes. Besides, another investigation could be done to other fields of ESP to give others insights .

Acknowledgements

THE AUTHORS

Vinindita Citrayasa teaches and conducts research at Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She is interested in researching English for academic and specific purposes, applied linguistics, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), and English education technology.
Email: vinindita.citrayasa@uajy.ac.id, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7742-6291

Elisabeth Marsella teaches and conducts research at Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Her area of interest is corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, business communication, and discourse analysis.
Email: elisabeth.marsella@uajy.ac.id, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6343-4354

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

VC – Conceptualization, Research Design, Data Collection, Data Analysis & Evaluation, Manuscript Writing
EM – Data Analysis, Evaluation, Manuscript Writing

REFERENCES

Akbari, O., & Sahibzada, J. (2020). Students' Self-Confidence and Its Impacts on Their Learning Process. *American International Journal of Social Science Research, 5*(1), 1–15. https://doi:10.46281/aijssr.v5i1.462

Andrea, T. (2021). The effect of anxiety on foreign language academic achievement. *Hungarian Educational Research Journal.* https://doi:10.1556/063.2021.00098

Argaman, O., & Abu-Rabia, S. (2002). The Influence of Language Anxiety on English Reading and Writing Tasks Among Native Hebrew Speakers. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 15(2), 143–160. https://doi:10.1080/07908310208666640

Arnó-Macià, E., Aguilar-Pérez, M., & Tatzl, D. (2020). Engineering students' perceptions of the role of ESP courses in internationalized universities. *English for Specific Purposes*, 58, 58–74. https://doi:10.1016/j.esp.2019.12.001

Botes, E., Dewaele, J.-M., & Greiff, S. (2020). The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and Academic Achievement: An Overview of the Prevailing Literature and a Meta-analysis. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning, 2*(1), 26–56. https://doi:10.52598/jpll/2/1/3

Bozkurt, B. N., & Aydin, S. (2023). The Impact of Collaborative Learning on Speaking Anxiety Among Foreign Language Learners in Online and Face-to-Face Environments. *International Journal of Virtual and Personal Learning Environments, 13*(1), 1–16. https://doi:10.4018/IJVPLE.316973

Cardozo, L. T., Lima, P. O. de, Carvalho, M. S. M., Casale, K. R., Bettioli, A. L., Azevedo, M. A. R. de, & Marcondes, F. K. (2023). Active learning methodology, associated to formative assessment, improved cardiac physiology knowledge and decreased pre-test stress and anxiety. *Frontiers in Physiology, 14*. https://doi:10.3389/fphys.2023.1261199

Cho, S., & Hayter, C. S. (2021). Under pressure: A systematic review of stress and its impact among graduate students. *Science and Public Policy, 47(*6), 758–771. https://doi:10.1093/scipol/scaa053

Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 4*(2), 237–274. https://doi:10.14746/ssllt.2014.4.2.5

Dikmen, M. (2022). EFL Learners' Foreign Language Learning Anxiety and Language Performance: A Meta-Analysis Study. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research, 8*(3), 206–222. https://doi:10.33200/ijcer.908048

Djabali, M. M., & Zidouni, M. T. (n.d.). *Academic Year: 2015-2016 THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ABDERRAHMANE MIRA UNIVERSITY OF BEJAIA FACULTY OF LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH Investigating Teachers and Students' Perceptions towards the Role of Project-Based Learning to Overcome Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Candidate.*

Dmitrenko, N., Dolia, I., & Nikolaeva, S. (2020). SoftSkills Development of Prospective Educators by Means of Problem-Based ESP Learning. *The New Educational Review, 60*(2), 124–134. https://doi:10.15804/tner.20.60.2.10

Glory, K. M., & Subekti, A. S. (2021). Indonesian High School Learners' Fear of Negative Evaluation and Ought-to L2 Self. *Langkawi: Journal of The Association for Arabic and English, 7*(2), 157. https://doi:10.31332/lkw.v7i2.3052

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal, 70*(2), 125. https://doi:10.2307/327317

Hu, N., & Chen, M. (2022). Improving ESP Writing Class Learning Outcomes Among Medical University Undergraduates: How Do Emotions Impact? *Frontiers in Psychology,* 13. https://doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.909590

Jafari Pazoki, S., & Alemi, M. (2020). Engineering Students' Motivation to Learn Technical English in ESP Courses: Investigating Iranian Teachers' and Students' Perceptions. *RELC Journal, 51*(2), 212–226. https://doi:10.1177/0033688218811371

Joshi, A. (2022). *Supporting student motivation through Social Comparison.* Retrieved from http://ceur-ws.org

Kırkgöz, Y., & Dikilitas, K. (2018). Recent Developments in ESP/EAP/EMI Contexts (pp. 1–10). https://doi:10.1007/978-3-319-70214-8-1

Kokotsaki, D., Menzies, V., & Wiggins, A. (2016). Project-based learning: A review of *the literature. Improving Schools, 19*(3), 267–277. https://doi:10.1177/1365480216659733

Lavrysh, Y. (2016). THE JOURNAL OF TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SOFT SKILLS ACQUISITION THROUGH ESP CLASSES AT TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, *SPECIFIC AND ACADEMIC PURPOSES*, 4, 517–525. https://doi:10.22190/JTESAP1603517L

Lazareva, O., & Kovtun, O. (2017). *DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS AT ESP CLASSES IN TECHNICAL HEIS. In Psychological and pedagogical problems of modern specialist formation : collected articles, 2017.* (pp. 108–115). (KRPOCH). https://doi:10.26697/9789669726094.2017.108

Lin, L.-F. (2017). The Application of the Problem-Based Learning Approach to English Class: Chinese-speaking Learners' Willingness to Communicate. *International Journal of Education, 9*(3), 1. https://doi:10.5296/ije.v9i3.11414

Listyani, L.-, & Kristie, L. S. (2018). Teachers' Strategies to Improve Students' Self-Confidence in Speaking: A Study at Two Vocational Schools in Central Borneo. *Register Journal, 11*(2), 139. https://doi:10.18326/rgt.v11i2.139-153

MacIntyre, P. D. (1999). Language anxiety: a review of the research for language teachers. In D. J. Young (Ed.), *Affect in Foreign Language and Second Language Teaching: A Practical Guide to Creating a Low-Anxiety Classroom Atmosphere* (p. 2425). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

MacIntyre, Peter D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991). Methods and Results in the Study of Anxiety and Language Learning: A Review of the Literature*. *Language Learning, 41*(1), 85–117. https://doi:10.1111/j.1467-1770.1991.tb00677.x

Mandeville, D. S., Ho, T. K., & Lindy A. Valdez, L. A. V. (2017). The Effect Of Problem Based Learning On Undergraduate Oral Communication Competency. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning (TLC), 14*(1), 1–10. https://doi:10.19030/tlc.v14i1.9957

Miguel, E., & Carney, W. (2022). Foreign Language Acquisition Anxiety and Project-Based Learning in Collaborative L2 Instruction: A Case Study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 12*(1), 1–6. https://doi:10.17507/tpls.1201.01

Morales-Rodríguez, F. M., & Pérez-Mármol, J. M. (2019). The Role of Anxiety, Coping Strategies, and Emotional Intelligence on General Perceived Self-Efficacy in University Students. *Frontiers in Psychology,* 10. https://doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01689

Moslemi, S., Arani, N., Zarei, A. A., Moslemi, S., Zarei, A. A., & Sarani, A. (2024). *Online vs. offline Problem-based Learning Affecting Foreign Language Learners' willingness to communicate, self-efficacy, and classroom anxiety.* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/377241561

Nkem Iwe, , Dr.Nkechinyere, Chidi-Onwuta, Dr. G., & P.C Chikamadu, Dr. C. (2022). The Impact of Project Based Instruction on English Language Achievements: The mediating role of 'Motivation and Group work' for Language Teaching Research. *International Journal for Humanities & Social Sciences (IJHS), 2(*2), 36–39. https://doi:10.69792/IJHS.22.2.6

Putri Astawa, N. L. P. N. S., Putu Artini, L., & Kerti Nitiasih, P. (2018). Do Learners Like Project in Their English Classes?: Impact of PBL on Students' Attitudes. *SHS Web of Conferences, 42,* 00084. https://doi:10.1051/shsconf/20184200084

Rafek, M., Ramli, N. H. L., & Hassan, J. (2018). Language and Gender: Fear of Evaluation in Second Language Learning. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 8*(1). https://doi:10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i1/3825

Romanov, Y., & Snigurova, T. (2021). Coping with stress and anxiety when L2 acquisition. *Humanities Science* Current Issues, 3(36), 93–97. https://doi:10.24919/2308-4863/36-3-16

Rosmayanti, V., Ramli, R., & Rafiqa, R. (2023). Building beginners self-confidence in speaking at private high school in Makassar. EduLite: *Journal of English Education, Literature and Culture, 8*(1), 192. https://doi:10.30659/e.8.1.192-208

Samarji, A., & Sabbah, F. (2024). Project-based learning as an innovative approach for overcoming tertiary EFL students' barriers to learning English and coming closer to their L2 ideal self. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education.* https://doi:10.1108/JARHE-02-2023-0053

Tarigan, F. N., Nasution, A. F., Hasibuan, S. A., Nurmayana, N., & Siregar, E. S. (2024). PUBLIC SPEAKING LEARNING ASSISTANCE TO INCREASE STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE. *Journal of Community Research and Service, 8*(2), 291. https://doi:10.24114/jcrs.v8i2.55437

Teimouri, Y. (2018). Differential Roles of Shame and Guilt in L2 Learning: How Bad Is Bad? The *Modern Language Journal, 102*(4), 632–652. https://doi:10.1111/modl.12511

Toyama, M., & Yamazaki, Y. (2021). Classroom Interventions and Foreign Language Anxiety: A Systematic Review With Narrative Approach. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*. https://doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.614184

Van Yperen, N. W., & Leander, N. P. (2014). The Overpowering Effect of Social Comparison Information. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 40*(5), 676–688. https://doi:10.1177/0146167214523475

Wang, X., & Zhang, W. (2021). Psychological Anxiety of College Students' Foreign Language Learning in Online Course. *Frontiers in Psychology,* 12. https://doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.598992

Woodrow, L. (2011). College English writing affect: *Self-efficacy and anxiety. System, 39*(4), 510–522. https://doi:10.1016/j.system.2011.10.017

Zhang, X. (2019). Foreign Language Anxiety and Foreign Language Performance: A Meta Analysis. *The Modern Language Journal, 103*(4), 763–781. https://doi:10.1111/modl.12590

Zhao, H. (2022). A STUDY ON THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL ANXIETY, SELF-EFFICACY AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT. *International Journal of Neuropsychopharmacology, 25*(Supplement-1), A63–A64. https://doi:10.1093/ijnp/pyac032.087

Zhao, X. (2023). A Review on the Effects of Foreign Language Anxiety on Second Language Learning. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation, 6*(2), 150–156. https://doi:10.32996/ijllt.2023.6.2.19

An Analysis of Prambanan Temple Reviews to Increase Customer Satisfaction Using a Corpus Linguistics Approach

Elisabeth Marsella
Vinindita Citrayasa
Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

With the interconnection of the digital world, online reviews have emerged as significant sources of community attitudes towards objects, including tourism destinations. Prambanan Temple, a leading destination in Yogyakarta, boasts a 4.7 rating on Google Maps reviews. Despite the increasing popularity of online review research, the linguistic analysis of these reviews remains an understudied area. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how visitors of Prambanan Temple linguistically express their experiences in online reviews by implementing collocational analysis. The online reviews on Google Maps were crawled to obtain the data using a scraping platform. The data from this process was then sorted, and 438 reviews were received to be processed using AntConc. The tool resulted in 7972-word frequencies with 2440 hits. The content words from the data were then carefully sorted into the top ten most frequent words. The collocation and n-grams were then examined for each word to see the occurrences in the text. To see how visitors express their experience, the word occurrences were analyzed using Searles's speech act theories, including assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative. The findings show that the reviewers mostly use assertive illocutionary acts where the reviewers tell and evaluate their experiences. For the negative reviews, the visitors not only produce assertive acts but also directive acts by giving suggestions to the readers. From how they express their experience, some recommendations were also discussed that contribute to the practical strategies to improve the business.

Keyboards: *Prambanan Temple; online reviews; Google Maps; corpus linguistics; AntConc;*

Introduction

Online reviews have become a significant source of communal information about their experiences or opinions towards their products. Recognizing the value of online feedback, most companies now consider it an essential aspect of their customer relationship management. Buttle & Maklan (2019) explained that CRM is not only about the information technology used in understanding customers; CRM should also be seen as a holistic strategy from the initial acquisition of a customer to a high-spending, profitable customer. Building relationships and good communication becomes crucial for businesses to reach that target. So, understanding how they communicate and express their experiences becomes vital for sustainable relationships.

Tourism is one of the critical sectors in Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, Indonesia. This province relies so much on tourism, and one of the leading destinations is Prambanan Temple. Prambanan Temple is the largest Hindu temple dedicated to the Hindu divinities (Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma) and is recognized as a world heritage site by UNESCO. This temple has always been the magnet of tourism in Yogyakarta, especially on holidays. Prambanan Temple contributes to the number of tourists in Yogyakarta. The data showed that 2.447.882 local and foreign tourists visited the Prambanan Temple (Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Sleman, 2024). To add,

PT Taman Wisata Candi Borobudur, Prambanan dan Ratu Boko recorded 82.138 tourists visited Prambanan dan Boko Temples or 35% of tourists coming to Yogyakarta during the 2024 Idul Fitri holiday (injourneydestination.id, 2024). Idul Fitri is an Islamic religious holiday when people in Indonesia usually return to their hometowns and gather with family. People typically spend their time with their families visiting tourist spots.

With the popularity of this tourism destination, the management always needs to evaluate their service in order to meet all stakeholders' needs, in this case, the visitors. Based on Google Maps reviews, the rating of Prambanan Temple was 4.7 out of 5 from more than 92,000 reviews. With more than ninety thousand reviews, the rating shows that visitors' perceptions of Prambanan Temple have already been good. Online reviews can be used as credible and trustworthy across various business sectors, which later influences potential customers' decisions, in this case, visitors, to visit or revisit the tourism spots (Hwang & Yoo, 2021). Furthermore, the study shows that most customers read customer reviews before buying online and think the reviews are essential. In other words, the reviews affect the customers' buying decisions. On the other hand, for the business owner or management, the customer's reviews can give more insights into the possible improvements or developments in the temple's service.

Online texts, including online reviews, are often used to see communities' perceptions of certain things. For instance, online reviews are used to see customers' sentiments towards services in tourism and hospitality (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023; Xu et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2023), etc. The studies show not only the positive or negative sentiments regarding the business but also the aspects that can significantly affect customer satisfaction and the aspects that should be improved. For instance, Yu et al. (2023) found that the element that should be improved in the studied resort business was the employee service. Unlike other elements, employee service negatively impacted customer satisfaction, which can translate into customer dissatisfaction. By acknowledging these aspects, the management can evaluate and apply the business strategies more effectively. Similarly, Nguyen & Nguyen (2023)studied customer reviews, and the highest satisfaction level was influenced by 'place', and the lowest satisfaction rate was the room service aspect. However, the lowest to highest satisfaction rate range was not significant, from 61,3% to 78%. The studies show the room for business improvement.

Online texts are also used to see a representation in society, such as complaints on Twitter (Ruytenbeek, 2024), media portrayal (Liu & Bakar, 2024), and hospitality. This implies that online text can be used as a source of information in order to develop a business. The study of Ruytenbeek (2024) validated that a negated positive adjective was more frequently used in the commuters' complaints corpus. It implies that positive words do not always mean positive sentiment because they might be negated in the sentences, which results in a negative meaning. Liu and Bakar (2024) studied how China's pandemic response was portrayed in American media. Their finding indicated a noticeable trend toward a negative representation that was characterized by the stigmatization of China, the undermining of China's endeavor to solve the pandemic, and the politicization of the pandemic.

There are some factors affecting customer satisfaction. Some factors are facilities, service qualities (Mubarok et al., 2023), and experience quality (Kusumawati & Rahayu, 2020). The studies of Kusumawati and Rahayu (2020) found the customer satisfaction factors of cafe visitors, and they showed that if the variable of experience quality is improved, customer satisfaction will increase, too. In other words, providing a good experience for customers will help management retain customers.

The studies as mentioned earlier primarily focus on exploring customer (dis)satisfaction as reflected in their reviews. Ruytenbeek and Decock (2024) emphasize the importance of not viewing customer feedback from a single perspective. They argue that reviews should not only be examined through the lens of customer experience. Instead, the reviews should be viewed more holistically from the viewpoint of business strategy, communication patterns, and linguistic features. This multidimensional approach allows a more comprehensive understanding of the construction and interpretation of customer sentiments. Hence, studies from a linguistic perspective should be developed to get more comprehensive insights.

Among the varieties of linguistic approaches, a corpus linguistic approach can provide real-world language data that can identify the linguistic patterns to reflect customer (dis)satisfaction. The approach allows a collocation study and a concordance study of selected words, which provide a comprehensive understanding of how language is used in real-world contexts. Furthermore, by employing collocation analysis, researchers can examine extensive text collections using a standardized, duplicable approach that maintains consistency across different datasets (Kaufmann & Haans, 2021).

A study from Lutzky (2024) shows how a corpus linguistic approach helps figure out the patterns of how an airline and its customers communicate. The findings point out that the airline often uses fixed phrases and generic responses, like "please contact us", leaving customers unsatisfied. This finding should be considered since languages shape consumer behavior and simultaneously provide strategies to enhance customer satisfaction (Packard & Berger, 2021). Specifically, the study confirms that concrete languages engage with immediate experiences.

The implementation of collocation analysis usually involves tools to ease the work, such as the widely used tool AntConc (Anthony, 2024). It helps identify words that frequently appear near a search term. A study by Vojnovic (2021) shows how noun + noun collocation revealed the similarities and differences of linguistic features in tourism corpora. The same tool was also used to identify the patterns of customer reviews for tourist attractions (Mutiara, 2017) and pet cafes (Hariyatmi, 2022). The studies show how tourists/customers express their experiences in those places. Mutiara (2017) found that the visitors reviewed the place by evaluating the tourist attractions, giving advice and instructions, recounting, reporting what the others said, thanking, and encouraging the readers to imagine. Meanwhile, Hariyatmi (2022) discovered that the customers of the two cafes expressed their experiences differently. These studies affirm the importance of understanding customer experience patterns that allow business owners or practitioners to improve their business.

Regarding the insights from the previous studies, it is important to study customer reviews not only from the customer satisfaction perspective but also from a linguistic perspective simultaneously. However, studies on the linguistic construction of visitor experience in online reviews are still limited. Employing a corpus linguistic approach, this study aims to understand the language visitors use when sharing their experiences of Prambanan Temple on Google Maps. Understanding that the business has good reviews is not enough, even when the visitors give high ratings to the tourist destination. Prambanan Temple needs to consider how visitors express their experiences, which can provide insights into visitor satisfaction.

Method

To investigate how visitors of Prambanan Temple linguistically express their experiences, this study implemented a corpus linguistic approach since it allows researchers to extract the information drawn from the global structuring of text. The information includes conceptual and subjective entities that can be reflected in usage-based linguistics.

The rating of Prambanan Temple in Google Maps when the article was written was 4.7 out of 5.0. This can be interpreted as a positive review. However, to see the details of what the visitors felt, it is essential to check the comments or reviews on Google Maps. Google Maps review was used in this study because Google is the most popular search engine, and 60% of customers check Google Reviews before visiting a business (ReviewTrackers, 2022). This means it is worth checking the reviews on this platform. If the reviewers say something bad about the business, there is a chance that potential customers will go to other places or competitors (Pike, 2022). To collect the data from Google Maps reviews, the researchers used the web scraping platform www.outscarper.com, which enables users to collect public data from websites without coding. The platform was set to scrape the reviews up to May 2024 and obtained the 1000 most recent reviews. The review data included texts, emoticons, and images, but only text reviews were used in this study. After elimination and translation, 351 reviews were obtained in Indonesian and 87 in English. The text reviews were mainly in Indonesian, and the others were written in other languages such as English, Korean, Chinese, German, and others. The reviews were then translated into English using the features in Microsoft Excel. So, two kinds of data were used in this study

Then, each language review was processed using AntConc version 4.3.1 (MacOs) 2024. It is a free-ware corpus analysis toolkit for concordance and text analysis (Anthony, 2024) that can be applied to Windows, Linux, and Macintosh systems. This tool can analyze texts in many languages, including English, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, etc(Arum & Winarti, 2019). This study then separated the language to see the differences between local and foreign tourists' reviews of the temple. The data of Indonesian reviews was then named Data 1, and the English reviews were named Data 2. After processing the data using AntConc, the analysis was conducted by checking the word frequency and collocation of the two kinds of data. From the process, the most frequent word list was obtained. The words included only content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Function words occurring in the data were not included in the list. So, the top 10 most frequently occurring content words were listed from each dataset.

Then, a collocational analysis was implemented by studying the concordance and the occurrence of the words by looking at the n-grams. The collocate feature setting was 1R2L. The n-gram setting for each data was 2-gram and 3-gram words. After obtaining the keywords, the data was analyzed to find out how visitors express their experiences linguistically in the online reviews. Looking at the collocation and n-grams becomes essential because one word might be biased. Ruytenbeek (2024) showed that positive adjectives were more frequently used in negation in the language than their antonyms. The phrase 'not good' might be more frequently used than the negative adjective 'bad.' So, it can be misleading if the study only focuses on a single word's meaning. The collocation and n-grams will show how frequently used words occur in the language, or in this case, in the reviews.

The last phase was to implement Searle's speech act theory to see how visitors express their experiences. The speech act is a locomotive that moves language in communication (Searle, as cited in Sophia et al., 2021). It comprises locutionary, perlocutionary, and illocutionary acts. Locutionary acts refer to what the speakers say, while perlocutionary acts refer to the effect of the speech on the audience. The illocutionary acts are the force of an action in saying something that classifies into five: assertives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declarations. The study then proceeds to investigate the observed collocations and n-grams and the pragmatic function defined by the illocutionary act.

Results
Indonesian Reviews

AntConc version 4.3.1 showed that Data 1 comprised 1660 entries from 6315 tokens. Data 1 was compiled from Indonesian reviews, and the result shows the frequency of word occurrence in the reviews. The list includes some Indonesian function words, which connect words in the language and serve the grammatical and structural relationship in sentences. The contribution to the meaning of function words is minimal. Therefore, the function words from the data were not analyzed and were removed from the word frequency list. The function words include pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, articles, and auxiliary words (Bögel, 2021; Chung & Pennebaker, 2007). Some of the eliminated function words were dan (and), di (in), and yang (that/which). These kinds of words were then eliminated, leaving the content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Top 10 words from Indonesian and Foreign Language Reviews

No	Indonesian			Other Languages	
	Words	**English translation**	**Frequency**	**Words**	**Frequency**
1	Candi (n)	temple	186	temple	38
2	Prambanan (n)	Prambanan	75	place	22
3	Tempat (n)	Place	74	visit	21
4	Bagus (adj)	Good	69	beautiful	18
5	Sejarah (n)	History	39	temples	17
6	Wisata (n)	Tourism	38	prambanan	14
7	Masuk (v, n)	Enter	37	site	12
8	Panas (adj)	Hot	34	worth	12
9	Tiket (n)	Ticket	34	take	11
10	Banyak (adj)	A lot	33	well	11

The next step was to check the collocation of the words in the list. Collocation can be defined as word combinations that allow words to come together with a particular word, for example, strong coffee (Lee, 2019). In real language use, speakers would combine strong and coffee instead of, for instance, powerful coffee. Although the words strong and powerful can be synonymous, the use of powerful coffee is uncommon. Concerning the real language use, this study also checks the collocation using the collocate feature. The results are seen in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Collocation and n-gram List

No	Words	Collocation	2-gram	3-gram
1	Candi (n)	prambanan; merupakan; utama; adalah; sewu;	candi Prambanan; candi yang; candi hindu; candi ini; candi utama	candi prambanan adalah; candi prambanan merupakan; candi hindu di; candi hindu terbesar; candi ini merupakan
2	Prambanan (n)	candi, merupakan, adalah	prambanan dan; prambanan adalah; prambanan merupakan; prambanan ada; prambanan banyak	prambanan merupakan candi; prambanan candi Prambanan; candiprambanan wonderfulindonesia candi
3	Tempat (n)	bersejarah, wisata	tempat bersejarah; tempat wisata; tempatnya bagus; tempat nya; tempat oleh;	tempat bersejarah yang; tempat bersejarah tempat; tempat wisata bersejarah; tempat yang sangat; tempatnya bagus dan;
4	Bagus (adj)	tempatnya	bagus dan; bagus untuk; bagus banget; bagus bgt; bagus buat	bagus dan menakjubkan; bagus untuk edukasi; bagus apalagi saat; bagus apalagi untuk; bagus bagus bagus;
5	Sejarah (n)	belajar, tentang, peninggalan, mengenal	bersejarah yang bersejarah tempat sejarah bagus sejarah candi sejarah dan	bersejarah yang bagus sejarah candi prambanan sejarah yang harus bersejarah di jawa bersejarah dimana nenek
6	Wisata (n)	destinasi, tempat, kawasan, dunia, wajib, leluhur, populer	wisata yang wisata yg wisata bersejarah wisata dunia wisata populer	wisata yang bagus; berwisata ke tempat; karyawisata dan belajar; wisata bersejarah tempat; wisata bersejarah yang
7	Masuk (v, n)	tiket, ke, pintu, dalam, biaya	masuk ke masuk candi masuk area masuk k masuk kawasan	masuk ke dalam masuk area candi masuk area dalam masuk biar yg masuk candi borobudur
8	Panas (adj)	banget, terik	panas banget panas bgt panas panas panas tapi panas tempatnya	panas aja dilihat panas atau hujan panas banget datang panas banget di panas banget pertama
9	Tiket (n)	harga, masuk, beli, k, dewasa, pembelian, online, masuknya	tiket masuk tiket dewasa tiket k tiket masuknya tiket mending	tiket masuk k tiket masuk untuk tiket ada tulisan tiket anda akan tiket bisa via

No	Words	Collocation	2-gram	3-gram
10	*Banyak (adj)*	*spot,*	*banyak spot*	*banyak dan luas*
		tersedia,	*banyak dan*	*banyak spot untuk*
		turis,	*banyak patung*	*banyak aktifitas yg*
		asing	*banyak yg*	*banyak aktivitas gak*
			banyak aktifitas	*banyak anak sekolah*

Table 2 shows that the words collocate frequently with certain words. For example, the words candi (temple) and merupakan (is) occur frequently in the data. This collocation happened in the review when reviewers tried to explain what Prambanan Temple is after checking the occurrence of the collocation in the keyword in context (KWIC). The collocations of the words candi, Prambanan, wisata, sejarah, masuk, tiket, and banyak show how visitors describe Prambanan temple. The collocations suggest the assertive illocutionary act, which describes a condition in the world that can be true or false. The collocations and n-grams of the words show the statements of fact, assertions, and conclusions (Sophia et al., 2021).

For instance, the words candi and Prambanan were frequently used in the data since they are the names of the tourist destination. The two words collocated with merupakan and adalah can be freely translated as is to show the description of Prambanan Temple. Figure 1 shows how the words occurred in the reviews.

FIGURE 1. Collocation of words candi and Prambanan

Figure 1 shows the elaboration of the Prambanan temple, which is demonstrated by the collocations and n-grams of the words. The visitors describe the temple as the biggest Hindu temple (candi hindu di and candi hindu terbesar) with Nusantara Hindu architecture (arsitektur). Furthermore, The temple is also an important cultural site and one of the UNESCO World Heritage sites (warisan dunia). The other word collocations, such as utama (main) and sewu (thousand), also present the description of the temple. Similar acts were also presented by the collocations of the words wisata (tourism), sejarah (history), masuk (enter), tiket (ticket), and banyak (a lot of). The visitors described Prambanan as a historical tourism destination that has a lot of facilities (banyak fasilitas) and spots to take pictures (banyak spot untuk foto). From the collocation of masuk (enter) and tiket (ticket), the visitors reported that they could get tickets easily from online ticketing.

The collocation of the words bagus (good) and tempatnya (place) also represents the assertive illocutionary. Unlike the words explained in the previous paragraph that only describe the fact of the temple, the words bagus (good) and tempatnya (place) imply positive reviews from visitors. As shown in Figure 2, the visitors reviewed bagus tempatnya or tempatnya bagus, which can be translated into "the place is good". Some advantages of visiting the place then supported the claim that the place was good. This can be seen from the collocation of the words sejarah collocated with belajar, tentang, peninggalan, and mengenal, and the word wisata collocated with destinasi, tempat, kawasan, dunia, wajib, leluhur, and popular. The n-grams shows the occurrence of bagus dan menakjubkan (good and amazing) and bagus untuk edukasi (good for education). The KWIC showed that visitors could learn history in the Prambanan temple and learn about the heritage of their ancestors.

FIGURE 2. Collocation of words bagus

Left Context	Hit	Right Context
pi. tempatnya bagus bgt, lingkungannya juga asrii	Tempatnya	bagus dan nyaman, lebih baik datang sore hari agar
haussss bgt terik jgn lupa bawa sunscreen Bagus..	Tempatnya	luas bagusss Bagusss tapi baru sampe Borobudur doang Bagu
pada aturan di dlm kawasan Candi. Bagus banget	tempatnya	suka sekali Bagus bersih luas dan terawat Bagus bgt
elayanan baik Suka bgt ke candi Prambanan karena	tempatnya	bagus, dan banyak turis asing yg datang. Tiket juga
soft file nya, kalo mau soft file harus bayar lagi.	Tempatnya	bagus, luas, kamar mandi bersih, ada sewa payung 10rb/
ari agar bisa melihat sunset dan tidak begitu panas	tempatnya	bagus, hanya kurang tempat berteduh, panas bgt klo lagi
engan bangunan candi yang begitu indah dan rapi.	tempatnya	bagus bgt, lingkungannya juga asrii Tempatnya bagus dan nya
ule Holland ma uk Dulu pernah study tour ke sini,	tempatnya	bagus banget. Candi nya isinya bersejarah sekali, ada banyak
a kurang tempat berteduh, panas bgt klo lagi terik	Tempatnya	bagus. Tiket masuk untuk Candi Prambanan Rp50.000. Diusah

Furthermore, the word panas (hot) collocated with banget (very), terik (very hot), and karena (because) collocate frequently seen from the occurrences. The occurrences of the words suggest the directive illocutionary acts. Figure 3 shows that the word panas occurs in the suggestions given by visitors, such as bawa topi/payung (bring a hat/ an umbrella) and enak sore2 ke sini (visit the place in the afternoon). Here, their reviewers attempt to influence readers' behavior when they visit the place in the future.

FIGURE 3. Collocation of words panas

Left Context	Hit	Right Context
urah ... Nice Place, Bawa topi / payung saat panas	terik	atau hujan Nuansa alam yang indah dan menakjub
lu pengen di kunjungi walaupun pas puasa panas	terik	ttp smgt buat naik ke candi.cuma untuk pintu
belajar sejarah. Area nya bersih namun panas nya	terik	asik asyik dikunjungi sore hari g pernah bosan spo

Left Context	Hit	Right Context
sarankan bawa payung dan minum karena panas	banget.	Datang jam 3 sore, masih ramai, tapi tidak padat
kak ? Harus siapkan payung sihh .. karena panas	banget..	topi juga dan kacamata tentunya Hati2 diparkirar
Sunscreen juga yang tebel hehehe soalnya panas	banget	Pertama kaki ke sini thn 2003 kelas 2 sd dan ken
rankan untuk bawa payung sendiri karena panas	banget	di sana dari pada sewa, dan jangan bawa barang
ebaran penuh banget cuaca disana bener2 panas	banget	Tempatnya sangat terkelola dengan rapih. Tiket
ar. Enak sore2 kesini biar adem. Kalo siang poul	banget	panasnya. Candi umat Hindu yang berdiri megah

Foreign Language Reviews

Data from foreign language reviews resulted in 818 entries and 2638 tokens. After the same process as the Indonesian review data, the word frequency list was obtained. Table 3 lists the top 10 words used in the reviews.

TABLE 3. Collocation and n-gram of Foreign Language Reviews

Words	Freq	Collocation	2-gram	3-gram
temple	38	*main* *hindu* *ancient*	*temple is;* *temple complex;* *temple in* *temples are;* *temple group*	*temple in the* *temple and the* *temple architecture in*
place	22		*place is; place to* *place a* *place very* *place best*	*place to visit* *place a hindu* *place a large*
visit	21	*to*	*visit the* *visit it* *visit an* *visit and* *visit beautiful*	*visit an underrated* *visit and it* *visit beautiful temple*
beautiful	18	*park*	*beautiful hindu* *beautiful park* *beautiful temple* *beautiful amazing* *beautiful and*	*beautiful amazing place;* *beautiful and well;* *beautiful archaeological area;*
temples	17		*temples are* *temples and* *temples around* *temples in* *temples before*	*temples and give* *temples and nice* *temples are amazing*
prambanan	14	*candi*	*prambanan and* *prambanan is* *prambanan was* *prambanan indone-sian* *prambanan its*	*prambanan is the* *prambanan and one* *prambanan and the*
site	12	*heritage*	*site but* *site ensuring* *site however* *site i* *site is*	*site but unfortunately* *site ensuring you* *site however very*
worth	12	*well, seeing, visiting*	*worth seeing* *worth the* *worth visiting* *noteworthy are* *worth exploring*	*noteworthy are the* *worth exploring further* *worth it the*
take	11	*picture, pictures, to*	*take a* *take pictures* *mistakes and* *take photos* *take stones*	*take a picture* *mistakes and stingy* *take a good* *take a ride*
well	11	*maintained,* *organized,* *worth;* *large*	*well maintained* *well worth* *well organized* *well as* *well conditioned* *well groomed*	*well as borobudur* *well-conditioned space* *well-groomed large*

The reviews leave positive feedback shown by the words temple, place, visit, beautiful, worth, and take. The word occurrences narrate the factual condition of the temple. It implies that the visitors use an assertive illocutionary act. For instance, the word temple is collocated with the words main, Hindu, and ancient. The collocations also show the description of the temple that Prambanan is a Hindu temple as a heritage from the Indonesian ancient culture. Like Indonesian reviews, the n-gram of the two words describes the temple, the largest Hindu temple complex. The place also provides the best place for sightseeing. Figure 4 shows how the words beautiful and worth occur in the reviews. The word beautiful also occurred in the reviews showing the phrases of beautiful parks, temples, and areas. One mentioned beautiful archaeological area. From these occurrences, the visitors thought that Prambanan temple was a beautiful place to visit. Furthermore, the word worth occurrences were worth seeing, worth visiting, and worth exploring. This means visitors get value from visiting the temple.

FIGURE 4. Collocation of words beautiful and worth

was quite busy, but not too crowded for comfort. Very	beautiful	temples and nice that it is rather close to
l Prambanan ♥ 3 stars because it's absolutely overpriced. 😕 Very	beautiful	archaeological area full of services. I leave a very
and Sewu you can see on the photos) and a	beautiful	park around them. Obviously, the temples couldn't be
are golf carts, bicycles, etc available for hire/rent. Beautiful	Beautiful	and well maintained. Keep in mind it is quite
a motorbike. Beautiful Indonesia ♥ Beautiful park with lot to do	Beautiful	place to visit! But it's really warm, so
I didn't visit. Hope you find this review helpful. 😊	Beautiful	temple in Indonesia that you have to visit Beautiful
is near the main entrance + a lot of parking lot +	worth	ticket price – need more seating facilities – need a lot
ure history and mythical worlds. Highly recommended. Evocative. It is	worth	visiting along with the Borobudur temple. It is preferable
for pilgrimage sites. Tickets are not cheap and it is	worth	visiting. There is still a difference with Angkor Wat.
nice view hot But the story on the wall is	worth	watching This India temple local ticket price 1 person 50,000 rupiah
around with very few other visitors on our day. Well	worth	your time and energy but bring comfortable shoes to

Despite the positive feedback, the word site displayed the negative feedback the reviewers gave. From the n-gram 'site but unfortunately,' the KWIC shows that it was a great site, but the tickets for foreigners are far higher (25 euros). Since the review mentioned the price, the next word to check was the word "price". The result is shown in Figure 5 below. Four reviewers mentioned that the ticket is expensive for foreigners, especially when compared to tickets for local tourists. Regardless of the review sentiments, the visitors practice the assertive illocutionary act.

FIGURE 5. KWIC of word ticket

x as locals is absolutely nuts. Double or triple the	price	would be understandable and easy 5* rating but not at
er smaller and quieter temples around... And 20 times cheaper. The	price	is expensive and you have to book online in
is no priority entry, and it is not worth the	price, 1	to 2 hours to go. The Indonesian government and the
around Best place Best spot for sightseeing Difference between the	price	for locals and foreigners is extremely ridiculous. 🖐 🅓 = 🌐 🌍 =
the main entrance + a lot of parking lot + worth ticket	price –	need more seating facilities – need a lot of tourist
the wall is worth watching This India temple local ticket	price 1	person 50,000 rupiah foreigners will be 400,000 is too bad, and
interesting one-hour tour and in our native language. Guide	price 150	k e sure to visit this awesome site! Prambanan

Discussion

The findings show that the reviewers of Prambanan Temple in Google Maps mostly use an assertive illocutionary act for both Indonesian and Foreign Language Data. The reviewers describe the temples and report what they experience there. The assertive illocutionary act allows the reviewers to show facts based on their observations in the temple. Besides that, they the service and the weather. From this act, the reviews cover positive and negative evaluations of Prambanan Temple. Generally, the description implies a positive evaluation that the temple is good and amazing. This also reflects the rating on Google Maps (4.7 out of 5). It is a good place for education, especially to learn about the history of the ancestors.

This good impression can be beneficial in promoting and preserving the temple. Assertive acts are characterized by factual information, which can give detailed information about the described object. UNESCO mentions that one of the challenges in preserving a historical heritage is unchecked tourist development *(World Heritage in Danger, n.d.),* which can lead to unmonitored tourism activities. When the activities are excessive and unmonitored, tourists tend to show little respect for the tourist spot. Therefore, providing visitors with educational information about the tourist spot can increase their understanding of the place.

Assertive acts align with the educational benefit that the acts typically enable the transfer of information and facts, especially when the assertive acts contain positive information. It benefits Prambanan Temple that the information the readers get can educate them about the values of the place and attract potential visitors. This act usually dominates information sharing activity, like a preach-in sermon (Maksum, 2024) and an interview (Novitasari et al., 2023). Statements, explanations, exemplifications, comparisons, and illustrations dominate the activities. From the reviews, visitors understand that Prambanan Temple is a sacred place for the Hindus and that they use it for religious activities. Educating the visitors about the history and the cultural context can create understanding and respect for the local traditions and customs (Xu et al., 2024). Visitors will understand that they are not allowed to sit or stand on the temple stones. The reasons are to preserve the physical form of the temple and to respect the sacred value of the temple as a place to pray for the Hindu people.

For online reviews, the assertive acts contain statements, explanations, and evaluations. This evaluation can create a positive impression when visitors give positive feedback.

The examples are that the options for buying tickets online and on the spot helped visitors to plan their visit. This service gives reliability to the visitors, where the visitors can rely on the service provided by the management. One of the theories on service quality measurement applies reliability variables to determine the impact on customer satisfaction. Reliability can be defined as consistency and accuracy in delivering the promised service (Sharma et al., 2024), and this variable has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction (Al-Kumaim et al., 2023). In the ticketing context, it can be interpreted as the ability of the temple to provide tickets for visitors online, so they do not need to queue for tickets.

The reliability of the service is also shown in some reviews posted on Google Maps. Reliability focuses on providing the needs of customers, in this case, visitors, accurately and reliably (Al-Kumaim et al., 2023). Taking pictures for social media has been today's trend, so providing photo spots can fulfill this need. The temple management sees this need and fulfills this need by providing some photo spots. The reviewers mentioned that many aesthetic photo spots also positively impact visitors. With the advancement of social media, providing good spots for photos can attract visitors to tourist spots. The temple was good, well-maintained, and worth visiting. It also has a beautiful park in the area. From the perspective of foreign visitors, Prambanan Temple received very positive feedback. Similar to local visitors, the foreigners were also happy with the photo spots in Prambanan Temple.

Online reviews have been used to see customers' perceptions and shape a company's reputation for their service (Chen & Chang, 2024; Eyisüren et al., 2023). In the study on city libraries in Taiwan, Chen & Chang (2024) found that one library has a strong reputation as a *"clean and tidy reading environment, enriched with ample reading resources, which foster comfortable reading and learning experiences accompanied by commendable service attitudes."* On the contrary, the study by Eyisüren et al. (2023) shows the use of negative adjectives in hotel reviews. Consequently, the readers get negative impressions of the hotels. The two studies confirm how customers' experiences can shape the readers' perception of the places. The customers share and gain information at Google Maps Reviews, which can affect their decisions. Furthermore, online reviews can reveal customers' insights into the business, such as playground inclusivity in Jakarta (Saragih et al., 2024), the evaluation of library services (Chen & Chang, 2024), the perception of community pharmacies (Laghbi & Al Dhoayan, 2024), and food service (Mathayomchan & Taecharungroj, 2020).

The reviews benefit customers by providing information regarding the goods or services they need. They can check whether the products are suitable for their needs. The availability of information will play an essential role in the increasing number of tourist spots in Yogyakarta. Limited information can deter customers from buying products or, in this case, visiting the temple. Young customers tend to check the information on many platforms before buying products. A study by Zhang et al. (2024) shows that there is a positive relationship between information availability and green consumption intention. This implies that relatively new behavior can be influenced by the availability of information. Therefore, providing good service is crucial so customers can later share their experiences online.

While conveying belief in a proposition's truth, the assertive illocutionary act can also express negative evaluations. In the context of complaints regarding ticket prices, individuals employ assertive acts by comparing the costs imposed on local and foreign tourists. Thereby, the comparison highlights a perceived disparity and implicitly asserts the unfairness of the pricing structure. Using comparison as an assertive strategy underscores how speakers can utilize statements of fact or belief to express complaints. A similar attitude is also reflected in the complaints of hot weather. The reviewers share their experiences in the temple.

Interestingly, the collocation and n-grams of the word related to the complaints indicate directive acts. This act expresses the reviewers' desire to direct the reader to do something. In this case, they do not advise against visiting the location but suggest that readers anticipate the circumstances. For instance, they recommend visitors buy tickets online for convenience and to bring an umbrella/hat when visiting the place. This implies that the visitors believe that the place is worth visiting.

From the business perspective, negative reviews can deteriorate businesses since customers or visitors usually make decisions after collecting information. Therefore, it is necessary for the management to respond to the reviews (Feng & Yan, 2024). The study explains that visitors can better understand the negative situation when the management gives responses, such as excuses, apologies, or justifications. Potential visitors will give a better evaluation of the business's service. On the contrary, when negative reviews are not responded to, customers might see this as indifference or acceptance of the negative review.

Regarding the ticket price visitors complained about, the management needs to educate them on why the price is as it is. The response is not necessarily given in Google Maps Reviews, but the management can use other platforms that can reach a wider audience, such as news platforms. PT TWC, as the management of Prambanan temple, responded Tempo.co that the ticket prices of world heritage sites in Indonesia are the lowest compared to other heritages in other countries (Tempo.co, 2019). Not only that, but the management can also provide information on how to maintain the sustainability of the temple and create some social media content about it. Providing the information can show the intention of showing price transparency, which positively and significantly affects the perception of fair price and customer satisfaction (Sepehrian et al., 2023).

Considering this insight, the management of Prambanan Temple needs to evaluate the ticket price so that the customers get value from paying the price.

Conclusion

To conclude, the visitors employ assertive speech acts to express their experiences visiting Prambanan Temples. These acts dominate the reviews by telling the facts and evaluating the place for positive and negative feedback. Since the reviewers generally write positive feedback, the shared information benefits Prambanan Temple so that the readers and potential visitors can learn from the information. The evaluation of the place is shown in the occurrence of the adjectives good and hot. Interestingly, the negative feedback, for instance, the occurrence of the word "hot", shows the directive illocutionary acts. The reviewers do not suggest that readers should avoid visiting the place. Rather, they suggest that the readers prepare for anticipation.

For the empirical implication of improving customer satisfaction, management needs to evaluate and develop a strategy to respond to complaints. Negative feedback can be used as a tool to acquire, retain, and develop more customers when the management responds to the comments aptly. The nonresponsive attitude of the management can be misinterpreted as indifference or agreement to the bad services provided by the management.

Theoretically, it implies that a corpus can be created by collecting real languages people use, especially when the number of reviews is huge. That means some insights can be derived from the corpus. What needs to be considered is that the language source for the corpus represents the objects that will be researched. In this case, Google Maps reviews are one of the platforms that many people in Indonesia use to share their opinions on places they have visited. Therefore, a big collection of text representing the research object should be considered as data sources.

Acknowledgements

The Authors

Elisabeth Marsella teaches and conducts research at Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Her area of interest is corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, business communication, and discourse analysis.
Email: elisabeth.marsella@uajy.ac.id, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6343-4354

Vinindita Citrayasa teaches and conducts research at Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She is interested in researching English for academic and specific purposes, applied linguistics, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), and English education technology.
Email: vinindita.citrayasa@uajy.ac.id, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7742-6291

Author's Contributions

EM – Conceptualization, Research Design, Data Collection, Data Analysis & Evaluation, Manuscript Writing
VC – Data Analysis, Evaluation, Manuscript Writing

References

Al-Kumaim, N. H. S., Samer, M., Hassan, S. H., Shabbir, M. S., Mohammed, F., & Al-Shami, S. (2023). New demands by hotel customers post COVID-19 era. *Foresight*. https://doi.org/10.1108/FS-05-2023-0082

Anthony, L. (2024). AntConc Version 4.3.1 (4.3.1). Waseda University. https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software

Arum, E. R., & Winarti, W. (2019). The use of Antconc in providing lexical and syntactic information of the textbook of radiographic positioning and related anatomy: a corpus linguistic study. *Jurnal Sosioteknologi,* 18(1), 106–112. https://doi.org/10.5614/sostek.itbj.2019.18.1.8

Bögel, T. (2021). Function words at the interface: A two-tier approach. *Languages*, 6(4), 197. https://doi.org/10.3390/languages6040197

Buttle, F., & Maklan, S. (2019). *Customer Relation Management: Concept and Technologies* (4th ed.). Routledge.

Chen, C. C., & Chang, C. C. (2024). Evaluating public library services in Taiwan through user-generated content: analyzing Google Maps reviews. Electronics *(Switzerland)*, 13(12). https://doi.org/10.3390/electronics13122393

Chung, C., & Pennebaker, J. (2007). The psychological functions of function words. In K. Fiedler (Ed.), *Social Communication* (p. 343359). Psychology Press.

Dinas Pariwisata Kabupaten Sleman. (2024). *Statistik Pariwisata Kabupaten Sleman* 2023. https://pariwisata.slemankab.go.id/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Statistik-Pariwisata-Kabupaten-Sleman-2023-compressed.pdf

Eyisüren, I. I., Karatepe, Ç., & Ayhan, E. (2023). Speech act and adjective preferences in online hotel reviews: corpus analysis in US context. *International Journal of Languages Education*, 11.2(11.2), 70–80. https://doi.org/10.29228/ijlet.68870

Feng, W., & Yan, J. (2024). Language abstraction in negative online customer reviews: the choice of corporate response strategy and voice. SAGE Open, 14(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241240561

Hariyatmi, S. (2022). A comparative keywords analysis in pet cafe and regular cafe reviews: a corpus study. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching, 25*(1), 93–106. https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v25i1.4107

Hwang, G., & Yoo, J. (2021). The impact of customer engagement in online reviews on the credibility of shopping sites and customer purchase intentions. *Journal of Marketing and Consumer Research*. https://doi.org/10.7176/jmcr/76-03

injourneydestination.id. (2024, April 17). *Destinasi Taman Wisata Candi dan Taman Mini Indonesia Indah Jadi Magnet Kunjungan Wisatawan selama Masa Libur Lebaran 2024.* https://injourneydestination.id/2024/04/17/destinasi-taman-wisata-candi-dan-taman-mini-indonesia-indah-jadi-magnet-kunjungan-wisatawan-selama-masa-libur-lebaran-2024/

Kaufmann, W., & Haans, R. F. J. (2021). Understanding the meaning of concepts across domains through collocation analysis: an application to the study of Red Tape. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 31(1), 218–233. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muaa020

Kusumawati, A., & Rahayu, K. S. (2020). The effect of experience quality on customer perceived value and customer satisfaction and its impact on customer loyalty. *TQM Journal*, 32(6), 1525–1540. https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-05-2019-0150

Laghbi, Y. A., & Al Dhoayan, M. (2024). Examining how customers perceive community pharmacies based on Google maps reviews: Multivariable and sentiment analysis. *Exploratory Research in Clinical and Social Pharmacy,* 15, 100498. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rcsop.2024.100498

Lee, N. (2019). *Examining The Underlying Constructs of L2 Lexical Collocation Knowledge.* Indiana University.

Liu, Z., & Bakar, K. A. (2024). Shifting narratives: A corpus-based discourse analysis of American media's portrayal of China's covid-19 response. 3L: *Language, Linguistics, Literature*, 30(1), 125–141. https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2024-3001-10

Lutzky, U. (2024). "Doesn't really answer my question . . .": Exploring customer service interactions on Twitter. *International Journal of Business Communication,* 61(1), 92–114. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884231200247

Maksum, S. K. D. M. (2024). The assertive illocutionary act of Khatib' Islam preacher' in Friday sermons in Baiturohim Mosque of Surakarta. *Journal of Pragmatics Research,* 6(2), 206–226. https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v6i2.206-226

Mathayomchan, B., & Taecharungroj, V. (2020). "How was your meal?" Examining customer experience using Google maps reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 90, 102641. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102641

Mubarok, E. S., Subarjo, B., Raihan, R., Wiwin, W., & Bandawaty, E. (2023). Determinants of customer satisfaction and loyalty Waroeng Steak Restaurant in DKI Jakarta. *Cogent Business and Management,* 10(3). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2282739

Mutiara, R. (2017). How helpful the writers are: A corpus-assisted discourse study of online reviews of tourist attractions. *International Journal of Humanity Studies,* 1(2), 203–213. https://doi.org/10.24071/ijhs.2018.010206

Nguyen, H. T. T., & Nguyen, T. X. (2023). Understanding customer experience with Vietnamese hotels by analyzing online reviews. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications,* 10(1). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02098-8

Novitasari, N. F., Ziama, R., & Amelia, F. (2023). Investigating the use of illocutionary acts performed by Jenna Ortega in some interviews. Diglossia: *Jurnal Kajian Ilmiah Kebahasaan Dan Kesusastraan,* 15(1), 133–152. https://doi.org/10.26594/diglossia.v15i1.3867

Packard, G., & Berger, J. (2021). How concrete language shapes customer satisfaction. *Journal of Consumer Research,* 47(5), 787–806. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucaa038

Pike, R. (2022, July). *What Every Small Business Needs To Know About Google Reviews*. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2022/07/27/what-every-small-business-needs-to-know-about-google-reviews/

ReviewTrackers. (2022). *Online Reviews Statistics and Trends*: A 2022 Report by ReviewTrackers. https://Www.Reviewtrackers.Com/Reports/Online-Reviews-Survey/. https://www.reviewtrackers.com/reports/online-reviews-survey/

Ruytenbeek, N. (2024). A case study of negated adjectives in commuters' Twitter complaints. *Languages*, 9(8). https://doi.org/10.3390/languages9080274

Ruytenbeek, N., & Decock, S. (2024). Expressing and responding to customer (dis)satisfaction online: New insights from discourse and linguistic approaches. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 61(1), 3–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884231199740

Sepehrian, A. H., Mirzazadeh, Z. S., & Aghaei Shahri, M. S. (2023). Effect of price transparency on the perception of fair price and satisfaction with the purchase of sports products. *Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management,* 22(5), 327–337. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41272-022-00391-w

Sharma, V., Jangir, K., Gupta, M., & Rupeika-Apoga, R. (2024). Does service quality matter in FinTech payment services? An integrated SERVQUAL and TAM approach. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights,* 4(2). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jjimei.2024.100252

Sophia, T. C., Saptiko, L., & Musarokah, S. (2021). Illocutionary act found on character Arthur Fleck's in Joker movie. SALEE: *Study of Applied Linguistics and English Education,* 2(2), 137–154. https://doi.org/10.35961/salee.v2i02.272

Tempo.co. (2019). *Tiket Candi Borobudur Dianggap Kemahalan, Pengelola: Itu Termurah. Tempo.Co.* https://www.tempo.co/hiburan/wisata-candi-prambanan-harga-tiket-jam-buka-dan-lokasi-212854

Vojnovic, D. V. (2021). Key noun + noun collocations in the language of tourism: A corpus-based study of English and Serbian. ELOPE: *English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries,* 18(2), 51–68. https://doi.org/10.4312/elope.18.2.51-68

World Heritage in Danger. (n.d.). Retrieved April 25, 2025, from https://whc.unesco.org/en/danger/

Xu, J., Peng, P., Wei, D., & Deng, Z. (2024). The research of knowledge diffusion network model for Tourism Destination-Public ecological civilization. *PLoS* ONE, 19(10). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0310112

Xu, J., Wang, X., Zhang, J., Huang, S. (Sam), & Lu, X. (2022). Explaining customer satisfaction via hotel reviews: A comparison between pre- and post-COVID-19 reviews. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management,* 53, 208–213. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2022.11.003

Yu, J., Zhang, X., & Kim, H. S. (2023). Using online customer reviews to understand customers' experience and satisfaction with integrated resorts. *Sustainability (Switzerland),* 15(17). https://doi.org/10.3390/su151713049

Zhang, Y., Cham, T.-H., Pek, C. K., & Leong, C.-M. (2024). Is face and information availability important in green purchasing among young consumers? *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications,* 11(1), 878. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03377-8

Assessing Postgraduate Students' Engineering Content Learning Outcomes and Associated Linguistic Competencies Through CLIL-Based Instruction

Takashi Uemura
Yamaguchi University, Ube-shi, Yamaguchi, Japan
Mayumi Tanaka
Mukogawa Women's University, Nishinomiya-shi, Hyogo, Japan
Katsumi Ichimura
Naritoshi Aoyagi
National Institute of Technology, Nagaoka College, Nagaoka-shi, Niigata, Japan
Makoto Ikeda
Sophia University, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Abstract

This study investigates the engineering content learning outcomes and related language skills of Japanese and international master's students through presentations and oral exercises, implemented using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) principles. The presentation required students to identify manufacturing product issues and propose solutions according to given criteria. The oral tasks mimicked a business meeting where students had to verify a potential customer's current procurement process, explore their requirements, and present their product. The English for Manufacturing Course was developed based on Tanaka et al.'s (2017) linguistic model, which outlines four expression types essential for manufacturing industry communication, as well as the 4Cs of CLIL (Coyle et al., 2010). Data was collected using rubrics to evaluate students' pre- and post-oral tasks and presentations. Fifteen Japanese and five Chinese international students participated in the presentation, while seventeen Japanese and five international students took part in the oral tasks. All were enrolled in a 15-week elective CLIL-based English course for engineering master's students. Presentation outcomes indicated that students could generally explain manufacturing business issues and solutions, primarily by highlighting their product's advantages over competitors. Oral task results showed that students were typically able to use contextually appropriate expressions, accurately citing information sources and providing specific explanations with quantitative data.

Keywords: CLIL; English for manufacturing; spoken tasks; presentation; engineering students

Introduction

Traditionally, engineering students attend "English for Science and Technology" courses, which fall under the category of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). These classes primarily focus on knowledge building and skill acquisition in specialized engineering fields, emphasizing hard skills like learning subject-specific terminology and understanding technical concepts. However, in today's globalized world, many manufacturing companies are seeking professionals who not only excel in engineering but also possess soft skills, including advanced English communication abilities. Consequently, higher education institutions need to adapt their teaching methods to keep pace with societal and technological advancements.

In this context, the global spread of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) over the past three decades has garnered attention from researchers. CLIL is an educational approach that simultaneously emphasizes content learning and language acquisition, with researchers applying it to engineering and English instruction. For instance, Pancheva and Antov (2017) implemented a pilot CLIL program for undergraduate and postgraduate students in wood technology and engineering design in Bulgaria. Similarly, Aoyagi et al. (2016) applied CLIL to mechanical engineering students at KOSEN (National Institute of Technology), tasking them with

writing assembly instructions for a model car in groups. Tanaka (2017) and Tanaka et al. (2017) developed a language model based on interviews with engineers, identifying four types of expressions (simple, detailed, logical, appropriate and accurate) essential for communication in the manufacturing industry. This model proposed four levels of situationally appropriate expressions for use in factory, interdepartmental, and external communication to address quality issues and introduce new products to customers.

Drawing inspiration from this model, the authors created CLIL-based English materials focused on manufacturing business for engineering students, considering their future career development. These materials were designed to help future management-level professionals acquire advanced communication skills. Studies were conducted on the CLIL-based English course, targeting postgraduate students who typically possess extensive English language knowledge and learning experience.

To date, various aspects of learning in CLIL have been explored, including students' perceptions of CLIL instruction in five pilot classes (Uemura et al., 2021a), their evaluation of lesson materials (Ichimura et al., 2021), a semi-structured interview survey focusing on the cognitive aspect of learning (Uemura et al., 2021b), and cultural and communicative aspects of learning in a full-semester English course for engineering master's degree students (Uemura et al., 2022).

This study focuses on new dimensions of CLIL, examining engineering content learning outcomes through student presentations and associated linguistic competencies identified through spoken tasks. The research is based on CLIL instruction in an English course for engineering master's degree students in Japan.

Literature Review
CLIL for Engineering Students

Research on CLIL for engineering students is growing, albeit still limited. In Europe, where CLIL is widely adopted, Dalton-Puffer et al. (2009) implemented CLIL instruction for engineering college students, discovering that reduced inhibition when speaking a foreign language was crucial. A study by Aguilar and Muñoz (2013) examined how varying English proficiency levels among Spanish postgraduate engineering students affected CLIL effectiveness, revealing greater benefits for higher proficiency students. In Bulgaria, Pancheva and Antov (2017) piloted CLIL for bachelor's and master's students in wood technology and engineering design, with most participants finding the CLIL course knowledge closely related to their field.

In Asia, Kim et al. (2021) employ the term Integrating Content and Language (ICL), which appears synonymous with CLIL. They note the recent use of Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education (ICL-HE), though its frameworks and conceptualization remain unsettled. Their research showed students generally preferred the more integrated aspect of ICL classes over language-focused ones.

CLIL research in engineering is particularly active in Japanese KOSEN institutions, given their established goal of producing skilled engineers for Japanese industries. Aoyagi et al. (2016) implemented CLIL-based teaching for KOSEN mechanical engineering students, who collaboratively wrote assembly instructions for a model car after completing related tasks. Students found CLIL beneficial for both language and content learning, while engineering instructors recognized their need to enhance language teaching skills.

The 4Cs Framework of CLIL

CLIL is grounded in the 4Cs framework: content, communication, cognition, and culture/community (Coyle et al., 2010; Mehisto et al., 2008). In CLIL classrooms, content encompasses a wide range, from standard curriculum subjects to cross-curricular thematic topics. Cognitive engagement in CLIL encompasses metacognitive learning awareness and the cultivation of thinking skills, progressing from lower-order thinking skills (LOTS) (remember, understand, apply) to higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) (analyze, evaluate, create), as described in the updated Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001). Language in CLIL serves three functions: language of learning (subject-specific terminology), language for learning (instructional language supported by scaffolding in group activities and discussions), and language through learning (emergent language during content acquisition, requiring educators to address immediate linguistic needs) (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 37, emphasis in the original). Cultural awareness, encompassing both self-culture and other cultures, is nurtured through dialogic interactions. These intercultural exchanges occur within classroom communities and broader external communities. Such

interactions promote understanding of cultural diversity, enhance intercultural awareness, and prepare learners for global citizenship.

Development and Classroom Application of the Four-Level Language Model for Manufacturing Communication

Research by Tanaka (2017) and Tanaka et al. (2017) introduced a CLIL framework for engineering education, based on the 4Cs: content (manufacturing expertise), communication (English for manufacturing), cognition (thought processes), and culture/community (intercultural and collaborative learning). Given the significance of English proficiency for Japanese engineers, communication is central to this model.

Additionally, Tanaka (2017) and Tanaka et al. (2017) proposed a language model comprising four levels of expression essential for manufacturing communication: Level 1 (basic operational instructions or reports), Level 2 (detailed operational instructions or reports), Level 3 (logical operational instructions or reports for those with shared context), and Level 4 (precise and culturally appropriate operational instructions or reports for those without shared context). These models underscore the importance of structured communication in engineering education.

Building on Tanaka (2017) and Tanaka et al.'s (2017) work, the authors conducted five studies:

Uemura et al. (2021a) examined CLIL's applicability for Japanese and Asian international engineering graduate students in a five-session English for manufacturing course. Survey results indicated the suitability of manufacturing business practice content and positive student responses to analytical language learning, peer teaching, and self-reflection through speaking tasks.

Ichimura et al. (2021) developed CLIL-based English teaching materials for engineering students in collaboration with engineers through interviews and brainstorming sessions. These resources included manufacturer articles, engineer-performed roleplay videos from overseas sites, and language study aids, helping students envision their future careers. Postgraduate engineering students generally responded positively to these materials, as evidenced by questionnaires and interviews.

Uemura et al. (2021b) investigated engineering graduate students' perceptions of CLIL instruction. Data were collected from Japanese and international students through a self-evaluation rubric and semi-structured interviews conducted at the end of the course. This study emphasized cognitive aspects of CLIL and the importance of students' ability to provide both quantitative and qualitative explanations. Assignments and presentations were found to be more effective for understanding Level 4 expressions compared to classroom reports and speaking tasks.

Uemura et al. (2022) conducted another CLIL course for engineering master's students, focusing on cultural and communicative learning aspects. Interviews revealed increased student motivation for working abroad and improved communication skills, including language level adjustment and respect for others' ideas. Comparative pre- and post-speaking task data showed improvements in students' ability to focus discussions and provide situational explanations with references.

A study by Aoyagi et al. (2024) examined the effectiveness of student product presentations and related preparatory activities in enhancing product promotion skills. The research utilized Tanaka (2017) and Tanaka et al.'s (2017) four expression types to design tasks that focused on conceptualizing product development, manufacturing, and marketing. Working in pairs or groups, students were required to articulate various product specifications, including features and functionalities. To simulate real-world industry communication, participants were asked to choose different products and deliver presentations highlighting their selected item's advantages. The study's findings indicated that students not only acquired technical vocabulary and scientific expressions but also gained insight into the significance of English communication regarding societal connections and impacts. This included discussions on environmental concerns, cost-effectiveness, and safety considerations, which were explored through product tracking and investigation.

Focus on Form and CLIL

"Focus on form" (Long, 1991; hereafter abbreviated as FonF) is a pedagogical approach where instructors explicitly draw students' attention to linguistic features that arise naturally in classes whose primary focus is on meaning. Genesee (1991) suggests that second language instruction can be improved by incorpo-

rating non-language content, increasing classroom interaction, and planning for language growth. Dalton-Puffer (2007) identified four key factors influencing CLIL classroom language development: FonF, meaning emphasis, class interaction, and teacher's L2 proficiency. However, CLIL lessons are often highly communicative, prioritizing meaning and its negotiation, with insufficient attention to language due to a lack of explicit FonF (Pérez-Vidal, 2007). Consequently, there is a growing need for FonF to successfully integrate content and language in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms. The FonF approach aims to provide ample L2 comprehensible input and interaction while incorporating language instruction in supplementary and often incidental ways. Instead of isolated grammar explanations and exercises, FonF seeks to merge form- and meaning-focused learning by directing learners' attention to form during communicative language use (Izumi, 2022). Valeo (2013) proposes pedagogical options such as modified input, form-focused tasks, and corrective feedback, which align with content-based language classroom practices where subject-specific input is provided, language is used meaningfully in tasks, and feedback addresses both language and content.

Izumi (2022) advocates for a flexible approach to FonF, tailored to local teaching contexts rather than rigidly defined. Doughty and Williams (1998) proposed proactive FonF approaches, allowing teachers to prepare in advance. This prior assessment of learner needs enables teachers to design form-focused activities that help learners focus on specific forms requiring attention (Izumi, 2022). The teaching intervention is expected to help learners notice crucial linguistic features and promote L2 learning, provided it respects the learner's social, psycholinguistic, and emotional/affective needs and readiness, even if immediate target-like use of the form post-instruction may not occur (Izumi, 2022).

Presentations and CLIL

This research incorporated presentations into a CLIL program for graduate engineering students. Presentations in CLIL have been shown to effectively enhance students' understanding of subject matter. For example, Elwood (2022) analyzed oral presentations in a CLIL course on behavioral economics, examining their impact on peer comprehension and effective content delivery. The study utilized quizzes based on presentation content to evaluate peer understanding and engagement. Results indicated that even less-than-ideal presentations could facilitate comprehension under certain circumstances, while effective paraphrasing necessitated a thorough grasp of the source material. Moreover, students found learning content through peer presentations to be both rewarding and advantageous, highlighting the educational value of interactive, content-focused tasks.

Nevertheless, presentations in CLIL face obstacles regarding language improvement. Gallardo del Puerto and Martínez Adrián (2015) explored the use of oral presentations in Higher Education, contrasting CLIL and EFL students. Their research revealed that while EFL students reported notable improvements in English language proficiency following training, CLIL students did not perceive comparable linguistic advancements. This disparity implies that CLIL lessons may emphasize content at the cost of language development, potentially overlooking focus-on-form techniques crucial for effective language acquisition. The researchers suggest improved integration of content and language in CLIL environments, particularly through the use of rubrics to align learning objectives and strategies.

Presentations in CLIL are also considered effective for promoting cognitive growth, a crucial element of the 4Cs framework underlying CLIL. Within the context of Bloom's revised taxonomy, presentations correspond to the highest cognitive process: creating. As stated by Anderson et al. (2001), creating involves combining elements to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure, and encompasses generating, planning, and producing. Presentations require students to engage in this process, as they must organize their ideas and findings based on their research.

Beyond cognition, presentations in CLIL substantially contribute to the culture/community aspect of the 4Cs framework. As demonstrated in Elwood (2022), presentations necessitate student collaboration, idea sharing, and meaningful peer interactions, fostering intercultural understanding and collaborative learning. Such activities prepare students for participation in diverse professional and academic settings by encouraging respect for different viewpoints and enhancing communication skills.

Research Questions

This research investigates two primary questions:

RQ1: In a CLIL-based "English for Manufacturing" course, how effectively will engineering master's students identify manufacturing product issues and suggest solutions based on provided specifications?

RQ2: What changes will be observed in engineering graduate students' oral proficiency of Level 4 (Appropriate and Accurate) Expressions before and after CLIL-based instruction?

Methodology

Lesson Content and Structure

During the 2021 spring semester, we offered a CLIL-based 15-week elective English for Manufacturing course for engineering master's students. The course content was structured around a framework combining Tanaka (2017) and Tanaka et al.'s (2017) four expression types and the CLIL 4Cs framework (Coyle et al., 2010).

The course began with two introductory lessons on English for Manufacturing, familiarizing students with the aforementioned expression types. The subsequent two lessons focused on Levels 1 and 2 expressions, commonly used in overseas factory communication. Six lessons were then dedicated to Level 3 expressions, typically employed in interdepartmental communication for addressing customer-reported quality issues. The following three lessons concentrated on Level 4 expressions, often used in external communication, such as introducing new products to customers. The course concluded with a presentation preparation workshop and a final presentation on a product of the student's choice. Students were required to submit a Zoom-recorded presentation for teacher evaluation between these last two lessons and share their recordings in small groups for peer assessment and feedback. Appendices 3 to 5 outline the workshop tasks, which involved: (1) online research on three product specifications, considering various aspects and identifying promotional points (Task 1), (2) selecting one product, researching similar products from different manufacturers, and identifying promotional points through comparison (Task 2), and (3) identifying potential issues arising from not owning the product and proposing solutions (Task 3).

A typical lesson was structured as follows: The first half began with a video viewing task featuring engineers communicating in business settings. This included gap-filling exercises and comprehension checks through group discussions. A brief lecture on engineering technical terms was followed by peer teaching activities and dialogue practice, with the teacher providing verbal corrective feedback. The second half comprised teacher explanations of key grammar points and associated linguistic functions, along with peer teaching activities. The lesson concluded with students personalizing information using these linguistic features.

Two individual spoken tasks were administered during the course: one before the Level 3 expression lessons and another after completing the Level 4 expression lessons. Students were expected to introduce a new product using Level 4 expressions, receiving immediate verbal feedback from the teacher.

Additionally, students were required to submit a Zoom-recorded presentation for official teacher evaluation between the presentation preparation workshop and the final presentation. Each student then shared their recorded presentation in small groups for peer assessment and feedback.

Participants

The presentation involved twenty engineering master's students, comprising fifteen from Japan and five from China. For the oral components, twenty-two engineering master's students participated, including seventeen Japanese and five Chinese individuals. All students were enrolled in the 15-week English for Manufacturing course in 2021, which was designed for engineering master's students. The English proficiency of the participants ranged from beginner level, with TOEIC scores of 350, to advanced level, with scores reaching 990 on the TOEIC scale.

Data Collection and Measurement

In 2021, researchers gathered data through individual spoken tasks conducted and digitally recorded on Zoom. The pre-spoken task was given after lessons on Levels 1 and 2 expressions but prior to those on Level 4

expressions. The post-spoken task followed the completion of the final lesson. Students individually recorded their presentations using Zoom and submitted them after the 15th week's lesson. These recordings were subsequently transcribed anonymously.

Two rubrics were created and utilized: a three-criteria rubric for assessing student presentations (Appendix 1) and a five-criteria rubric for evaluating spoken tasks (Appendix 2). Given that an English language teacher taught the lessons, the communicative aspect of learning in spoken tasks was evaluated more comprehensively, while the content aspect of learning in student presentations was assessed more concisely. Using these rubrics, one rater evaluated student performances in 2021, followed by second raters in 2024. This method aimed to improve the objectivity and reliability of the data. To ensure valid inter-rater reliability, the Kappa coefficient was calculated. The results were then averaged to produce the official presentation of the figures.

Procedures

The content before and after the spoken task remained the same. Participants were required to deliver a three-minute monologue via Zoom following a 15-minute preparation period. While presenting, they were allowed to reference the instruction card but not any materials used during preparation. The task necessitated the use of Level 4 expressions to address three key points: (1) verifying the current supplier and procurement details of the potential customer, (2) highlighting the benefits of the student's company's new product or part using numerical data, and (3) gathering information about the potential customer's quality expectations for the product or part in question.

During the 14th week, students received instruction on product presentation preparation. They were introduced to a specification showcasing various product attributes such as performance and functionality. Students were then tasked with conducting online research on the specifications of three products of interest and identifying their main selling points. After selecting one product based on a comparison of these points, students were assigned further research on similar products from different manufacturers. This exercise aimed to pinpoint the chosen product's promotional aspects by comparing various features of the two. To enhance the persuasiveness of their presentations, students were advised to focus on identifying (1) potential problems that might arise without the product, and (2) possible remedies for these issues.

Following the elicitation of relevant ideas, the overall and specific objectives of the presentation were clarified. The primary goal was to cultivate the ability to elucidate issues, concerns, and their solutions in manufacturing environments and relevant business contexts requiring Level 4 expressions. The secondary goals were fivefold: Students should be capable of (1) delivering a simulated presentation to promote their company's product in a corporate setting, (2) articulating potential problems that may occur without the product, (3) providing technical explanations of the product's specifications and features while detailing how it addresses the issues identified in (2), (4) highlighting the product's advantages compared to competitors' or existing products, and (5) offering explanations based on research findings. In the 15th week, students submitted a three-minute one-way presentation recorded on Zoom.

Result
Student Presentations

Table 1 displays the evaluation outcomes for student presentations, showcasing the mean scores across five objectives. A robust inter-rater reliability ($k = 0.895$, $p < 0.01$) was observed, indicating consistent scoring. Four out of five objectives received scores of 2.0 or above, suggesting moderate success. Notably, Objective 4, which assessed students' ability to highlight their product's advantages over competitors or existing offerings, achieved the highest average score of 2.4. This suggests that students performed relatively well in comparative product analysis. The overall performance, when translated to a five-point scale, approximated to 3, demonstrating satisfactory accomplishment across the evaluated criteria.

An illustration of student presentation evaluation is provided in Figure 1, highlighting the performance of a top-scoring student who received the maximum score of 3 for each criterion. This student delivered a simulated corporate presentation focusing on a hairdryer product, showcasing its features, advantages, and ability to solve specific problems.

TABLE 1. Average Student Scores of Presentations

Objectives	Scores
(1) Student can give a simulated presentation to promote their company's product in a corporate business setting.	2.1
(2) Student can articulate issues that may emerge if one does not possess the product in question.	2.1
(3) Student can give technical explanations about the product specification and/or features while detailing how the product resolves the issues identified in (2).	2.0
(4) Student can identify the product's superior points compared to competitors' and/or existing product(s).	2.4
(5) Student can appropriately give explanations based on research.	1.9
All Items	2.1
Conversion to five-point scale (rounded)	3.0

FIGURE 1. A Student's Presentation

1	Hello, everyone! <u>My name is *Hanako Yamada from the Sales Department.</u> And I'm very glad
2	to be here today. <u>I'd like to talk about our latest hairdryer.</u> There are three, two things I would like
3	to talk on this presentation. First, I would like to talk about the features of the product. Next, I'll
4	talk about the benefits of buying the product.
5	Now, let me begin. I'd like to start by the features of the product. If you don't have a hairdryer,
6	your cuticles will spread and your hair will be damaged easily. Also natural drain causes bacteria
7	to grow and causes smell. <u>There are three main features of the EH-NA0E model hairdryer I am
8	about to show you: Nano Care, Longer lasting hair color, and five modes. Nanoe is an ion rich
9	moisture. The nanoe is a moisture rich ion that helps to tighten the hair cuticle and make it shiny.
10	Ions have the cuticle hold tighter, so the coloring agent does not run out and the hair color lasts
11	longer. The five modes refer to these five functions. By adjusting the temperature of the air flow,
12	you can minimize the damage to your skin and hair.</u>
13	Let's move on to the next topic, advantage. This graph shows the five step evaluation of the
14	new product when the conventional product is there. <u>According to our analysis, the amount of
15	ions generated by the new product is 18 times that of the conventional product, which is so to
16	have significantly improve the moist feeling.</u> The price is a bit high about thirty thousand yen, but
17	I think you will find the effect more than worth the price.
18	Let's use our hairdryer and have beautiful hair life. Thank you for your kind attention.
19	*Pseudonymized

The student successfully met Objective 1 by delivering a simulated presentation in a corporate business environment, introducing themselves as a company representative and clearly stating the presentation's purpose (lines 1–2).

For Objective 2, the student effectively communicated potential issues that could arise without the product in question, using at least one clear and complete sentence to convey these concerns (lines 5–7).

In addressing Objective 3, the student provided comprehensive technical explanations of the product's specifications and features. These explanations included a clear description of how the product resolves the previously identified issues, showcasing the ability to combine technical information with problem-solving communication (lines 7–12).

The student fulfilled Objectives 4 and 5 by effectively highlighting the product's advantages compared to competitors or existing products through specific comparisons (lines 13–16). Additionally, the student incorporated research-based explanations, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence. For example, the student cited data, prefacing it with "According to," to support claims about the product's benefits (lines 14–16).

This presentation demonstrates exceptional performance, fulfilling all five objectives thoroughly and exhibiting advanced skills in both presentation delivery and content integration.

Spoken Tasks

Table 2 displays the average student scores for the four objectives in the pre- and post-spoken task evaluations. The scoring process demonstrated strong inter-rater reliability (k = 0.783, p < 0.01). A moderate improvement was observed in average scores between the two tests. All items showed an increase in rounded scores from 2 in the pre-test to 3 in the post-test. Students exhibited significant advancement in explaining situations using quantitative expressions and providing information sources, achieving a high post-test average of 4.0. However, their ability to focus the discussion range scored lower at 2.3 in the post-test, with a pre-test score of 1.3. The skill of politely inquiring about others' requests remained nearly unchanged, moving from 2.8 to 2.9 between tests.

TABLE 2. Average Student Scores of Spoken Task Results

Objectives	Scores	
	Pre-test	**Post-test**
(1) Student can focus the range of discussion/a topic by using appropriate and accurate expressions	1.3	2.3
(2) Student can explain a situation by providing the source of information using quantitative expressions	2.8	4.0
(3) Student can explain a situation by providing the source of information accompanied by a reason	2.3	3.0
(4) Student can politely ask about another's request	2.8	2.9
All Items	**2**	**3**

Table 3 presents the target Level 4 expressions and their associated linguistic functions, which students were expected to utilize in the spoken tasks. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the assessment of pre- and post-spoken tasks, concentrating on the third Level 4 expression from Table 3. The examples showcase the performance of a student who demonstrated substantial improvement, receiving scores of 2.5 and 5 in the pre- and post-spoken tasks, respectively, and achieving the highest scores in the latter.

For the pre-spoken task (Figure 2), the student's use of "due to analyze this share" as a subordinate clause was deemed acceptable for indicating the information source, despite a minor grammatical error in using "analyze" as a verb (line 4). The main clause, however, led to a slight disagreement between raters. One assigned a score of 2, concluding that the explanation was insufficient as the comparison party for the student's simulated company was not clearly identified. The other rater gave a 3, noting that the student correctly mentioned "relatively high price" and ruled out "quality" to prevent misunderstanding by the simulated customer (lines 4–5). Without the target expression "the main reason for" alongside "because of" (line 4), a valid reason was not considered provided. Consequently, the scores were averaged to 2.5.

TABLE 3. Target Level 4 Expressions and Associated Linguistic Functions

Appropriate and Accurate (Level 4) Expressions	Linguistic Functions
(1) **As far as I know,** you have used materials **which meet the specification of 501C** for your device related to the car industry, and you **buy them from one of our competitors.**	Focusing the range of discussion/a topic by using appropriate and accurate expressions
(2) **According to** our sales department, the **market share** of our materials for this spec **is less than 10%** worldwide.	Explaining a situation by providing the source of information using quantitative expressions
(3) **Based on** our market research and analysis, **the main reason** for such a lower market share is **not because of our quality,** but **because of our relatively higher prices compared to our competitors.**	Explaining a situation by providing the source of information accompanied by a reason
(4) **Could you let me know** how much material you'll need for the testing and the delivery date, please?	Politely asking about another's request

In the post-spoken task (Figure 3), the student effectively provided the information source using the target phrase "based on" along with a valid reason introduced by "the main reason for" and "because of" (lines 5–6). The main clause included a detailed explanation of the situation, employing the adjective "low" and comparative expressions like "relatively higher prices compared to" (lines 6–7). This performance exemplified a high standard and met the top criteria, earning a score of 5.

FIGURE 2. A Student's Pre-Spoken Task Performance

1	My name is *Hanako Yamada from Company A. Today I'm here to talk about 450K
2	specification. According, according to, according to, uh, my company's sales department, my my
3	part, my part, my company's part is share, um, less than, 10% less than the market price. Um,
4	this, so uh, due to analyze this share is because not, **not because of** quality **but** because of
5	relatively high, high price. Today, uh, this time I would like to hear company B's what kind of
6	quality is it looking for?.
7	*Pseudonymized

FIGURE 3. A Student's Post-Spoken Task Performance

1	Good morning *Mr. Yamada. Today, I will introduce our company's materials. As far as I know,
2	you have used materials which meet the specification 450K. We have supplied the materials
3	which meet 450K specifications. Am I correct? So, the main reason I am here today is for
4	promotional purposes. According to our sales department, uh, the market share of our materials is
5	less than 10% worldwide, wide. And **based on** market research and analysis, **the main reason**
6	for, uh, low, ma, low, low market share is not **because of** our quality, uh, **but** because of our
7	relatively higher prices **compared to** our rival companies. I would like to know what your
8	company is looking for in terms of quality. Thank you.
9	*Pseudonymized

Discussion
Student Presentations (RQ1)

The evaluation criteria centered on assessing content learning through presentations, encompassing five key areas: (1) showcasing a product in a corporate setting, (2) discussing potential challenges when the product is unavailable, (3) providing technical specifics and solutions, (4) contrasting the product's benefits with those of rivals, and (5) offering research-supported explanations. English accuracy was not included as a criterion to emphasize the evaluation of content mastery and delivery over linguistic precision. This approach ensured that students' abilities to recognize and tackle real-world manufacturing challenges were highlighted.

The findings indicate that engineering master's students excelled in identifying problems and proposing solutions in manufacturing contexts, achieving average scores of 2.0 or higher in four out of five objectives. Notably, students performed best in Objective 4, which evaluated their ability to compare their product's attributes with competitors.' The robust average score of 2.4 for this objective indicates that students were particularly adept at assessing their products' competitive edge, a crucial skill in professional settings where value differentiation is vital. This outcome aligns with Gallardo del Puerto and Martínez Adrián's (2015) observations that CLIL students excel in content-related tasks such as analyzing and presenting product advantages. Additionally, the findings support Elwood's (2022) assertion that CLIL-based presentations effectively promote content understanding and problem-solving skills.

Moreover, students demonstrated their proficiency in articulating issues and proposing solutions by providing comprehensive explanations of how their products address specific challenges, effectively combining technical specifications with practical applications. This aligns with the cognitive dimension of the 4Cs framework (Coyle et al., 2010), particularly by engaging students in HOTS such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Their comparative analysis of product advantages and evidence-based explanations also reflects the cognitive skill of "creating" as defined in Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001), as students were not merely analyzing or

evaluating but actively generating new arguments and justifications based on their integrated understanding of the product, its features, and its competitive advantages.

These findings suggest that the course's instructional design effectively facilitated students' engagement with these HOTS. Task 1 required students to examine various product characteristics, including performance, design, price, applicability, and environmental considerations, helping them break down complex information into meaningful components. For example, students investigated how specific features, such as shape and material, influenced a product's suitability for activities like mountain climbing or industrial applications. This level of in-depth analysis provided students with the foundational knowledge necessary for more advanced tasks.

In the second task, students progressed from analysis to assessment, comparing their chosen product with similar offerings from other manufacturers. This exercise required them to recognize competitive advantages and drawbacks, nurturing critical thinking abilities. Students assessed aspects such as longevity, cost-efficiency, and eco-friendliness to identify their product's unique market position. This evaluative approach promoted the growth of competitive reasoning, a crucial skill in professional business settings.

The third task challenged students to consolidate their findings into compelling presentations. They exhibited their "creating" ability by suggesting solutions to potential issues and emphasizing their product's strengths relative to competitors. For example, students crafted value propositions that connected technical features, like recyclability or production efficiency, to real-world applications. By choosing relevant promotional points and structuring their discoveries into logical arguments, students effectively demonstrated their capacity to synthesize information and convey it persuasively.

The focus on product comparison and evidence-based justification further highlights the significance of developing practical persuasive communication skills. For instance, the top-performing student effectively utilized quantitative data, such as ion generation capacity, to showcase her product's advantages, exhibiting strong evaluative and communication abilities. This accomplishment underlines the efficacy of the CLIL approach in combining content learning with professional communication skills, a vital competency in global business environments.

Nevertheless, while disregarding English accuracy allowed for greater emphasis on content learning, it also reveals an area for enhancement. As proposed by Gallardo del Puerto and Martínez Adrián (2015), incorporating focus-on-form techniques could improve linguistic precision without compromising content mastery. This modification would provide students with a more balanced skill set, merging technical expertise with advanced language proficiency.

In conclusion, the results demonstrate the effectiveness of the CLIL-based "English for Manufacturing" course in equipping students to tackle real-world challenges through organized, research-oriented problem-solving tasks. The course's emphasis on professional and technical competencies ensures that students are well-prepared to navigate global business environments while offering innovative and evidence-based solutions.

Spoken Tasks (RQ2)

The comparison of pre- and post-spoken task outcomes demonstrated a modest enhancement in mean scores. Notably, Objective 2 results indicated a substantial improvement in students' capacity to elucidate situations by citing information sources with quantitative expressions, reaching an impressive average of 4.0 in the post-test, up from 2.8 in the pre-test. This exceptional progress may be attributed to the students' prior experience with academic presentations as postgraduates. Most participants were likely accustomed to employing phrases like "According to" and numerical expressions such as "10%." This aligns with Izumi's (2022) view that teaching interventions can enhance learners' recognition of crucial linguistic features and promote L2 learning when considering their social, psycholinguistic, and emotional/affective needs and preparedness.

The relevance of key academic presentation terms to postgraduate students might have encouraged their focus on essential linguistic elements. However, they may have lacked confidence in accurately using business-specific vocabulary like "sales department," "market share," "materials for this spec," and comparative phrases like "less than" during the initial spoken task. These business terms were introduced within relevant contexts, such as explaining corporate structures, followed by reinforcement exercises. Students practiced using these terms through paired dialogues, gradually moving away from written prompts to internalize the expressions. Instructors provided corrective feedback, particularly when target business terms were omitted or misused.

Grammatical explanations and associated linguistic functions were presented immediately after dialogue practice. This sequence of (1) contextual vocabulary instruction, (2) paired dialogue practice simulating business scenarios, and (3) grammar and linguistic function explanations was designed to facilitate inductive learning. This approach corresponds with Genesee's (1991) assertion that second language instruction effectiveness can be enhanced by integrating non-language content, increasing classroom interaction, and systematically planning language development.

The results for Objective 3 were similar, showing a modest enhancement in students' capacity to elucidate situations by offering information sources with supporting rationales, achieving a score of 3.0 in the post-spoken assessment. Outcomes for Objective 1 indicated a moderate 1.0 increase in students' ability to narrow discussion scope, although average scores remained lower than other objectives at 1.3 and 2.3 in pre- and post-spoken assessments, respectively. These difficulties were linked to the intricate grammatical structures within the target expressions, including restrictive relative clauses, restrictive participial phrases, and the use of coordinate conjunctions to verify customer procurement processes. Despite grammar explanations, this complexity may have been somewhat overwhelming.

The outcome of Objective 4 revealed that students' ability to courteously inquire about others' requests remained nearly unchanged between the two tasks, moving from 2.8 to 2.9. This linguistic function appeared to be comparatively easier to accomplish than other objectives. Students tended to customize their expressions using available options like "Please," "Can you tell me," and "I would like to know." It seemed they were reluctant to venture beyond their comfort zone and failed to employ the new grammatical construction "Could you let me know."

Conclusion

This study investigated two aspects of CLIL-based English for Manufacturing lessons for engineering master's students: their ability to identify and solve manufacturing issues according to given specifications, and the change in their spoken use of Level 4 (Appropriate and Accurate) Expressions before and after CLIL instruction. Regarding the first aspect, student presentations demonstrated that participants could generally explain manufacturing business problems and solutions, primarily by highlighting their product's advantages over competitors. The second aspect, examined through pre- and post-spoken tasks, showed that students could generally employ contextually suitable expressions, accurately citing information sources and providing specific explanations using quantitative terms.

Nevertheless, this research faced certain constraints. A significant disparity in English proficiency among students may have influenced the varying degrees of difficulty they experienced in naturally producing both the target language elements and product descriptions during presentations.

Considering recent advancements in CLIL theory and practice, future research could explore several pedagogical approaches. For instance, Dalton-Puffer (2013) outlines seven types of Cognitive Discourse Functions (CDFs) observed in CLIL classrooms. If the classroom instruction for manufacturing CLIL includes the explicit connection between the CDF constructs and product presentations (e.g., the type of a product is "defined" and "classified," the characteristic of it is "described," the strengths and weaknesses of it are "explained" and "evaluated"), students' communicative, cognitive, and conceptual competencies are expected to be more densely intertwined and elevated. Another relevant development in CLIL scholarship is the "pluriliteracies teaching for deeper learning" approach (Coyle & Meyer, 2021). This concept extends beyond traditional academic literacy skills to encompass a profound understanding of content, or "the internalisation of conceptual knowledge" (Coyle et al., 2023: 7). Regardless of the CLIL type (content-focused Hard CLIL or language-oriented Soft CLIL), acquiring subject-specific conceptual knowledge promotes sustainable learning (Ikeda, 2024). For example, the top-performing student in this study presented a product using "nanoe" technology to address hair damage caused by conventional hairdryers. Further exploration of "nanoe" technology could provide additional insights, offering classmates a new perspective on various electric appliances.

Integrating these emerging CLIL educational trends with the four-level expression framework for manufacturing CLIL proposed in this research could create an effective model for developing manufacturing English literacy.

Acknowledgements

The Authors

Takashi Uemura is a professor in the Faculty of Engineering at Yamaguchi University, Japan. He holds an MA in TESL/TEFL from the University of Birmingham, UK. His teaching focuses on workplace English for engineering students using a CLIL approach. Uemura's research interests include English language pedagogy and CLIL.
Email: t-uemura@yamaguchi-u.ac.jp

Mayumi Tanaka is a professor in the Department of English and Global Studies at Mukogawa Women's University, Hyogo, Japan. She holds a PhD in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics from the University of Warwick. Her areas of interest include critical reading, materials development, and CLIL.
Email: tmayumi@mukogawa-u.ac.jp

Katsumi Ichimura is a professor in the Division of General Education at the National Institute of Technology, Nagaoka College, teaching intermediate-level English courses. He acquired a BSc from QMUL followed by an MA in English Linguistics from Nagoya Gakuin University. His research focus includes extensive reading and CLIL.
Email: ichimura@nagaoka-ct.ac.jp

Naritoshi Aoyagi is a professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the National Institute of Technology, Nagaoka College. After receiving a PhD, he spent a year as a visiting researcher at Oxford University. He has been teaching Materials science along with related English courses using practical pedagogy.
Email: aoyagi@nagaoka-ct.ac.jp

Makoto Ikeda is a professor in English language education at Sophia University, Japan. He has written various CLIL methodology books for practitioners and researchers and delivered numerous lectures for Japanese, Asian, and European audiences. His recent publications include co-authored Soft CLIL and English language teaching (Routledge, 2022).
Email: makoto-i@sophia.ac.jp

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

TU – Conceptualization, Research Design, Data Collection, Evaluation, Manuscript Writing.
MT – Conceptualization, Data Analysis, Evaluation, Manuscript Writing.
KI – Data Analysis, Evaluation, Manuscript Writing.
NA – Evaluation, Manuscript Writing.
MI – Evaluation, Manuscript Writing.

References

Aguilar, M., & Muñoz, C. (2013). The effect of proficiency on CLIL benefits in engineering students in Spain. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 24*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12006

Anderson, L. W., Krathwohl, D. R., Airasian, P. W., Cruikshank, K. A., Mayer, R. E., Pintrich, P. R., Raths, J., & Wittrock, M. C. (Eds.). (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: *A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives.* Longman.

Aoyagi, N., Ichimura, K., Uemura, T., Tanaka, M., & Ikeda, M. (2024, February 24). Considering a new era of CLIL-based English education at higher education engineering institutions: Expansion of educational practices incorporating CLIL-based English learning materials designed for future manufacturing professionals at KOSEN [Paper presentation]. *Japan CLIL Pedagogy Association Tohoku* Chapter's Special Webinar 2024. https://www.j-clil.com/single-post/2024%E5%B9%B42%E6%9C%8824%E6%97%A5%E9%96%8B%E5%82%AC%E3%80%8C%E6%97%A5%E6%9C%ACclil%E6%95%99%E8%82%B2%E5%AD%A6%E4%BC%9A%E6%9D%B1%E5%8C%97%E6%94%AF%E9%83%A8%E7%89%B9%E5%88%A5%E3%82%A6%E3%82%A7%E3%83%96%E3%82%BB%E3%83%9F%E3%83%8A%E3%83%BC%E3%80%8D

Aoyagi, N., Tanaka, M., & Ikeda, M. (2016). Teaching English to engineering students: A CLIL Approach. *Journal of JSEE*, 64(6), 56–62. https://doi.org/10.4307/jsee.64.6-56

Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). CLIL: *content and language integrated learning.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009024549

Coyle, D., & Meyer, O. (2021). Beyond CLIL: *Pluriliteracies teaching for deeper learning.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108914505

Coyle, D., Meyer, O., & Staschen-Dielmann, S. (2023). *A deeper learning companion for* CLIL: Putting pluriliteracies into practice. Cambridge University Press.

Dalton-Puffer, C. (2007). *Discourse in content and language integrated learning* (CLIL) *classrooms.* John Benjamins.

Dalton-Puffer, C. (2013). A construct of cognitive discourse functions for conceptualising content-language integration in CLIL and multilingual education. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics,* 1(2), 216–253.

Dalton-Puffer, C., Hüttner, J., Schindelegger, V., & Smit, U. (2009). Technology-geeks speak out: What students think about vocational CLIL. *International CLIL Research Journal*, 1(2), 17–26.

Doughty, C., & Williams, J. (1998). Communicative focus on form. In C. Doughty & J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 197–261). Cambridge University Press.

Elwood, K. (2022). University student presentations and CLIL: Assessing peer audience uptake. *The Journal of the Japan CLIL Pedagogy Association,* 4, 110–124. https://www.j-clil.com/-files/ugd/d705d2-f9805b7b790341879874854efe20448a.pdf

Gallardo del Puerto, F., & Martínez Adrián, M. (2015). The use of oral presentations in higher education: CLIL vs. English as a foreign language. *Pulso*, (38), 73–106.

Genesee, F. (1991). Second language learning in school settings: Lessons from immersion. In A. Reynolds (Ed.), *Bilingualism, multiculturalism, and second language learning* (pp. 183–202). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ichimura, K., Uemura, T., Aoyagi, N., Tanaka, M., & Ikeda, M. (2021). Development of CLIL-based English teaching materials for engineering students on the basis of research data obtained from engineers. *Journal of JSEE*, 69(4), 26–30. https://doi.org/10.4307/jsee.69.4-26

Ikeda, M. (2024). Materials for developing cognitive skills and conceptual knowledge in the Japanese Soft CLIL classroom. In A. Cirocki, R. Farrelly, & T. Sapp (Eds.), *Developing materials for innovative teaching and sustainable learning: ELT practitioners' experiences from diverse global contexts* (pp. 301–323). Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-69206-2-12

Izumi, S. (2022). Focus on form for content and language integration. In M. Ikeda, S. Izumi, Y. Watanabe, R. Pinner, & M. Davis (Eds.), Soft CLIL and *English language teaching: Understanding Japanese policy, practice, and implications* (pp. 46–62). Routledge.

Kim, E. G., Park, S., & Baldwin, M. (2021). Toward successful implementation of introductory integrated content and language classes for EFL science and engineering students. *TESOL Journal,* 55(2), 219–247. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.594

Long, M. (1991). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. In K. de Bot, R. B. Ginsberg, & C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 39–52). John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/sibil.2.07lon

Mehisto, P., Marsh, D., & Frigols, M. J. (2008). *Uncovering CLIL: Content and language integrated learning in bilingual and multilingual education.* Macmillan.

Pancheva, T., & Antov, P. (2017). Application of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in engineering education. *Management and Sustainable Development*, 63(2), 36–40.

Pérez-Vidal, C. (2007). The need for focus on form (FoF) in content and language integrated approaches: An exploratory study. *Revista Española de Lingüística Aplicada*, 1, 39–54.

Tanaka, M. (2017). Gijutsu rikkoku nippon ni okeru mono zukuri eigo komyunikeishon moderu [English communication model in a technology-oriented country, Japan]. *The Mitsubishi Foundation the 47th report of granted research and activities 2016* [CD-ROM], 104, 1–4.

Tanaka, M., Aoyagi, N., & Ikeda, M. (2017, July 15). Monozukuri eigo komyunikeishon moderu no kouchiku [Developing a model of communication for manufacturing engineering] [Workshop session]. Japan CLIL Pedagogy Association CLIL Seminar 2017, Tokyo, Japan.

Uemura, T., Tanaka, M., Ichimura, K., Aoyagi, N., & Ikeda, M. (2021a). CLIL for manufacturing: Japanese and international postgraduate students' perceptions of its instruction. *The Journal of the Japan CLIL Pedagogy Association (J-CLIL)*, 3, 84–109. https://www.j-clil.com/-files/ugd/d705d2-2f9cd26812fd4f08b8b3fc4d4d206aa7.pdf

Uemura, T., Tanaka, M., Ichimura, K., Aoyagi, N., & Ikeda, M. (2021b, June 19). *Teaching situationally appropriate expressions for manufacturing: Engineering students' evaluation of CLIL-based instruction in a postgraduate course [Paper presentation].* 2021 ICLHE East Asia Symposium. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-PuVn0XHpBSU-4oOlpw8py5Aw4aYuVIX/view?usp=sharing

Uemura, T., Tanaka, M., Ichimura, K., Aoyagi, N., & Ikeda, M. (2022, July 8). *CLIL-based pedagogical design and materials development for a Japanese postgraduate engineering course: Innovating English education with engineers through a four-year collaborative project [Paper presentation]. WORLD CLIL 2022: Sharing classrooms, sharing worlds, the Hague, the Netherlands.*

Valeo, A. (2013). The integration of language and content: Form-focused instruction in a content-based language program. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics,* 16(1), 25–50.

APPENDIX 1: RUBRIC FOR ASSESSING CONTENT LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH PRESENTATIONS

Objectives	3	2	1
Content			
(1) Student can give a simulated presentation to promote their company's product in a corporate business setting.	Student can give a simulated presentation introducing themselves as a supplier's representative AND articulating the purpose of their visit.	Student can give a simulated presentation introducing themselves as a supplier's representative OR articulating the purpose of their visit.	Student fails to introduce themselves AND articulate the purpose of their visit before beginning the main discussion.
(2) Student can articulate issues that may emerge if one does not possess the product in question.	Student can articulate potential issue(s) using at least one full sentence.	Student can list potential issue(s) using sentence fragments.	Student cannot explain potential issue(s).
(3) Student can give technical explanations about the product specification and/or features while detailing how the product resolves the issues identified in (2).	Student can give technical explanations about the product specification and/or features while detailing how the product resolves the issues identified in (2).	Student can give technical explanations about the product specification and/or features with no consideration for resolving issues identified in (2).	Student cannot give technical explanations about the product specification and/or features.
(4) Student can identify the product's superior points compared to competitors' and/or existing product(s).	Student can identify the product's superior points via comparison and concrete explanation.	Student can identify the product's superior points via comparison but provides inadequate explanation.	Student cannot identify the product's superior points via comparison.
(5) Student can appropriately give explanations based on research.	Student can give quantitative AND qualitative explanations based on research.	Student can give quantitative OR qualitative explanations based on research.	Student cannot give explanations based on research.

APPENDIX 2: RUBRIC FOR ASSESSING SPOKEN TASK PERFORMANCES

Objectives	5	4	3	2	1
Communication					
(1) Student can focus the range of discussion by using appropriate and accurate expressions	Student can focus the range of discussion using *as far as* and confirm the background of a customer's part/product using specific examples.	Student can generally restrict the range of discussion and confirm the background of a customer's part/product using specific examples.	Student can generally restrict the range of discussion and confirm the basic background of a customer's part/product.	Student can do either of the following: restrict the range of discussion or confirm the basic background of a customer's part/product.	A student can do neither of the following: restrict the range of discussion nor confirm the basic background of a customer's part/product.
(2) Student can explain a situation by providing the source of information using quantitative expressions.	Student can explain a situation by providing the source of information using *according to* along with quantitative expressions.	Student can explain a situation by providing the source of information using quantitative expressions.	Student can explain a situation by providing the source of information without using quantitative expressions.	Student can do either of the following: explain a situation or provide the source of information.	Student can do neither of the following: explain a situation nor provide the source of information.
(3) Student can explain a situation by providing the source of information accompanied by a reason.	Student can explain a situation by providing the source of information using *based on* accompanied by a reason.	Student can explain a situation by providing the source of information accompanied by a reason.	Student can explain a situation by providing the source of information without a reason.	Student can do either of the following: explain a situation or provide the source of information.	Student can do neither of the following: explain a situation nor provide the source of information.
(4) Student can politely ask about another's request.	Student can politely ask about another's request by using *Could you…?*	Student can politely ask about another's request using an appropriate expression.	Student can ask about another's request by using a direct question.	Student can express their willingness to know about another's request.	Student cannot ask about another's request.

APPENDIX 3: TASK 1 OF THE PRESENTATION PREPARATION WORKSHOP

Task 1 ～Various Aspects of Products～

1. Consider each aspect of the three products you selected in the **Warm-Up Activity** and list them in the **Worksheet**.
2. Imagine you are going to visit a potential customer as a sales engineer next week to give a presentation on your new product. Select one product from the **Worksheet** and find the promotional points you want to highlight in next week's presentation.
3. Share and discuss your thoughts on **1** and **2** with your classmates.

	Performance and Function	Shape and Design	Price	Applicability	Manufacturing Process	Materials	Color and Visibility	Product lifetime	Environmental Considerations/ SDGs, etc.
Product 1									
Product 2									
Product 3									

APPENDIX 4: TASK 2 OF THE PRESENTATION PREPARATION WORKSHOP

Task 2 ~Differences and Similarities~

In your presentation, you are expected to use **Appropriate and Accurate Expressions (Level 4)** which contain *explaining a situation through comparisons* and *listing similarities* as important linguistic functions.

● Research similar products made by different manufacturers. Identify different and similar aspects between your selected product and the similar products.
● Identify the promotional points of your selected product that you can highlight in your presentation.
● Explain your research results and the promotional points to your classmates.
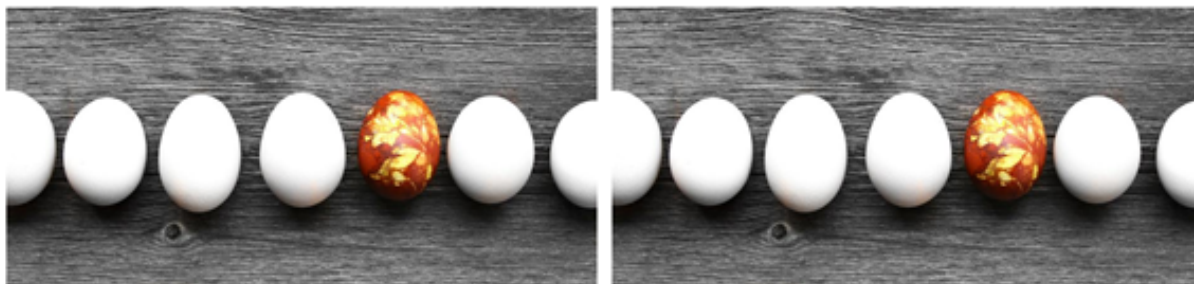
APPENDIX 5: TASK 3 OF THE PRESENTATION PREPARATION WORKSHOP

Task 3 ~Problems (Concerns) and Solutions~

• Consider what problems and/or concerns can emerge in your daily life without your selected product.
• Explain how your selected product could resolve the above problems and/or concerns in light of the aspects you listed in the **Worksheet**.

| Problems and/or Concerns (in your daily life) |
| |
| |
| **Solutions** |
| |

Decolonizing English Language Pedagogy by Adopting a Postmethod Framework to Empower Bangladeshi Educators and Learners

Sayma Ahmed
North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Abstract

This study investigates the limitations of Eurocentric pedagogical approaches in English Language Teaching (ELT) within the Bangladeshi higher education landscape, highlighting its marginalizing effects on nonnative educators and learners through the neglect of local cultures and linguistic identities. To address these issues, the study adopts a postmethod pedagogical framework as a transformative strategy aimed at decolonizing ELT and promoting culturally responsive education. A mixed-method approach was employed, incorporating in-depth interviews and surveys with university educators and learners across diverse institutional settings. The data were analyzed using a descriptive thematic analytical approach. The quantitative findings reveal the dominance of monocultural prescriptive teaching models, and the need for culturally relevant content, learner autonomy, and context-sensitive pedagogical strategies. Qualitative insights reveal how Eurocentric approaches undermine linguistic and cultural representation while participants advocate for antiracist, context-sensitive pedagogies to empower educators. However, challenges persist in shifting institutional mindsets, accessing localized resources, and ensuring pedagogical flexibility. The findings affirm the urgency of a postmethod pedagogical framework that transcends rigid models and encourages dynamic, localized engagement with both global and indigenous knowledge systems. Such a shift is crucial to decolonize ELT, ensure equity, and empower stakeholders in Bangladesh.

Keywords: *English imperialism, postmethod framework, antiracist ELT Pedagogy, educator and learner empowerment, inclusivity and diversity*

Introduction

The colonial concept of curriculum is an insidious construct of marginality that deprives educators and learners of their cultural richness and sense of self-worth. Its psychological stranglehold undermines the intellectual vitality of both, sustaining reliance and disempowerment. English language learning should transcend a mere sterile exercise in linguistic proficiency and evolve into an enriching expedition of cultural awakening, creative exploration, and intellectual emancipation. It must empower educators to devise transformative methodologies grounded in learners' distinct needs, fueled by profound insights gleaned from their lived realities.

The colonial legacy embedded in the curriculum continues to exert a marginalizing influence on both educators and learners by eroding cultural identity and diminishing self-worth (Apple, 2004; Phillipson, 1992; Ramanathan, 2005). Such curriculum frameworks often perpetuate psychological and intellectual dependency, obstructing the development of local agency and epistemological diversity. ELT, therefore, must move beyond a mechanistic focus on linguistic competence to embrace a more transformative vision—one that prioritizes cultural consciousness, critical thinking, and learner empowerment (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Canagarajah, 2005; Janks, 2010).

The revolutionary principles of postmethod pedagogy obliterate the oppressive confines of conventional ELT, revitalizing a decolonized, inclusive framework. This paradigm equips educators and learners with the critical awareness to dismantle self-marginalizing curricula and embody a bold vision of autonomy, creativity, and success. It heralds the revolutionary reconfiguration of ELT power dynamics, restoring autonomy for the subaltern, initiating a new era of empowerment.

ELT in formerly colonized societies, including Bangladesh, remains heavily shaped by Eurocentric pedagogical models and methods that fail to reflect learners' sociocultural realities (Pennycook, 1998; Holliday, 2005; McKay, 2002). The traditional reliance on methods such as the Grammar Translation Method, the Audiolingual Method, and even Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has often served to reinforce Western epistemologies while marginalizing indigenous perspectives (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Alptekin, 2002). These methods are often seen as relics of a colonial past, embedded in the ideology of the "native speaker" and the monolingual norm (Phillipson, 1992; Motha, 2014).

Educators, as the guardians of their learners' lived experiences, are strategically positioned to resist the antiquated paradigms. They are not mere passive executors of authoritative mandates but dynamic architects of pedagogical transformation. With an unyielding commitment to revolutionary practice, educators can unravel the political and ideological structures underpinning educational systems, constructing dynamic approaches that resonate with their contexts and expertise. Kumaravadivelu's conceptualization of educators as transformative intellectuals must emerge as the defining call of this revolution. Educators, as catalysts of change, must transcend theoretical frameworks to design curricula that encapsulate learners' expressions, promote justice, and catalyze an educational renaissance.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) contends that the progression of ELT pedagogies has been predominantly shaped by Western academic spheres, ELT content providers, and Western epistemic frameworks. He emphasizes that the field of ELT demands a focus towards enriching language teachers' praxis, attuned to localized demands, contextual realities, and broader systemic factors. Kumaravadivelu (2003) critiques the notion that "with the emergence of colonialism, method seems to have assumed easily identifiable colonial characteristics" (p. 540). He conceptualizes method as a product of colonialism, referencing the creation and utilization of "prototypical ELT methods (such as Grammar-Translation, Audiolingual, Communicative)" (p. 540). He underscores how Western academics frequently neglected indigenous knowledge, manifesting structural inequalities between the colonial Self and the subaltern Other. ELT functioned as a tool in perpetuating the colonizers' hegemony. Moreover, ELT methodologies reinforce the monolingual doctrine, typically requiring instruction solely in English, thereby reinforcing the dominance of English at the expense of local languages.

In response to persistent dissatisfaction with the notion of method, postmethod pedagogy developed as a reimagined construct to address the inherent drawbacks of conventional frameworks in applied linguistics (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). Simultaneously, disapproval of established methods began to emerge in the 1990s, revolving around the belief that a particular method may not necessarily align with the unique demands of an instructional setting. This debunked the myth of a singular "best method" and highlighted the insufficiency of relying on one method to accurately capture the intricate dynamics that occur in the classroom.

Canagarajah's (1999) ethnographic research among Tamil students in Sri Lanka offers a compelling critique of how Western pedagogical models are often resisted in local contexts. Students subverted dominant discourses in ELT textbooks that valorized Western lifestyles, thereby reclaiming their linguistic and cultural agency. Such resistance signals the pressing need for decolonized pedagogical models that align with learners' identities and aspirations (Canagarajah, 1999; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Street, 2003).

Kumaravadivelu (2003, 2006) advocates for postmethod pedagogy as a highly effective strategy for English language teaching, aiming to revolutionize the principles and content of L2 pedagogy, educator training, and in-class activities. This necessitates ESL educators to critically assess and rationalize their instructional strategies by drawing from their pedagogical expertise and knowledge of various methodologies. Educators are encouraged to devise their personalized strategies as evaluators, analysts, critical thinkers, theorists, and ESL experts.

Postmethod pedagogy embraces inclusiveness by considering the lived experiences of ESL learners and the insights of educators as essential mechanisms that contribute to the overall efficacy of teaching and learning endeavors. It primarily focuses on practical communication within the L2 classroom, contributing to deeper learner engagement with enhanced opportunities to elevate fluency, enabling learners to reach their highest potential beyond the academic environment (Motlhaka & Wadesango, 2014).

The parameter of particularity recognizes the importance of context-specific teaching strategies that emerge from the needs, culture, and experiences of learners (Akbari, 2008; Block, 2003). Practicality emphasizes the need for teachers to theorize from their own practice, bridging the gap between theory and classroom realities (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Benson & Voller, 1997). Possibility draws from critical pedagogy and social justice education, encouraging educators to view language teaching as a site for empowerment and transformation (Freire, 1970; Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Postmethod pedagogy does not signal the discontinuation of traditional pedagogical methods; rather, it can be viewed as a corrective to the inadequacies of these approaches (Can, 2008; Khany & Darabi, 2014). In this model, educators are urged to examine and evaluate what is effective and what is not, employing what Brown (2007) characterizes as a thoughtful and eclectic methodology to address ESL learners' linguistic deficiencies.

Furthermore, scholars such as Pennycook (2001, 2007) and Holliday (2011, 2013) argue that a shift toward critical and culturally responsive pedagogy is essential in challenging linguistic imperialism and fostering inclusive learning environments. Through a postmethod lens, educators are empowered not only to challenge inherited epistemologies but also to create curricula that celebrate diversity, promote equity, and cultivate learner agency.

In sum, the literature underscores the necessity for ELT in Bangladesh to move away from rigid, imported methodologies and embrace a decolonial, postmethod approach. This shift not only addresses the structural inequalities perpetuated by Eurocentric paradigms but also amplifies local voices in the discourse of language education.

Research Question 1: How does the prevailing Eurocentric approach in English language teaching (ELT) marginalize Bangladeshi educators and learners, suppressing their intellectual growth and creativity and create barriers to inclusive and equitable educational environments?

Research Question 2: How does adopting a postmethod framework within ELT empower Bangladeshi educators and learners by promoting linguistic autonomy and engaging them with diverse knowledge and experiences?

Research Question 3: What impediments do Bangladeshi educators encounter in implementing postmethod pedagogy that integrates local wisdom and culture into English Language Teaching (ELT) practices?

Theoretical Background
Empowering Educators for Contextual Teaching

Kumaravadivelu (2006) "sees language teaching as a prime source for sensitizing learners to social inequalities that control them, and for developing necessary capabilities for addressing those inequalities" (p 15). According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), educators firmly believe that no single theory of learning or teaching can effectively address the challenges of the regular teaching process. Instead, their practical experience and intuitive judgment direct them in determining what is effective or what is not. According to Henry Giroux (1988), educators possess the insights, expertise, beliefs, and mindsets necessary to inquire, comprehend, question, and function as reformers in addressing unfair practices within the professional environment. Hence, lecturers should dedicate themselves to the construction and application of knowledge relevant to addressing their specific needs, goals, and circumstances, along with those of their students (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Postmethod teachers are considered as the most influential figures due to their previous educational experience, prior teaching experience, understanding of specific methodologies gained through potential teacher development programs, awareness of colleagues' pedagogical techniques and viewpoints, as well as their experience as parents, (Prabhu, 1990). As a result, postmethod practitioners are granted the autonomy to craft and formulate context-specific teaching strategies targeted to their specific classroom contexts. Localized methods or knowledge are highly valued, as they are believed to be effective solutions for improving educators' instructional skills. This aligns with what is termed a transition from "science-research conceptions" to an "art-craft conception of teaching" (Arikan, 2006, p. 4) and signifies a reorientation from a top-down to a bottom-up process, wherein educators "theorize what they practice or practice what they theorize" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003a, p. 37).

Educator and Learner Autonomy in Postmethod Pedagogy

Postmethod pedagogy reflects both student and teacher autonomy by facilitating an inclusive classroom environment and meaningful learning experience that deeply enhance the curriculum. (Motlhaka & Wadesango, 2014). According to Kumaravadivelu (2001), the postmethod educator, much like the postmethod learner, is an autonomous individual. Within this framework, educator autonomy reflects an appropriate level of expertise and self-confidence to construct and enact self-developed pedagogical strategies that are attuned to the unique needs of their educational settings and the possibilities shaped by their sociopolitical contexts (p. 548). The study by Souryasack and Lee (2007) indicated that when students are encouraged to articulate their unique experiences, cultural identities, and languages, they become more interested and motivated to master and converse in the target language. This results in greater success in their ESL learning, in contrast to students whose cultural and linguistic identities have been suppressed. Souryasack and Lee further suggested that providing students with a platform to articulate their experiences, cultures, and languages in the classroom can significantly alleviate the anxiety and unease associated with ESL learning, as it empowers them full autonomy over the content they choose to share. Feuer's (2009) argument aligns with the insights of Souryasack and Lee (2007). He asserted that language acquisition within a social setting, shaped by interpersonal connections and discussions of ethnic identity and community norms, constitutes an informal learning environment where learning unfolds through experiential and voluntary engagement.

Three Pillars of Postmethod Pedagogy

Postmethod pedagogy is a multidimensional framework comprising three parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility. (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). These parameters constitute the foundation for transcending traditional paradigms of language instruction and deliver a holistic framework for language pedagogy. Furthermore, postmethod pedagogy places considerable emphasis on exclusive, context-sensitive educational settings. Context-specific comprehension of instructional settings, known as the particularity parameter, requires concentrated care not only from educators but also from policymakers and institutional leaders (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). The particularity parameter underscores the context-driven approach to foreign language instruction.Particularity "seeks to facilitate the advancement of a context-sensitive, location-specific pedagogy that is based on a true understanding of local linguistic, sociocultural, and political particularities" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 537).

The practicality parameter relates to the correlation between theory and application by distinguishing between "professional theories and personal theories" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 540). This parameter emphasizes the autonomy of educators, enabling them to construct their own teaching philosophies based on their daily pedagogical experiences. Drawing on the principles of Paulo Freire (1970), Kumaravadivelu (2001) broadens the scope of language education from focusing on "linguistic functional elements that obtain inside the classroom" to introducing the "sociopolitical consciousness that participants bring with them to the classroom, so that it can also function as a catalyst for a continual quest for identity formation and social transformation" (p. 545).

As articulated by Kumaravadivelu (2001), the possibility parameter encourages language practitioners not only to address issues related to race, economic deprivation, inequality, and hegemonic dominance in their classrooms but also to challenge and critique prevailing socio-political realities, aiming to reform the existing framework by broadening students' understanding.With respect to the role of autonomy in postmethod pedagogy, it is imperative to emphasize that postmethod educators are encouraged to be introspective in assessing their teaching methodologies, evaluate results, discern obstacles, generate solutions, and explore alternative approaches to enhance teaching techniques (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b). This approach signifies a transition from a top-down process to a bottom-up process, where educators actively "theorize what they practice or practice what they theorize" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003a, p. 37). Postmethod pedagogy affirms educators' capacity to perceive "not only how to teach but also how to act autonomously within the academic and administrative constraints imposed by institutions, curricula, and textbooks" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a, p. 178).

Decolonizing ELT Embracing Postmethod Pedagogy

Historically, English functioned as a language of colonial control and a neo-colonial language in the present era, shaped by "structural inequalities between the hegemonic Western countries and less developed countries in the periphery" (Shin & Kubota, 2008, p. 209). The expansion of English is not altruistic, and the global dominance of English has resulted in serious consequences, such as the construction of hierarchical relationships

between linguistic and cultural systems, the demise of native regional languages, and the exacerbation of economic injustices (Phillipson, 1992). The Eurocentric paradigm and the supremacy of metropolitan power in the global knowledge economy constrain intellectual production, standardize its intellectual domains, hinder progress toward a decolonial framework, undervalue and nullify knowledge generated in the Global South and by academics from the periphery (Connell, 2014). The field of ELT is similarly affected (Kubota, 2020).

In his inquiry of decolonizing ELT, Kumaravadivelu (2016) Drawing insights from the theories of hegemony and subaltern (Gramsci, 1973; Spivak, 1988), contends that non-native English language experts constitute a marginalized group within the ELT domain, as they fall under the supremacy of native speakerism. Native speaker-centric discrimination against subordinate ELT professionals is firmly embedded in linguistic discrimination and racial stereotyping, and is inextricably linked to colonial legacies. Colonialism not only led to European imperial powers exploiting the land and wealth of the colonized but also invented a framework of 'othering' that depicted the colonized people as ethically, intellectually, and linguistically inferior to their colonizers. It nurtures colonial ideologies among both the colonizers and the colonized. Pennycook (2001) asserts that colonialism should be viewed as "far more than just economic and political exploitation" but as "a movement that both produced and in turn was produced by colonial cultures and ideologies" (p. 67). This decolonial perspective critiques the hegemonic Western frameworks in ELT and advocates for postmethod pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006) and anti-racist pedagogy (Motha, 2020).

Methodology
Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This approach allows for triangulation, thereby enhancing the depth and credibility of the findings by combining statistical insights with rich, contextual narratives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Participants

The participants were divided into two distinct groups. The first group comprised male and female undergraduate learners aged 19 to 25, enrolled at various universities in Dhaka. Notably, all of them had undertaken English language courses early in their studies. The second group comprised male and female educators aged 30 to 48, both native and non-native English speakers, with degrees in English Literature or TESOL, teaching at private universities in Dhaka.

Data Collection Process

Data were collected using online surveys and semi-structured interviews. Survey links were created via Google Forms and shared with university authorities, who distributed them to relevant departments, resulting in 25 completed responses from educators. Additionally, 16 interviews were held with both educators and learners. These were conducted in English, audio -recorded with consent, and later transcribed. By integrating both methods, the study achieved a well-rounded analysis capturing both wide-ranging quantitative data and deep, context-specific qualitative insights.

Data Analysis

A combination of surveys and interviews enabled the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys offered general insights from a larger sample, while interviews captured in-depth, context- rich perspectives from a smaller group of participants.

Quantitative Analysis
Educator Perception
Significance of Potmethod Framework in Shaping ELT

Derived from the responses regarding the significance of a postmethod Framework in shaping effective English Language Teaching, out of the 25 respondents, an overwhelming 80% (n=20) of respondents consider adopting a postmethod framework as "absolutely important," while the remaining 20% (n=5) view it as "very important." Notably, none of the respondents selected "moderately important," "slightly important," or "not important at all," underscoring the framework's vital role in transforming rigid traditional ELT practices. (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Educator Questionnaire Results: Significance of Potmethod Framework in Shaping ELT

How important is it for Bangladeshi educators to adopt a postmethod framework in ELT that moves beyond Western methods and addresses the needs of learners?

- a. Absolutely important
- b. Very important
- c. Moderately important
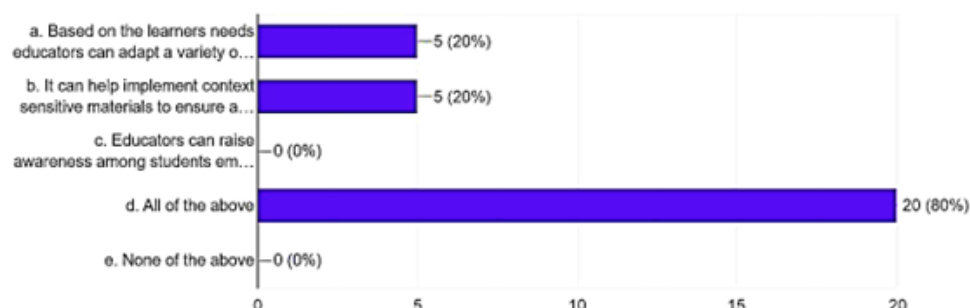- d. Slightly important
- e. Not important at all
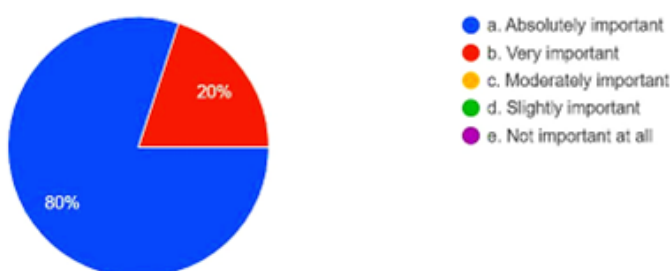
The Multifaceted Benefits of Postmethod Framework

Derived from the responses regarding the benefits of the postmethod framework, 20% (n=5) of respondents selected the option "based on the learners' needs, educators can adapt a variety of methods rather than adhering to a rigid method." Interestingly, none of the respondents selected the option "educators can raise awareness among students, empowering them to challenge inequalities for societal reform." However, the majority of respondents, 80% (n=20), opted for "all of the above," indicating their recognition of the holistic advantages of the postmethod framework, encompassing both flexibility in pedagogical approaches and the promotion of societal consciousness among learners. Furthermore, none of the respondents, 0% selected "none of the above," This highlights the framework's far-reaching benefits, rendering it impactful in both language acquisition and social empowerment. (see Figure 2)

FIGURE 2. Educator Questionnaire Results: Multifaceted Benefits of Postmethod Framework

Which of the following benefits do you believe a postmethod framework can help educators achieve?(Tick as many as you want)

- a. Based on the learners needs educators can adapt a variety o... — 5 (20%)
- b. It can help implement context sensitive materials to ensure a... — 5 (20%)
- c. Educators can raise awareness among students em... — 0 (0%)
- d. All of the above — 20 (80%)
- e. None of the above — 0 (0%)

Transformative Practices for Inclusive ELT Pedagogies

Responses to the question on suggested changes for making English Language Teaching (ELT) pedagogies more inclusive and equitable, 40% (n=10) of respondents selected the option advocating for materials and curricula that reflect local cultures rather than predominantly featuring Western norms, thus promoting inclusivity and cultural diversity. Another 40% (n=10) emphasized the need for creating inclusive classroom practices

by encouraging learners' active participation and autonomy, allowing them to express their identities. Meanwhile, 20% (n=5) suggested equipping teachers with the tools and training to become decision-makers in their classrooms and to adopt appropriate teaching strategies to meet local learners' needs. The majority of respondents, 80% (n=20), chose the option "all of the above," indicating the importance of implementing all three suggested changes. None of the respondents (0%) selected the option "none of the above." These integrated approaches are perceived as crucial for creating a more inclusive and equitable ELT environment where both educators and learners alike can excel. (see Figure 3)

FIGURE 3. Educator Questionnaire Results: Transformative Practices for Inclusive ELT Pedagogies

What changes would you suggest to make ELT pedagogies more inclusive and equitable for local educators and learners?

a. Materials and curricula should reflect local cultures, rather tha…	10 (40%)
b. Equip teachers with the tools and training to become decisio…	5 (20%)
c. Create inclusive classroom practices by encouraging learn…	10 (40%)
d. All of the above	20 (80%)
e. None of the above	0 (0%)
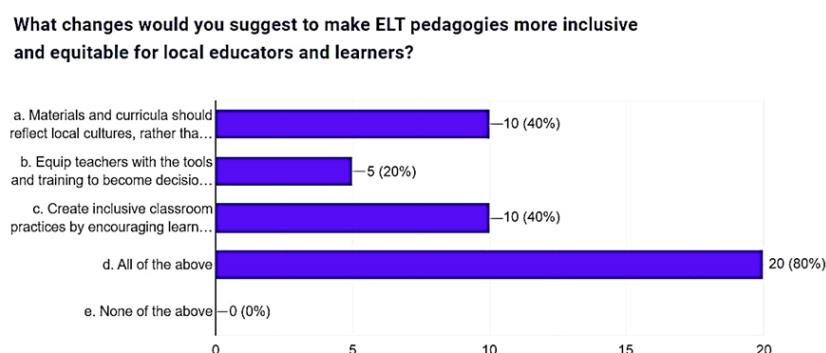
Qualitative Analysis
Learner Perception

Over-Reliance on Western-Centric Resources

Learners articulate significant concerns pertaining to the constraints and complications imposed by the over-reliance on Western-centric resources in English textbooks, emphasizing how this narrow focus constrains understanding to a predominantly Western perspective. As respondents assert: "Within English-medium instruction, we heavily depend on resources authored in the UK, showcasing examples from alien Western contexts rather than addressing our vibrant Asian context. This gap sabotages our ability to comprehend the content, leading to rote memorization." Incorporating features of Bangladeshi culture, history, and ethnic heritage would not merely intensify intellectual involvement but also instill a profound sense of cultural pride and historical awareness. Such an approach, they argue, would motivate learners to affirm and uphold their heritage while significantly promoting cultural diversity. As one individual remarks: "While it is crucial to explore Western cultural contexts, at times it may seem completely detached from the practical realities of everyday life in Bangladesh, as if we are being pressured to embrace an entirely unfamiliar cultural framework." Learners propose that exploring local culture trough English texts can be far more intriguing and motivating. This approach could help expand vocabulary and encourage the articulation of cultural identity in English. The learner responses underscore the demand for a more context- sensitive framework in English language education.

Bilingualism for Successful Language Acquisition

Learners are unified in the belief that English must serve as the language of instruction. However, they equally underscore the strategic significance of code-switching, a crucial linguistic tool that facilitates comprehension, critical thinking, and effective communication, particularly when confronted with linguistic hurdles. As one respondent contends: "English reigns as the universal language of academia, international research, and global business. For those of us aspiring to study abroad, mastering a strong foundation in English from the outset is crucial for shaping bright careers." Conversely, another participant reflects:

I am a big believer that speaking in my mother tongue enables me to articulate with greater clarity in certain instances. Nevertheless, in English classes, I fully embrace the challenge of conversing solely in English to strengthen aptitude and self-assurance, aside from instances of challenging moments.

This nuanced approach reflects learners' conviction that the flexibility to alternate between Bengali and English fosters transparent clarification, alleviates stress associated with complex concepts, strengthens cog-

nitive grasp and aids in retention of new vocabulary and expressions. A learner observes: "There are moments when I find myself at a loss for words. However, the flexibility of switching between the two languages allows me to articulate myself effortlessly, free from hesitation or overthinking." Ultimately, code-switching equips learners to adeptly maneuver bilingual dynamics, driving academic excellence and intellectual growth

Constraints Imposed by Educator-Centered Classrooms

In rigid, teacher-centered environments, learners often feel marginalized, where linguistic obstacles, stringent rules, the ban on code-switching, and fear of judgment undermine creativity and impede engagement. As one respondent articulates: "We have often been conditioned to believe that attending an English class demands perfection. This pressure suffocates creativity and distorts the approach to genuine self-expression." Furthermore, another respondent reflects: "Writing flows effortlessly - I am granted the luxury of time to carefully organize and articulate my thoughts with clarity. Speaking, however, is an entirely different ordeal. The 'English-only' rule and fast-paced lectures leave me drowning in discomfort." Another respondent laments: "I am trapped in an endless battle, silenced by the fear of judgment with every word I speak. Even the slightest recognition of my efforts would instill the confidence I lack" Moreover, some respondents reveal that shyness or an inferiority complex cripple their potential. A learner declares: "I am incredibly self-conscious. Whenever I encounter someone who speaks or writes better English than I do, it shatters my confidence. I often perceive others as far more capable than I am. This self-doubt impacts my creativity." To address these issues, educators must strive to create a more supportive, student-centered environment that values effort, encourages creativity, and assists learners overcome language barriers without the anxiety of judgment.

Educators' Transformative Role in Shaping Brilliant Minds and Empowering Futures

Learners underscore the value of educational spaces that mirror life-relevant experiences, incorporate cultural diversity, and prioritize inclusivity, thus rendering lessons engaging, delightful, and effective. They underscore the transformative power of realistic examples, remarking: "Learning becomes life-changing when lessons integrate practical realities or personal narratives." Moreover, harmonizing Bengali culture with nuanced elements from diverse traditions can further amplify relatability and inclusivity. One learner declares: "Bangladeshi content has a profound impact! Infusing English lessons with local elements would deepen our connection to our roots and make learning relatable." Furthermore, they emphasize a teacher's mindset is crucial for impactful learning. A learner affirms: "Creating a classroom where every student feels valued and respected fuels empowerment and nurture confidence. Prioritizing growth over mistakes ensures an inclusive environment." Learners are empowered when educators dismantle the pressure of perfectionism and encourage a joy-filled atmosphere. A respondent articulates: "A judgment-free environment transforms the classroom into a secure space, where learning becomes a joy." Additionally, interactive strategies, including role-playing, collaborative discussions, and unrestricted verbal expression are vital for sustaining engagement. As one learner emphatically remarks: "If studying lacks excitement, it transforms into a tedious memorization, devoid of meaningful learning and joy." By incorporating local content, real-world scenarios, and interactive, growth-oriented methods, educators can create a dynamic environment.

Educator Perception

Reconstructing the English Curriculum for a Balanced Global and Local Identity

Educators have long critiqued the predominant reliance on Western-centric materials in English language pedagogy, underscoring their insufficiency in accommodating the contextual specificities of Bangladesh. These resources frequently conform to rigid, preconstructed syllabi, constricting the creativity and autonomy of both educators and learners. As one respondent states: "Our English textbooks are heavily Eurocentric, predominantly featuring U.S. contexts in essay examples. The total disregard for Bangladeshi culture reflects a colonial mindset with enduring harm." This observation highlights the concept of colonial attitudes embedded within the curriculum, which inherently elevates Western culture as paramount, perpetuating a psychological sense of cultural subjugation among both instructors and learners. Consequently, such an imbalance obstructs educators' potential to craft instructional strategies that cater to the unique needs of learners, further marginalizing local insights and cultural perspectives. Nevertheless, some educators advocate for a carefully balanced pedagogical method. As one participant expresses: "I am not claiming we should entirely overlook Western viewpoints, but there must be an ideal fusion of our vibrant cultural identity and the valuable aspects of the Western ideals, with

neither overpowering the other." A harmonious curriculum featuring both indigenous and global resources would facilitate a recognition of cultural interconnectedness, empowering learners to articulate their cultural identities through English. Moreover, such a framework would nurture creativity, promote cultural respect, and enhance global proficiency, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and enriching educational space.

Integrating Local Context in English Language Curriculum

The complete exclusion of local context and cultural references in English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks breeds a significant gulf between educational material and learners' realities. When curricula prioritize exclusively Eurocentric narratives, they generate disorientation, impeding learners' ability to connect with the content and undermining their potential to grasp the target language effectively. This omission erodes the inclusivity of the classroom environment, limiting opportunities for collaboration and hindering the supportive atmosphere that is vital for impactful language education. An educator reflects:

> *In teaching English 111, the textbook's Eurocentric examples, like 'el perro' for dog, bewildered learners. Using local terms like 'pani' for water made the lessons more relatable. By incorporating more South Asian references, we can enable students to relate better without compromising their cultural identity.*

When learners connect with familiar topics instead of Eurocentric contexts, they nurture a deeper comprehension and enhance their critical reasoning capabilities. Instructors emphasize that while English is a global language, its pedagogy should not overshadow learners' cultural legacies. One respondent further underscores:

> *Language is an instrument of communication, and learners should articulate their views within their own cultural context. We should not mold them to think like Westerners, such as British or American; the objective is to empower them to communicate while preserving their cultural identity!*

By harmonizing foreign and local content, educators can facilitate a holistic learning experience, enabling learners to succeed in English language acquisition without compromising their cultural distinctiveness. This approach ensures that language education becomes a tool for both global communication and cultural preservation.

Postmethod Framework for Linguistic Justice

The postmethod framework revolutionizes linguistic justice in education, dismantling the barriers of obsolete, antiquated pedagogies. It boldly empowers educators to break free from conventional norms and design lessons that uphold and embrace the cultural, linguistic, and intellectual diversity of learners. At its heart lies learner-centeredness, a groundbreaking principle that reimagines the classroom as an immersive, interactive learning environment where learners engage proactively in their educational journeys. By aligning lessons with learners' personal experiences and cultural backgrounds, this strategy ignites unmatched involvement instills a powerful sense of belonging Breaking free from the outdated, teacher-centric model, the postmethod framework reimagines classrooms as thriving hubs of co-constructed knowledge. Orthodox methods, anchored in mechanical memorization and homogenous pedagogy, estrange diverse learners and suppress creativity and critical thinking. As one expert notes: "Conventional approaches falter to address the varied comprehension levels among students, entrenching educational inequities." Instead, the postmethod framework thrives on crafting curricula grounded in the authentic life experiences of learners. This pioneering strategy affirms their identities and obliterates barriers to inclusion and learning. Another concludes: "Developing a curriculum rooted in students' prior knowledge nurtures a strong sense of belonging," noted an educator, underscoring its transformative potential. In sum, the postmethod framework stands as a symbol of hope for linguistic justice. It empowers educators with unparalleled flexibility, allowing them to foster equity, inclusivity, and empowerment in every classroom. By embracing this approach, educators can reshape the educational landscape, ensuring that all learners are not only heard but valued and supported.

Challenges and Successful Implementation of Post-Method Pedagogy

Executing postmethod pedagogy into English Language Teaching (ELT) presents considerable obstacles, primarily stemming from instructors' inadequate grasp of its core concepts. Conditioned by traditional methods, many instructors lack the expertise to shift to this transformative framework. As one respondent mentions: "Decolonizing ELT begins with fundamental actions: teacher training, revising textbooks, and transitioning to learner-centered methods." Nonetheless, educator training programs can empower educators with the profi-

ciency and autonomy necessary to implement postmethod approaches, enabling them to design curricula that resonate with learners' needs and promotes active participation and in-depth learning. Another barrier stems from the scarcity of resources. As one individual remarks: "The inadequacy of resources, such as content developers, curriculum designers, and culturally relevant materials obstructs progress." Furthermore, learner resistance poses an additional layer of impediment. Another reflects: "Learners' reluctance to embrace transformation can create further barriers, as they may pressurize educators to cling to conventional pedagogies." Nevertheless, transparent communication regarding the rationale and long-term benefits of new methodologies can facilitate this shift. Despite these hurdles, embracing local contexts and learner-focused strategies constructs inclusive educational spaces that empower both instructors and learners. By addressing educator training, curriculum flexibility, and collaborative practices, Postmethod pedagogy advocates for linguistic equity and empowers transformative, inclusive education.

Findings and Discussions

The learner participants articulate profound dissatisfaction with the current state of English language education in Bangladesh, urgently demanding for a transformative change. They envision a more inclusive, student centered, and culturally relevant curriculum that skillfully integrates local histories, traditions, and values. This unique curriculum would offer an empowering educational experience that enables learners to achieve proficiency in English without losing touch with their cultural heritage. The incorporation of Bangladeshi culture into the curriculum exemplifies the parameter of particularity, underscoring the profound impact of local context in cultivating significant, individualized connections with the content.

Moreover, the over reliance on Western-centric resources emerges as a substantial educational flaw, alienating learners from the richness of their local culture and heritage. This approach creates a gap in in-depth understanding by mandating rote memorization, obstructing intellectual stimulation and creative engagement with the learning process. Learners strongly advocate for code-switching, perceiving it as a legitimate and effective pedagogical strategy for exploring a richer comprehension of both languages. Code-switching exemplifies the parameter of practicality as it facilitates a more engaging and inclusive framework for language acquisition

Furthermore, the rigid, teacher-dominated classroom environment compels learners to feel powerless and silenced, trapped by the fear of making mistakes and being judged. This environment impedes their active participation and obstructs their academic growth. In this light, learners demand for a paradigm shift, urging educators to broaden their perspective beyond mere grammatical accuracy and instead embrace creative expression, which can enhance self-confidence and a stronger sense of belonging in the classroom. This is consistent with the paradigm of possibility, underscoring the transformative power of creativity, inclusiveness, and student-centered educational practices

Ultimately, educators are called upon to evolve into transformative intellectuals in order to create positive, non-judgmental, supportive, and inclusive classroom environments. These settings empower learners by providing opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and self-expression, thereby facilitating learners' success both within and beyond the academic realm.

Shifting to the educators' perspectives, the educator participants strongly advocate for the adoption of a postmethod framework as a revolutionary leap to dismantle the rigid, Western-centric paradigms dominating traditional pedagogies. This framework arises as a vital, contextually attuned solution, emphasizing learner autonomy, cultural resonance, and groundbreaking pedagogical approaches. Through cultivating a dynamic and introspective methodology, it addresses the diverse and evolving needs of learners within distinct sociocultural frameworks, while challenging the imposition of monolithic teaching methods.

At the heart of the postmethod framework lies the empowerment of educators to design teaching strategies tailored to the distinct and diverse needs of their learners. This newfound freedom revolutionizes classrooms, transforming them into vibrant, inclusive spaces that prioritize critical engagement and intellectual empowerment. By weaving in contextually relevant materials that resonate with learners' lived experiences, educators can ignite awareness of societal inequities, arming learners with the intellectual arsenal to critically deconstruct and challenge oppressive ideologies. This alignment of pedagogy with real-world issues ignites a powerful sense of agency among both educators and learners, promoting reciprocal empowerment and social transformation.

The postmethod framework's focus on adaptability and cultural relevance empowers educators to break free from the constraints of conventional methodologies. By grounding lessons in the lived experiences and contextual realities of learners, it fosters a learning environment that is both equitable and inclusive. Moreover, by dismantling traditional power imbalances between teacher and student through participatory practices, the framework nurtures critical thinking, collaboration, and equips learners to confront complex societal challenges. This paradigm reimagines classrooms as collaborative sanctuaries where knowledge is co-constructed, enhancing engagement and meaningful learning.

The analysis highlights the urgent need to rethink the English language curriculum in Bangladesh to balance global and local perspectives. The pervasive dominance of Western-centric content in English Language Teaching (ELT) materials often reflects a colonial mindset, manifesting cultural hierarchies that elevate Western ideals while sidelining local identities. This disparity not only marginalizes local cultural insights and but also limits educators' capacity to design lessons that cater to the specific needs of their learners.

To bridge this gap, educators call for a curriculum that integrates indigenous and global perspectives, fostering a dual awareness that empowers learners to communicate effectively on a global scale while remaining firmly anchored in their cultural identities. A well-balanced curriculum nurtures creativity, fosters cross-cultural respect, and enhances learners' linguistic and cognitive abilities.

Incorporating local contexts into English Language Teaching (ELT) materials is crucial for learner engagement and cultural affirmation. essential for fostering learner engagement and affirming cultural identity. Excluding these contexts creates a dissonance between the curriculum and learners' realities, resulting in alienation and hindered comprehension. Language, as an instrument for communication, should empower learners to articulate their insights within their own cultural contexts. By integrating both local and global perspectives, educators can cultivate a pedagogical model that promotes linguistic proficiency and instills cultural pride.

Transitioning to a postmethod pedagogy is undoubtedly challenging. A significant hurdle is the lack of adequate training among educators to embrace this paradigm shift, compounded by resource limitations Furthermore, learners who are accustomed to traditional methods may be resistant to change. Overcoming these obstacles demands a comprehensive strategy focused on professional development and the creation of necessary resources. It is essential to empower educators with robust training and tools to adopt reflective and adaptive teaching styles responsive to learners' cultural and social realities is imperative

The shift to a postmethod pedagogy comes with its own set of challenges. Many educators lack the requisite training to implement such a shift, while resource limitations further impede progress. Furthermore, learners who are accustomed to conventional methods may resist such a change. Addressing these challenges necessitates targeted professional development and the creation of supportive resources. It is vital to equip educators with proper training and tools that allow them to embrace reflective and flexible teaching strategies, tailored to the cultural and social realities of their learners.

Creating opportunities for learners to express themselves authentically toward achieving an inclusive, learner-centered environment Placing emphasis on independence, cultural context, and critical thinking, the postmethod approach offers a robust foundation for dismantling entrenched inequities. This approach not only facilitates linguistic proficiency but also nurtures cultural pride and identity, equipping both students and teachers to initiate significant societal progress.

In conclusion, reshaping the English curriculum to harmonize global and local dimensions, combined with the transformative potential of the postmethod framework, holds the potential to create a more inclusive and empowering learning experience. By integrating cultural relevance and learner engagement, this methodology allows ELT to move beyond Western-centric paradigms, fostering a fairer and more impactful educational environment. Ultimately, this vision nurtures generations of learners and educators who are well-prepared to champion equity, inclusivity, and positive social change.

Conclusion

This research underscores the urgent need to decolonize English language instruction in Bangladesh by adopting a postmethod pedagogical approach. Such a framework empowers educators to design inclusive, context-sensitive curriculum tailored to local realities. Moving beyond rigid imposed models, educators, conceptualized as transformative intellectuals (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), are encouraged to integrate local histories, values, and learner identities into their teaching practices. Scholarly contributions (Canagarajah, 2005; Motha, 2014) affirm that culturally grounded pedagogy enhances learner autonomy and disrupts linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992). Postmethod frameworks enable classrooms to resist monocultural narratives, promoting equity, creativity, and critical engagement. By reimagining English not as a colonial tool but as a means of empowerment and social transformation (Pennycook, 2007), educators and learners in Bangladesh can reclaim their voices and reshape the language of the colonizer into an instrument of liberation.

The Author

Sayma Ahmed is a lecturer and coordinator in the Department of English and Modern Languages at North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. She possesses a total of fifteen years of teaching experience, encompassing eleven years at North South University and an additional four years at other universities. Her research interests primarily center around teaching methods, second language acquisition, and testing and assessment within the field of language education. She has presented research papers at international conferences and has published in international journals.
Email: nomi2011@gmail.com // sayma.ahmed@northsouth.edu

References

Akbari, R. (2008). Transforming lives: Introducing critical pedagogy into ELT classrooms. *ELT Journal*, 62(3), 276–283. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccn025

Alptekin, C. (2002). Towards intercultural communicative competence in ELT. *ELT Journal,* 56(1), 57–64. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/56.1.57

Apple, M. W. (2004). Ideology and *curriculum* (3rd ed.). RoutledgessFalmer.

Arikan, A. (2006). Postmethod condition and its implications for English language teacher education. *Journal of Language and Linguistics Studies,* 2(1), 1–11.

Benson, P., & Voller, P. (Eds.). (1997). *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. Longman.

Block, D. (2003). *The social turn in second language acquisition.* Edinburgh University Press.

Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence.* Multilingual Matters.

Can, N. (2008). Postmethod pedagogy: Teacher growth behind walls. *Ankara University Journal of Faculty of Educational Sciences,* 41(1), 93–116. https://doi.org/10.1501/Egifak-0000001092

Canagarajah, A. S. (1993). Critical ethnography of a Sri Lankan classroom: Ambiguities in student opposition to reproduction through ESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(4), 601–626. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587398

Canagarajah, A. S. (1999). *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Canagarajah, A. S. (2005). *Reclaiming the local in language policy and practice.* Lawrence Erlbaum.

Connell, R. (2014). Using southern theory: Decolonizing social thought in theory, research, and application. *Planning Theory,* 13(2), 210–223. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095213499216

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). Herder and Herder.

Freire, P., & Faundez, A. (2013). *Por una pedagogía de la pregunta: Crítica a una educación basada en respuestas a preguntas inexistentes.* Grupo Editorial Siglo XXI.

Giroux, H. A. (1988). Teachers as intellectuals: *Toward a critical pedagogy of learning.* Bergin & Garvey.

Gramsci, A. (1973). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell Smith, Trans.). International Publishers.

Holliday, A. (2005). The struggle to teach English as an *international language.* Oxford University Press.

Holliday, A. (2011). *Intercultural communication and ideology.* Sage.

Holliday, A. (2013). *Understanding intercultural communication: Negotiating a grammar of culture.* Routledge.

Janks, H. (2010). *Literacy and power*. Routledge.

Khany, R., & Darabi, F. (2014). Towards postmethod pedagogy: A case for a critical and dynamic approach to language teacher education. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature,* 3(3), 145–153. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.3n.3p.145

Kubota, R., & Lin, A. (2009). *Race, culture, and identities in second language education*: Exploring critically engaged practice. Routledge.

Kubota, R. (2020). Confronting epistemological racism, decolonizing scholarly knowledge: Race and gender in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics,* 41(5), 712–732. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amz033

Kumaravadivelu, B. (1994). The postmethod condition: (E)merging strategies for second/foreign language teaching. TESOL *Quarterly*, 28(1), 27–48.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward a postmethod pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly,* 35(4), 537–560. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588427

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). A postmethod perspective on English language teaching. *World Englishes*, 22(4), 539–550. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2003.00317.x

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003a). *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching*. Yale University Press.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003b). *Beyond methods: Micro-strategies for language teaching*. Yale University Press.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). TESOL methods: Changing tracks, challenging trends. TESOL *Quarterly*, 40(1), 59–81.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006a). *Understanding language teaching: From method to postmethod.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2016). The decolonial option in English teaching: Can the subaltern act? *TESOL Quarterly,* 50(1), 66–85. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.202

McKay, S. L. (2002). *Teaching English as an international language: Rethinking goals and approaches*. Oxford University Press.

Motlhaka, H., & Wadesango, N. (2014). The implementation of post method pedagogy: ESL teachers' classroom practices in selected schools. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(20), 1977–1986. https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n20p1977

Motha, S. (2014). *Race, empire, and English language teaching: Creating responsible and ethical anti-racist practice*. Teachers College Press.

Motha, S. (2020). Is an antiracist and decolonizing applied linguistics possible? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics,* 40, 128–133. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190520000100

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2011). Identity, language learning, and social change. *Language Teaching*, 44(4), 412–446. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444811000309

Pennycook, A. (1998). *English and the discourses of colonialism.* Routledge.

Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical applied linguistics: A critical introduction.* Lawrence Erlbaum.

Pennycook, A. (2007). *Global Englishes and transcultural flows.* Routledge.

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism.* Oxford University Press.

Prabhu, N. S. (1990). There is no best method—why? *TESOL Quarterly*, 24(2), 161–176.

Ramanathan, V. (2005). *The English-vernacular divide: Postcolonial language politics and practice.* Multilingual Matters.

Shin, H., & Kubota, R. (2008). Post-colonialism and globalization in language education. In B. Spolsky & F. M. Hult (Eds.), *The handbook of educational linguistics* (pp. 206–219). Blackwell.

Souryasack, R., & Lee, J. S. (2007). Drawing on students' experiences, cultures, and languages to develop English language writing: Perspectives from three Lao heritage middle school students. *Heritage Language Journal*, 5(1), 79–97. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348971373

Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271–313). Macmillan.

Street, B. V. (2003). What's "new" in New Literacy Studies? *Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 5(2), 77–91.

Westbrook, R. (1993). *John Dewey and American democracy.* Cornell University Press.

Developing Negotiation Skills of Business Management Students through Simulations as a Part of Language Training

Nargiza Abdurakhmanova
Senior Lecturer, School of Language and Communication,
Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Tatyana Sokhrannaya
Leading Lecturer, Head of School, School of Language and Communication,
Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Abstract

Foreign language proficiency is one of the major demands in the global job market, but without complementary business and transferrable skills, it does not provide a candidate with a competitive advantage when applying for a prestigious position in an international business organization. In this regard, teaching a foreign language in combination with negotiation skills in universities specializing in Business and Management is becoming particularly relevant for ELT/ESP professionals. By combining language fluency with negotiation expertise, students get the opportunity to practice realms of the business world and enhance essential skills that contribute to their personal and professional growth.

This study employs negotiation simulations as a teaching tool in English Language and Communication Skills for Business modules for Foundation Year students at the Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent (MDIST). The aim of this research is to cultivate students' negotiation skills through simulation exercises related to various scenarios occurring in the business community which contribute to enhancing their understanding of fundamental concepts from the field of Business and Management and soft skills development along with upgrading language proficiency. The practical part of the article contains a description of the empirical study of the negotiation simulation results, which prove the educational efficiency of simulation technology in the professional development of future entrepreneurs and economists.

Keywords: *ESP, negotiation skills, transferrable/ soft skills, negotiation simulations, language proficiency*

Background

In contemporary world, to survive the competition in the job market, it is no longer sufficient to possess hard skills only; the development of soft skills has become equally important. According to National Association of Colleges and Employers report 2025 (Naceweb.org), employers have started asking potential candidates to highlight in their resumes the skills that they acquired during their studying process through various class activities and assignments. Statistics of this report indicate that around 70 % of employers stated that they are interested in recruiting candidates that possess strong written and verbal communication skills.

However, communication skill as a term is very broad and multidimensional. In the scope of this study communication skill is defined not only as an ability to speak and write, but as a capability to negotiate, as successful communication involves the elements of accurate negotiation. According to Roloff et al. (2003) the ability to negotiate is a part of human's everyday life both in written and verbal settings, ranging from discussing with a spouse which movie to watch to reaching an agreement on contract at work.

Despite the increasing recognition of negotiation as a core soft skill in global job markets, there is still a noticeable gap in the research regarding effective pedagogical methods, particularly within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) context. Negotiation is commonly introduced in theoretical lessons; as a result, students frequently lack practical opportunities to apply these skills in simulated real-world business scenarios. Consequently, students often complete their university studies lacking the practical negotiation competencies essential for effective performance in professional settings. This gap highlights the need to develop instructional techniques to create authentic, practice-based learning environment in the classroom. One innovative approach to enhance negotiation skills in ESP lessons is the implementation of simulations. Simulations offer an interactive framework that helps students to develop linguistic competence alongside communication and negotiation skills, cultural awareness, and leadership. These are the qualities which are highly valued by potential employers, but often neglected in the traditional educational setting.

The aim of this research is to investigate the use of simulations to enhance negotiation skills among students majoring in Business and Management at the English language lessons. By integrating negotiation simulation into the curriculum, this study seeks to evaluate how these exercises contribute to students' ability to communicate, collaborate, and negotiate in real-world business contexts. The research will assess the impact of simulations on students' practical language proficiency, strategic thinking, and cultural understanding, with a focus on developing skills that are essential for success in global business environments. Ultimately, the goal is to determine whether simulation-based learning can be a valuable pedagogical approach to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in negotiation settings.

The aim of the research has predetermined the following research questions:

▪ How effective are simulations in negotiation skill development and what are the learning outcomes from business management students' perspectives?

▪ What are the participants' perception of the implementation of business negotiation simulations?

▪ What are the teachers' suggestions for improving business negotiation simulations?

Negotiation Skills

Negotiation skills are an integral part of business communication aimed at contributing to improved performance and strong business partnerships. Research in this field highlights that strong negotiation skills can improve business outcomes It emphasizes the importance of effective negotiations in fostering win-win business deals and maintaining relationships that can lead to future opportunities (Brett and Thompson, 2016). The ability to negotiate is crucial for Business Management students as they prepare for professional environments where effective communication and persuasion are the key to success. Therefore, developing negotiation skills is one of the essential elements that can be integrated into their English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course. The existing literature on this topic underscores the importance of including negotiation skills in ESP curricula.

According to Kay (2017), ESP learners have to enhance their negotiation skills to effectively function in specific professional contexts. By practicing negotiation, EFL specialists can develop their ability to articulate ideas, understand their interlocutors, and hone problem-solving skills, which are essential in professional business communication. Numerous studies emphasize the effectiveness of targeted training programs for developing negotiation skills. For instance, Smith and Doe (2018) describe role-playing and negotiation simulations as effective methods to practice negotiation skills in realistic scenarios, thereby building confidence and competence in the negotiation process. López et al. (2021) also points out that incorporating case studies, real-world scenarios, and industry-specific tasks into classroom practices can help students get involved in negotiation in a context that reflects their future workplaces.

Incorporating negotiation skills into the ESP classroom is essential for preparing Business Management students for future professional success. Through simulations and authentic materials, EFL professionals can create effective learning environments that enhance these crucial transferrable skills. Future research should continue investigating innovative teaching methods to further support the development of negotiation competencies among business professionals in ESP contexts.

Simulations

Simulations in education can be defined as a powerful tool to engage students in interactive and realistic learning process. They refer to creating models or role plays that imitate real life scenarios to help learners to practise the realms of everyday life and working environment. Kincaid et al. (2003) stated that simulations are

important to be implemented in teaching curricula because they are applicable for learners of all ages and levels, can be used in multiple disciplines, and provide opportunity to rehearse situations related to future profession. Another advantage of simulations is their impact on students' attitude towards the subject. Wenglinsky (1998) in his study on National Assessment of Educational Progress found out that classroom simulations not only positively affect leaners' academic achievement, but also increase their motivation and attendance.

Simulations as pedagogical tool are widely used in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) context. Crawford et al. (2023) used simulations in Spanish training program for students majoring in medicine. In their research, students who had classes with interventions in the form of simulation tasks reported that their communication skills related to professional setting improved. Šulovská (2023) claims that it is vital to introduce simulations in ESP modules at universities because most English language modules at tertiary level focus on academic writing and vocabulary, yet practicing communication skills is often neglected. Simulations can be a beneficial approach to improve not only foreign language skills, but other skills that are sought by potential employer: problem solving skills, decision making, ability to negotiate, critical thinking and others (Šulovská, 2023). These findings are echoed in work by Hyland (2019), who stresses the importance of integrating discipline-specific language use in ESP through communicative practices. He suggests that simulation can bridge the gap between theoretical instruction and practical language use, especially in healthcare, business, and engineering professions.

One of the types of simulations is a role play which is widely used in language teaching. Byrne (1997, as cited in Kincaid et al., 2003) identified two methods of role play implementation in the classroom. In both approaches students are given an imaginary scenario; however, in the first one, they are playing their own roles related to the given situation, whereas, in the second one, learners are asked to play particular people. There are four main divisions of role plays: open-ended dialogues, mapped dialogues, role instructions and scenarios. Open-ended dialogues provide only the frame of the situation, and students should decide themselves on continuation and further development of it. Mapped dialogues are considered to be more challenging comparing to open-ended. They give only functional cues of the imaginary scenario, and the dialogue is completely created by students themselves. In role instruction, students receive only the description of the situations and some directions for communication with other participants of the task. The last division is scenario, which usually refers to real life situations where students have an opportunity to practice functional language and experience the reality of interaction with other people in a particular setting (Byrne, 1997 as cited in Kincaid at al., 2003).

The Impact of Learning Styles on Simulation Selection

As ESP focuses on particular learners' needs related to the language use in professional setting, the choice of simulations highly depends on their learning styles. To identify the learning style of students, educators apply VARK model. VARK model was developed by Neil Flemming in 1987 (Sule et al., 2021) to categorise students according to their preferred mode of perceiving information: Visual, Auditory, Reading / Writing, and Kinesthetic. Visual learners perceive information through charts, images, and videos, while auditory learners prefer listening to explanations or taking part in verbal discussions. Reading/Writing students benefit from reading and writing exercises; and kinesthetic learners acquire information best through simulations or hand-on experience. Knowing the learning style of a student gives an opportunity for proper selection of simulation activities, so students benefit from completing activity not only in terms of academic achievement but also in terms of motivation and interest related to task completion. Thus, Chen and Fu (2003) stated that if materials are delivered in various modes, students get an idea that the topic is easier to acquire what, in turns, improves their attention span which is highly beneficial, especially for lower-achieving learners. Renuga and Vijayalakshmi (2013) are of the view that framing the syllabus taking into account to the learning styles of students will lead to better achievement of learning outcomes. Their research supports the idea that aligning syllabus content with students' learning styles leads to more effective learning outcomes, as learners are more engaged in acquiring the teaching material.

Understanding and applying the VARK model in ESP education is vital for introducing an inclusive learning environment that caters to the diverse needs of students. By considering learners' preferred styles of engagement educators can design more effective and motivating simulations that enhance both academic achievement and professional competence. As the field of education continues to evolve, the integration of learning style-based strategies will still remain a key factor in creating successful, personalized learning experiences for students in professional settings.

This study was conducted at Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent (MDIST). Taking into consideration that this institute provides programs in Business, Management, Tourism and Hospitality with English being a medium of instruction, it is important that the future graduates of this institution are able to

take part in conversations where they will have to implement negotiation skills, which requires the use of proper functional target language alongside critical thinking, communication, and presentation skills. The purpose of this paper was to evaluate the integration of simulation activities into the curriculum of Communication Skills for Business module that is taught to students majoring in Business and Management during their foundation year of study.

Methods

This study employed two groups of participants. The participants in this study were two groups of foundation year students enrolled in a Communication Skills for Business module at the Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent (MDIST). A total of 60 students (with the equal number of students in each group, n = 30) enrolled in the study and 57 participated in all the stages of the research. 3 students withdrew from the study during the data collection process. Of 57 learners involved, all were non-native English speakers at varying levels of English proficiency. The students were aged between 18 and 21 years, with an average age of 19 years. The Communication Skills for Business module consists of one weekly lecture and one weekly tutorial session over the span of one 12-week semester. The lecture component delivers theoretical content, while the tutorial focuses on practical applications related to weekly topics, primarily involving classroom-based conversational exercises with verbal interaction between the learners and the instructor. The simulation activities were conducted during three consecutive weeks, with each session taking approximately 20–25 minutes of the 80-minute tutorial. This allowed sufficient time for simulation execution, vocabulary application, and reflective discussion.

The focus of the study was to evaluate the impact of simulation-based learning on the development of negotiation skills. The research was carried out using three key instruments:

▪ Pre-survey questionnaire (see Appendix 1): It included questions on students' English proficiency level and reasons for studying English, prior experience with business English. This questionnaire included questions adapted from the survey used in the study done by Crawford at al. (2023) to ensure the validity of the content.

▪ VARK questionnaire (see Appendix 2): It is a standardized instrument used to identify students' preferred learning modalities (Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, Kinesthetic). VARK questionnaire results were used to select and design simulation activities according to students' learning styles to enhance their motivation in task completion and achieve higher performance alongside learning outcomes.

▪ Post-survey questionnaire (Appendix 3): It included reflective questions about students' perceptions on intervention activities and their improvement in negotiation skills, vocabulary usage, and communication confidence. To ensure the validity of content, the post-survey questionnaire was peer-reviewed by two ESP specialists prior to administration.

▪ Assessment: The group presentation served as a key component of the student evaluation, accounting for 20% of the total grade for the module. This assessment required students to select a product and work in mini groups to deliver a promotional presentation. The performance and outcomes of the presentation served as an indicator if the simulation activities conducted throughout the course contributed to the development of the necessary skills for achieving a high evaluation score.

Simulation intervention consisted of three weekly simulation tasks. Each simulation was designed to address different aspects of negotiation, including verbal and non-verbal communication, persuasive techniques, and professional language usage. To support students in using business-specific language during the simulations, a vocabulary list was provided at the start of each week. The list included key terms, phrases, and expressions relevant to the specific simulation task. The vocabulary lists were designed to scaffold the students' learning and ensure that they had the necessary language tools to engage effectively in each simulation.

▪ **Week 1 -** Job Interview Role-Play: In this task, students were paired and assigned roles, with one student acting as an interviewer and the other as an interviewee. They were provided with a job description and a set of qualifications to negotiate. Students were encouraged to use the provided vocabulary list to guide their interactions and negotiation during the role-play.

▪ **Week 2 –** Business Presentations: In the second week, students were given a product or service to sell to their peers. The objective was to advertise the given item in a way that other students were willing to buy

it. Students were asked to focus on both the content of their presentation and their persuasive communication techniques.

▪ **Week 3 -** Business Email Writing: In the final week, students were presented with a scenario in which they had to compose a professional email. This task was designed to assess students' written communication skills in a business context, particularly their ability to negotiate terms, request information, or address concerns through email.

Following each simulation, students participated in a guided discussion session. The purpose of these discussions was to help students reflect on their performance, identify areas for improvement, and engage in peer feedback. During the discussions, the tutor highlighted effective negotiation strategies and provided feedback on language use, including the vocabulary from the list provided.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting the research on the use of simulations to enhance negotiation skills among students majoring in business and management, several ethical considerations were addressed to ensure the integrity of the study and the well-being of participants.

The authors obtained the official permission from the university administration to conduct the research and analyze students' samples. All participants were fully informed about the aim of the research, the nature of simulations, and how the information they provided would be used prior to administering data collection. Their confidentiality and a right to withdraw their participation from the study were guaranteed. Participants had the opportunity to provide feedback about the simulations, including any concerns regarding the process or content

Results

As an essential part of Business English practice teaching, this study focused on business negotiation simulations in a university context based on the perspectives of 57 undergraduate foundation year students majoring in Business Management at the Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent. Out of 60 students initially enrolled, 3 withdrew from the research on the initial stages and did not take part in the experiment. 57 participants completed pre- and post-simulation surveys and got involved in several negotiation-simulation workshops to improve their negotiation skills and advance business English proficiency (see Table 1, the descriptive data on simulations conducted as a part of the research). The simulation activities were tailored to match students' learning styles which were identified by means of VARK questionnaire at the pre-survey stage of the research.

TABLE 1. Outline of Negotiation Simulations Practiced

Negotiation Simulation Tasks	Number of Participants	Amount of Exposure (in Hours)
Job Interviews	57	4
Business Presentations	57	4
Writing Business Emails	57	4

Note. Respondents = 57.

Table 2 summarizes the reasons why participants need English, their exposure to Business English, the challenges they face, and their preferred learning styles based on the VARK model.

Before involvement in business negotiation simulations, participants' English proficiency levels were identified based on the university enrollment information (IELTS test results submitted to the Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent Central Registry department for enrollment purposes) according to which 19% of learners demonstrated an Intermediate (B1) level of English proficiency (n = 11), 63% - Upper – Intermediate (B2) level (n = 36), and 16% - Advanced (C1) level (n = 9) (see Table 2). Participants were suggested to select multiple options regarding their reasons for studying English. The distribution of responses showed the desire to learn the language for educational (n = 42), work/business (n = 51), traveling (n = 28), family and friends (n = 6), and entertainment (n = 15) purposes.

In the meantime, the level of exposure to Business English among the participants constituted around 18% (n = 10). A significant majority of respondents (82%) reported no prior use of Business English (n =

47). Those exposed to Business English were involved in communication with clients (n = 7) and job interviews (n = 6) as the most common practices. Only 2 respondents took part in simulations/ role plays prior to participating in the study. Challenges mainly revolved around applying business terminology (n = 5) and organizing written communication (n = 6).

As for their learning styles, most participants identified as auditory (n = 25), kinesthetic (n = 19), or auditory-kinesthetic (n = 8) learners with a tiny minority referring to reading / writing (n = 2), visual (n = 1), visual and auditory (n = 1), and reading and kinesthetic learners (n = 1). Based on the pre-survey and VARK questionnaire results, the selection of simulation activities intended to match the respondents' learning styles.

TABLE 2. Pre-Survey Results

Part 1	Number of Participants (n)	Percentage of Participants (%)
1) What English proficiency level did you demonstrate at university enrollment stage?		
☐ Elementary (A2), IELTS 3,5 – 4,0		
☐ Pre – Intermediate (A2 – B1), IELTS 4,5	11	19
☐ Intermediate (B1), IELTS 5,0 – 5,5	36	63
☐ Upper – Intermediate (B2), IELTS 6,0 – 6,5	9	16
☐ Advanced (C1), IELTS 7,0 – 8,0	1	2
☐ No response		
2) Why do you need English? (You may select multiple options)		
☐ Education	42	74
☐ Work/Business	51	89
☐ Traveling	28	49
☐ Family and Friends	6	11
☐ Entertainment	15	32
☐ Other (please, specify)...		

Part 2	Number of Participants (n)	Percentage of Participants (%)
1) Have you had exposure to Business English before?		
☐ Yes	10	18
☐ No	45	80
☐ No response	2	4
2) If yes, prior Business English instruction included: (You may select multiple options)		
☐ Simulations / Role Plays	2	4
☐ Communication with clients	7	12
☐ Job interviews	6	11
☐ Other (please, specify)...		
3) If yes in Question 1, what challenges have you faced while being exposed to using Business English? (You may select multiple options)		
☐ Difficulty to understand	1	2
☐ Using business terminology	5	9
☐ Inability to formulate your ideas	2	4
☐ Organising business writing	4	7
☐ Other (please, specify)...		

VARK	Number of Participants (n)	Percentage of Participants (%)
Visual learners	1	2
Auditory learners	25	44
Reading / Writing learners	2	4
Kinesthetic learners	19	33
Auditory and Kinesthetic learners	8	14
Visual and Auditory learners	1	2
Reading and Kinesthetic learners	1	2
Total Responses	**57**	

Note. Respondents = 57.

After the intensive Business negotiation simulation course, the learners were re-assessed to determine the effectiveness of negotiation-simulation workshops (see Table 3). Of those who participated in negotiation simulations (n = 54), 80% respondents (n = 43) completely or partially agreed that the course helped them improve their business English while 4% (n = 2) found them not effective.

At the end of semester, the participants went through the summative assessment of their Business English proficiency which was followed up by completing the post-survey questionnaire reflecting their perceptions of the efficiency of the course.

The assessment offered students to involve in a group presentation promoting the selected product. The task required the demonstration of both business language and negotiation skills. The presentation assessment revealed that students involved in negotiation simulations showed better results compared to their counterparts not exposed to the intervention. 13% students from the experimental groups failed the test (F score) while the average failure rate in other groups constituted 20%. 11 participants (20%) demonstrated exceptional negotiation skills achieving Upper-intermediate (B) and Advanced (A) levels of business English proficiency.

The post-survey results demonstrated that 72% (n = 41) of the 54 learners admitted that their business negotiation proficiency has improved compared to the initial stage of the study. 35% participants showed Elementary- Pre-intermediate levels (n = 19), 52% (n = 28) demonstrated Intermediate through Upper-Intermediate levels, while 11% learners (n = 6) reported their proficiency 'Advanced.'

The research has revealed that 67% (n = 38) participants were satisfied with the approach used in the design of the business negotiation simulation workshops and felt they bettered their Business English by means of taking part in simulations while 28% (n = 15) saw no difference between traditional classroom practices and learning by simulations. Only one respondent considered simulation activities ineffective and 20% (n = 11) found them distracting.

TABLE 3. Post- Survey Results

Post-Survey Question	Number of Participants (n)	Percentage of Participants (%)
1) Have you participated in all Business English simulation activities (job interviews, selling the products, and email writing)?		
☐ Yes	43	80
☐ No	11	20
2) If yes, was Business English simulation instruction effective?		
☐ Completely disagree	1	2
☐ Somewhat disagree	1	2
☐ Neither agree nor disagree	6	11
☐ Somewhat agree	23	43

☐	Completely agree	20	37
☐	No response		

3) What Business English proficiency level did you demonstrate during the final presentation assessment after taking part in simulations?

☐	Elementary (F)	7	13
☐	Pre – Intermediate (D)	12	22
☐	Intermediate (C)	23	43
☐	Upper – Intermediate (B)	5	9
☐	Advanced (A)	6	11
☐	No response	1	2

4) Did simulations help you learn Business English?

☐	Completely disagree		
☐	Somewhat disagree	1	2
☐	Neither agree nor disagree	15	28
☐	Somewhat agree	24	44
☐	Completely agree	14	26

5) Were simulation activities distracting?

☐	Yes	11	20
☐	No	43	80
	Total Responses	54	

Note. Respondents = 54.

Discussion

This research evaluated the effectiveness of a practice-oriented approach to teaching business English through negotiation simulations. The study aimed to test how effective simulations are in developing negotiation skills and what learning language improvements can be achieved from the perspectives of business management students.

Literature focused on education through simulations has tentatively shown that simulations benefit student learning (Baranowski et al., 2015; Crossley-Frolick, 2010). The research at Universidad Pontificia Comillas and Universidad Politecnica, Spain focused on students studying English as a second language through a computerized simulation which provided learners with the opportunity to process questions posed in English and choose how they wanted to respond. As a result, students had more control over the topics discussed, eliminating the need for teacher-centered learning. Ultimately, those involved in the language learning simulations demonstrated improved communicative language skills (Garciá-Carbonell et al., 2001).

Another study emphasized the contribution of simulated negotiations to the development and practice of transferrable skills including negotiation techniques and strategies. Šulovská (2023) researched the effect of simulated negotiation on the development of language skills of undergraduate political science students at the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University where the participants underwent a 5-stage simulation negotiation process (negotiation preparation, classroom preparation, simulated negotiation, discussion, and feedback) followed up by a survey at the 1-year of study. The results emphasized not only the improvement of participants' language skills but also the positive effect of simulations on the development of transferrable/ soft skills.

Likewise, this study found that negotiation simulations allowed business management students to improve their speaking and negotiation skills through focusing on the target language (specific terminology) and collaboration with peers.

Compared to traditional language teaching methods used in university classrooms, business management students rated the simulation-based Business English workshops more effective than the previously utilized ELT practices. The majority of respondents surveyed viewed the incorporation of negotiation simulations into language training positively.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to improve the effectiveness of simulation activities in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classrooms, particularly in developing students' communication and negotiation skills.

1. Integration of simulations in ESP curriculum

Simulations should not be optional or supplementary component of the ESP program; instead, they should be viewed as a key part of the curriculum, so students are obliged to practise authentic language in a professional setting.

2. Aligning simulation activities with real world industry context

It is highly recommended to design simulation activities that reflect the challenges and situations students may encounter in their future professional life. For example, business students may be engaged in negotiation, sales meeting, or business presentations. These will help them to build business related vocabulary and confidence. ESP teacher can consult with subject-matter expert to design tasks that reveal workplace responsibilities, policies and communication norms.

3. Explanation of the roles, objectives and expectations

To ensure the effectiveness of the simulation, students should be provided clear roles, outcomes, and instructions. Also, some pre-teaching materials, such as vocabulary list, negotiation phrases, or background reading, can enhance students' motivation and involvement.

4. Inclusion of reflection and feedback sessions

Teachers should provide guidance in a form of constructive feedback, so students are able to analyze their communicative strategies, language use, and decision-making processes. Feedback and reflection sessions that can be led by both peers and teachers are essential for consolidate learning and students' growth.

5. Practicing language and soft skills simultaneously

In traditional classroom setting, focus in ESP is often on technical vocabulary, while offer a natural way to broaden skills like active listening, turn-taking and cultural awareness. Teachers should highlight the importance these skills engaging learners in practicing them during classroom simulations.

6. Implementing a scaffolder approach

Simulations activities should be introduced gradually, especially in the class where the majority of students are not familiar with this approach. Teachers can start with simple role plays and proceed with more complex open-ended scenarios.

7. Fostering a friendly classroom atmosphere

Finally, teachers play a crucial role in creating safe, encouraging environment that allows students to feel comfortable experimenting, making mistakes, and learning from each other.

By implementing the above recommendations, educators will be able to enhance the effectiveness of simulation-based learning in developing the negotiation skills of business management students while simultaneously improving their language abilities.

Limitations

Despite the overall improvements in students' perception of their Business English levels and negotiation skills, the study's limitations relate to the number of participants and official proficiency level identification. The research was conducted with 57 university Business and Management undergraduates (with English as a language of instruction) using one-stage pre-surveys, document analyses, post-simulation surveys, and the assessment stage without official pre-business English level tests, which may constrain the generalizability of the study results. Future studies should examine participants' objective language abilities and business negotiation outcomes before and after participation in simulation-based workshops.

The advantages of using simulation activities at EFL classrooms described in this paper reflect the results of a study limited to 3 weeks of intensive business simulation training. To make the research more

informative, it is desirable to continue the experiment for a longer period and observe further possible changes in students' business English command.

Despite a substantial improvement in participants' self-perceived proficiency, prior studies have also debated the possibility of organizing real-life authentic simulations in classroom settings (Van Hasselt, Romano, and Vecchi, 2008) and compared their general effectiveness to those conducted in the work setting. For instance, Burns and Moore (2008) studied the effectiveness of negotiation simulations between student accountants and their imaginary clients in a classroom setting compared to real-life experiences and found that the real work environment directly impacts the effectiveness of simulations.

Schultz (1989) criticized many negotiation training programs for failing to ground their teaching in the established theoretical framework of the field. He examined four negotiation training programs across North America and discovered that none evaluated how effectively the graduates negotiated. Each program solely assessed its success based on questionnaires filled out by students right after finishing the course, using student satisfaction with the course as the only measure of the simulation's success.

Nevertheless, the research findings have significant implications for Business English teaching practices. The simulation activities showcased can be replicated in other educational and cultural contexts. Future studies can investigate simulation-based teaching and practical teaching models in various scenarios with diverse learner groups.

Conclusions

This study provides a comprehensive pedagogical case for implementing negotiation simulations in teaching Business English, namely job interview simulations, business presentations, and writing business emails as a part of an ESP course for business and management students. Teaching negotiation by having learners participate in simulations builds on the experiential learning model. Through better learner engagement and negotiation, as well as effective student-student interaction, simulations can improve the learning experiences in ESP classrooms.

The research results proved the effectiveness of negotiation simulations. Students involved in the study reported improvements in their use of Business English; boosted their speaking and listening proficiency levels; acquired a better language command by applying field-specific vocabulary; and gained decision-making and problem-solving skills. Negotiation simulations encouraged peer feedback and made the learning process less stressful and more productive.

The results of this study guide the development of simulation and practice teaching activities in a Business university context. Integrating simulation-based learning into the ESP syllabi of business and management students offers a dynamic approach to developing essential negotiation skills. Teaching negotiation through simulations is most effective when the simulations are selected based on students' learning styles and clear objectives and when they are connected to form a cohesive series of experiences, accompanied by guided reflection and feedback. By engaging in realistic scenarios, students enhance their linguistic proficiency and gain practical experience in negotiation tactics, cultural awareness, and interpersonal communication. This dual focus on language and negotiation prepares students to navigate the complexities of the global business environment with confidence and competence.

The Authors

Nargiza Abdurakhmanova is a Senior Lecturer at Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. She has over 10 years' experience in teaching English for Academic Purposes and Communication Skills for Business. Her research interests include such fields as Academic Writing, Business Communication, and Teaching Strategies and Methodology. **Email: nabdurakhmanova@mdist.uz**

Tatyana Sokhrannaya Tatyana Sokhrannaya is a Leading Lecturer and Head of School of Language and Communication at Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent. She is a dedicated professional with a 5-year managerial and 18-year teaching experience in ELT, ESP, Academic Writing and Communication Skills; materials designer and trainer-trainer in governmental projects. **Email: tsokhrannaya@mdist.uz**

Authors' Contributions

In this study, both authors contributed equally to the research, analysis, and writing of the article.
TS – Conceptualization, Research Design, Data Analysis & Evaluation, Manuscript Writing.
NA – Research Design, Data Collection, Data Analysis & Evaluation, Manuscript Writing.

References

Andrew, J., & Meligrana, J. (2012). Evaluating the Use of Role Playing Simulations in Teaching Negotation Skills to University Students. *Creative Education,* 3(06), 696.

Baranowski, M. K., et al. (2015). Political simulations: What we know, what we think we know, and what we still need to know. *Journal of Political Science Education,*11(4):391-403 10.1080/15512169.2015.1065748

Brett, J., Thompson, L. (2016). Negotiation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 136, 68-79. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2016.06.003

Burns, A., & Moore, S. (2008). Questioning in simulated accountant–client consultations: exploring implications for ESP teaching. *English for Specific Purposes*, 27, 322-337.

Chen, G., & Fu, X. (2003). Effects of multimodal information on learning performance and judgment of learning. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 29(3), 349-362.

Crawford, S. B., Monks, S. M., Wells, R. N. (2023). La Oportunidad: Simulation as an opportunity for training language among health care providers. *International Journal of Healthcare Simulation*, 1-10. https://www.ijohs.com/article/doi/10.54531/JERC4053

Crossley-Frolick, K. A. (2010). Beyond model UN: Simulating multi-level, multi-actor diplomacy using the millennium development goals. *International Studies Perspectives.*11(2), 184-201 http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1528-3585.2010.00401.x

García-Carbonell, A., Rising, B., Montero, B., Watts, F. (2001). Simulation/gaming and the acquisition of communicative competence in another language*. Simulation Gaming*, 32(4), 481–491. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/104687810103200405

Hyland, K. (2022). English for specific purposes: What is it and where is it taking us?. *ESP Today-Journal of English for Specific Purposes at Tertiary Level*, 10(2), 202-220.

Kay, R. (2017). The Role of Negotiation in Professional Communication. *Business Communication Quarterly.*

Kincaid, J. P., Hamilton, R., Tarr, R. W., & Sangani, H. (2003). *Simulation in education and training. In Springer eBooks* (pp. 437–456). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-9218-5-19

López, C. M., Velásquez, G. R., & Vizcaíno-Figueroa, J. J. (2021). The Voice, an Authentic Material to Teach English: How to Use it in the Language Classroom. The International Journal of Pedagogy and Curriculum, 28(2), 1.Renuga, M., & Vijayalakshmi, V. (2013). Applying Vark principles to impart interpersonal skills to the students with multimodal learning styles. *Life Sci J*, 10(2), 55-60.

Roloff, M. E., Putnam, L. L., & Anastasiou, L. (2003). Negotiation skills. *Handbook of communication and social interaction skills*, 801-833.

Schultz, B. (1989). Conflict resolution training programs: Implications for theory and research. *Negotiation Journal*, 5, 301-311.

Smith, J., & Doe, L. (2018). Simulations and Role-Playing for Skill Development. *TESOL Quarterly*.

Sule, D. S., Kyei, K. A., & Abubakar, S. A. R. (2021). Influence Of Fleming's Vark Learning Styles On Student Radiographers' Competency In Lumbar Spine Imaging.

Šulovská, D. (2023). Simulated negotiations as a teaching tool in the ESP classroom. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 11(3), 25 https://doi.org/10.2478/jolace-2023-0023

Van Hasselt, VB, Romano, SJ & Vecchi, GM (2008). 'Role playing: Applications in hostage and crisis negotiation skills training,' *Behavior Modification*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 248-263. https://doi.org/10.1177/0145445507308281

Wenglinsky, H. (1998). Does it compute? The relationship between educational technology and student achievement in mathematics.

What are employers looking for when reviewing college students' resumes? (2024, December 9). Default. https://www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/candidate-selection/what-are-employers-looking-for-when-reviewing-college-students-resumes

APPENDIX 1

Pre survey

Part 1

1) What English proficiency level did you demonstrate at university enrollment stage?

☐ Elementary (A2), IELTS 3,5 – 4,0

☐ Pre – Intermediate (A2 – B1), IELTS 4,5

☐ Intermediate (B1), IELTS 5,0 – 5,5

☐ Upper – Intermediate (B2), IELTS 6,0 – 6,5

☐ Advanced (C1), IELTS 7,0 – 8,0

2) Why do you need English? (You can tick more than one option)

☐ Education

☐ Work/Business

☐ Traveling

☐ Family / Friends

☐ Entertainment (music, movies, etc.)

☐ Other (please, specify)..

Part 2

1) Have you had exposure to Business English before?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2) If yes, prior Business English instruction included: (You can tick more than one option)

☐ Simulation / Role Plays

☐ Communication with clients / customers

☐ Job interviews

☐ Other (please, specify)..

3) If yes in Question 1, what challenges have you faced while being exposed to using Business English? (You can tick more than one option)

☐ Difficulty to understand

☐ Using appropriate vocabulary

☐ Inability to express your thoughts

☐ Structuring business writing

☐ Other (please, specify)..

APPENDIX 2

The VARK Questionnaire
How do I learn best?
Choose the answer which best explains your preference and circle the letter(s) next to it. Please circle more than one if a single answer does not match your perception. Leave blank any question that does not apply.

1. I need to find the way to a shop that a friend has recommended. I would:
   a. find out where the shop is in relation to somewhere I know.
   b. ask my friend to tell me the directions.
   c. write down the street directions I need to remember.
   d. use a map.

2. A website has a video showing how to make a special graph or chart. There is a person speaking, some lists and words describing what to do and some diagrams. I would learn most from:
   a. seeing the diagrams.
   b. listening.
   c. reading the words.
   d. watching the actions.

3. I want to find out more about a tour that I am going on. I would:
   a. look at details about the highlights and activities on the tour.
   b. use a map and see where the places are.
   c. read about the tour on the itinerary.
   d. talk with the person who planned the tour or others who are going on the tour.

4. When choosing a career or area of study, these are important for me:
   a. Applying my knowledge in real situations.
   b. Communicating with others through discussion.
   c. Working with designs, maps or charts.
   d. Using words well in written communications.

5. When I am learning I:
   a. like to talk things through.
   b. see patterns in things.
   c. use examples and applications.
   d. read books, articles and handouts.

6. I want to save more money and to decide between a range of options. I would:
   a. consider examples of each option using my financial information.
   b. read a print brochure that describes the options in detail.
   c. use graphs showing different options for different time periods.
   d. talk with an expert about the options.

7. I want to learn how to play a new board game or card game. I would:
   a. watch others play the game before joining in.
   b. listen to somebody explaining it and ask questions.
   c. use the diagrams that explain the various stages, moves and strategies in the game.
   d. read the instructions.

8. I have a problem with my heart. I would prefer that the doctor:
   a. gave me something to read to explain what was wrong.
   b. used a plastic model to show me what was wrong.
   c. described what was wrong.
   d. showed me a diagram of what was wrong.

9. I want to learn to do something new on a computer. I would:
   a. read the written instructions that came with the program.
   b. talk with people who know about the program.
   c. start using it and learn by trial and error.
   d. follow the diagrams in a book.

10. When learning from the Internet I like:
   a. videos showing how to do or make things.
   b. interesting design and visual features.
   c. interesting written descriptions, lists and explanations.
   d. audio channels where I can listen to podcasts or interviews.

11. I want to learn about a new project. I would ask for:

        a. diagrams to show the project stages with charts of benefits and costs.

        b. a written report describing the main features of the project.

        c. an opportunity to discuss the project.

        d. examples where the project has been used successfully.

12. I want to learn how to take better photos. I would:

        a. ask questions and talk about the camera and its features.

        b. use the written instructions about what to do.

        c. use diagrams showing the camera and what each part does.

        d. use examples of good and poor photos showing how to improve them.

13. I prefer a presenter or a teacher who uses:

        a. demonstrations, models or practical sessions.

        b. question and answer, talk, group discussion, or guest speakers.

        c. handouts, books, or readings.

        d. diagrams, charts, maps or graphs.

14. I have finished a competition or test and I would like some feedback. I would like to have feedback:

        a. using examples from what I have done.

        b. using a written description of my results.

        c. from somebody who talks it through with me.

        d. using graphs showing what I achieved.

15. I want to find out about a house or an apartment. Before visiting it I would want:

        a. to view a video of the property.

        b. a discussion with the owner.

        c. a printed description of the rooms and features.

        d. a plan showing the rooms and a map of the area.

16. I want to assemble a wooden table that came in parts (kitset). I would learn best from:

        a. diagrams showing each stage of the assembly.

        b. advice from someone who has done it before.

        c. written instructions that came with the parts for the table.

        d. watching a video of a person assembling a similar table.

The VARK Questionnaire – Scoring Chart

Use the following scoring chart to find the VARK category that each of your answers corresponds to. Circle the letters that correspond to your answers.

e.g. If you answered b and c for question 3, circle V and R in the question 3 row:

Question	a category	b category	c category	d category
3	K	**V**	**R**	A

Scoring Chart

Question	A category	B category	C category	D category
1	K	A	R	V
2	V	A	R	K
3	K	V	R	A
4	K	A	V	R
5	A	V	K	R
6	K	R	V	A
7	K	A	V	R
8	R	K	A	V
9	R	A	K	V
10	K	V	R	A
11	V	R	A	K
12	A	R	V	K
13	K	A	R	V
14	K	R	A	V
15	K	A	R	V
16	V	A	R	K

Calculating Your Scores

Count the number of each of the VARK letters you have circled to get your score for each category:

Total number of Vs circled = ………………………………………………………

Total number of As circled = ………………………………………………………

Total number of Rs circled = ………………………………………………………

Total number of Ks circled = ………………………………………………………

APPENDIX 3

Post survey

1) Have you participated in Business English simulation activities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2) If yes, was Business English simulation instruction effective?

☐ Completely disagree

☐ Somewhat disagree

☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Somewhat agree

☐ Completely agree

3) What Business English proficiency level did you demonstrate during the final presentation assessment after taking part in simulations?

☐ Elementary (F)

☐ Pre – Intermediate (D)

☐ Intermediate (C)

☐ Upper – Intermediate (B)

☐ Advanced (A)

4) Did simulations help you learn Business English?

☐ Completely disagree

☐ Somewhat disagree

☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Somewhat agree

☐ Completely agree

5) Were simulation activities distracting?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Digital Tools in Project-Based Group Assessments: Insights from Tertiary EFL Students' Experiences

Phuong Thi Tieu Le
Nong Lam University - Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Diem Thi Nguyen
University of Finance - Marketing, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Nghia Thi Pham
Lac Hong University, Vietnam

Abstract

With the transition from the traditional to authentic assessment approach, project-based group assessment has become increasingly popular in EFL tertiary courses as it evaluates students' content knowledge and practical, real-world skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration. To achieve the target outcomes of the group assignment, students have to actively integrate digital tools to support teamwork throughout the project, from resource sharing, project planning, task delegation, PowerPoint preparation, and video editing up to the final presentation. Given this context, there is a growing need to examine how technology is utilized in project-based group assignments. This research, therefore, explores students' practices and perceptions toward technology usage in project-based group assessment. Employing a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, this study used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to explore the digital platform usage of 214 English-major students across three tertiary institutions. The research findings showed that students preferred specific digital tools, including Zalo chat groups, Google Meet, Google Docs, Canva, and ChatGPT. These platforms help increase communication efficiency, promote collaborations across virtual environments, and support the creating of high-quality projects. However, some difficulties were identified regarding students' lack of technology proficiency, unexpected technical errors, and monitoring group members' contributions. Hence, this study offers instructional recommendations for enhancing the digital tool application to address these challenges.

Keywords: digital tools; project-based group assessment; collaborative skills

Introduction

With the development of the student-centered teaching approach, more and more teachers have applied group work and project-based language teaching in their classrooms. Project-based teaching enhances students' learning outcomes, positively influences their attitudes toward learning, and develops their thinking skills (Zhang & Ma, 2023). As a result, EFL students are increasingly interested in working in groups. In addition, the transfer from traditional assessment with paper tests and multiple-choice tests to alternative assessments is one of the reasons for the development of project-based assessment, which can test not only the content knowledge of the students but also the skills needed to work in professional development (Fitriyah, 2021).

Additionally, because of the extended time of project-based group assessment, students must utilize digital tools to collaborate to fulfill the project requirements (Hoesny et al., 2024). Project-based assessment requires students to work in groups on many tasks, such as resource sharing, project planning, task delegation, PowerPoint preparation, and video editing up to the final presentation (NC State University, n.d.). In fact, they have to use digital tools to complete all these tasks. Their adoption choice and practice of digital tool integration

may differ from one group to another. From this reality, it is increasingly important to investigate how technology is employed in project-based group assignments. Therefore, this article examines how tertiary EFL students in Vietnam adopt and utilize digital tools in their project-based group assignments. The study is guided by the following two research questions:

1. How do tertiary EFL students utilize digital tools during project-based group assessments?

2. What benefits and challenges do tertiary EFL students perceive in using digital tools for project-based group assessments?

Literature Review
The Theoretical Framework

The socio-constructivist theory of collaborative learning, proposed by Lev Vygotsky in 1978, states that learners do not study individually but get the knowledge through the collaborative process. This theory suggests that learning is inherently a social process, where knowledge is co-constructed through cooperative activities and interactions with more knowledgeable others. As a result, the teacher is not the only source of knowledge (Bringuier, 1980). Instead, students are seen as active participants who build their understanding based on experience and interaction (Molenda, 1991, as cited in Yuan Feng, 1995). According to Nithideechaiwarachok & Chano (2024), this theory emphasizes the importance of the interactive teaching method in promoting learning, which implicates the significance of the student-centered approach, collaborative learning, real-world practical learning, and teachers' roles as a guide. Following this constructivist framework, higher education institutions must shift from instructivist to constructivist learning environments (Tarricone & Luca, 2002).

Project-based Learning

Project-based learning is introduced as an interactive learning technology with the following characteristic features: independence, inductiveness, practice-based, experience-oriented, collaboration, and participation. (Thomas, 2017; Roliak, 2023). Project-based learning (PBL) is based on Vygotsky's social learning theory and constructivism, emphasizing collaboration in the learners' learning process (Elam & Nesbit, 2012). PBL aims to develop students' critical thinking, teamwork, independent learning, and problem-solving skills (Petrosino, 2007; Roliak, 2023; Thomas, 2017). These skills help students engage in meaningful learning experiences and encourage higher-order thinking. Through PBL, students work together to solve real-world problems relevant to their needs (Edutopia, 2008). Teamwork is essential, as students contribute based on their strengths and learning styles (Moss & Van Duzer, 1999).

The teacher's role changes from instructor to facilitator, guiding students as they collaborate, teach, and learn from one another (Eng, 2000). The PBL process includes planning, engaging, reconstructing, presenting, and reflecting. During this process, teachers monitor students' progress, while peer review and self-reflection help students improve their work (Moss & Van Duzer, 1999). Small groups and competitions can enhance motivation and social interaction. With technological advancements, PBL has been widely applied in various subjects and is increasingly used in language learning (Elam & Nesbit, 2007). Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) practitioners recognize its value in improving language acquisition through collaboration and engagement.

Group-based Assessment

As a result of PBL, there is a need to transform from the traditional assessment with paper tests and multiple choice quizzes into more alternative assessments such as performance assessment and group-based assessment. As group work is one of the prominent characteristics of the PBL, group-based assessment is a must in evaluating the learning performance. Ettington & Camp (2002) defined group-based assessment as "a graded assessment requiring students to work collaboratively across multiple class periods and involving some time outside the normal class meeting" (Ettington & Camp, 2002, p.327). Similarly, other research later proved that group-based assessment allows students to work collaboratively in teams, a key skill for future employment (Aggarwaland & O'Brien, 2008; Hansen, 2006; Sedgwich, 2010).

Regarding the language learning environment, group-based assessment is believed to offer several benefits that enhance the learning experience and outcomes for students, namely language competence, higher participation, increased learner confidence, and better collaborative skills (Bakeerathan, 2013; Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997; Fitriyah, 2021; Kazemi et al., 2020; Pica & Doughty, 1985). Firstly, group-based assessment helps to improve language competence. Thanks to the engaging environment, learners can practice the language more effective-

ly, enhancing language skills, especially speaking skills (Bakeerathan, 2013; Pica & Doughty, 1985). Second, the group activities and the real-world tasks create more opportunities for students to speak and participate actively in the learning process. As a result, it helps to reduce the learners' anxiety and increases participation (Gedikli & Basbay, 2020). Third, engaging in group work helps build learners' confidence in using language. Also, peer supervision in group-based assessment can motivate students by giving them a sense of responsibility for their learning (Fitriyah, 2021; Munianti & Syukri, 2022). Last, Fitriyah (2021) also indicates that group activities promote cooperation among learners, fostering a supportive learning environment. This interaction improves language learning and helps students develop critical social skills.

### The Roles of Digital Tools in Group Projects

Digital tools have significantly changed how teachers teach and assess students, especially in group projects (Tomar et al., 2024). Along with the many benefits of utilizing digital tools in group projects, there are also some drawbacks to using digital tools in collaborative learning.

Regarding the benefits, digital tools make it easier for students who are not in the same place or have different schedules to work together (Wahl & Kitchel, 2016). For example, Ting (2013) mentions that video tools in classrooms let students collaborate and share ideas even when they're far apart. These tools also give students easy access to a wide range of resources, which makes their projects more detailed and informative (Roliak, 2023). Second, digital tools help learners to be more engaged in the group project. Huang (2021) showed that learners appreciated using technology and having collaborative learning experiences, which resulted in increased confidence. This makes learning more fun and helps include everyone, no matter their preferred learning style (Huang, 2021). Similarly, Tomar et al. (2024) emphasized how digital tools can be used to create both student-centered and evidence-based systems, highlighting the practical applications of these educational models in improving learning outcomes.

However, there are still disadvantages to using digital tools in group projects. One big problem is relying too much on technology, which can sometimes go wrong. Software problems, poor internet connections, and broken devices can slow a project (Elam & Nesbit, 2012). Another drawback is frustration and wasted time if students and teachers lack technology skills (Ting, 2013). Also, working through screens can affect how students communicate because digital communication doesn't always capture the full range of human interaction, like body language or emotional tone, which are crucial for effective communication (Wahl & Kitchel, 2016).

Therefore, while digital tools can significantly improve group projects by making collaboration easier and learning more engaging, they also come with challenges. Teachers must find the right balance in using these tools, ensuring they enhance learning while managing issues. As technology and its use in education keep advancing, teachers must keep updating their methods to get the best results (Roliak, 2023).

The Conceptual Framework
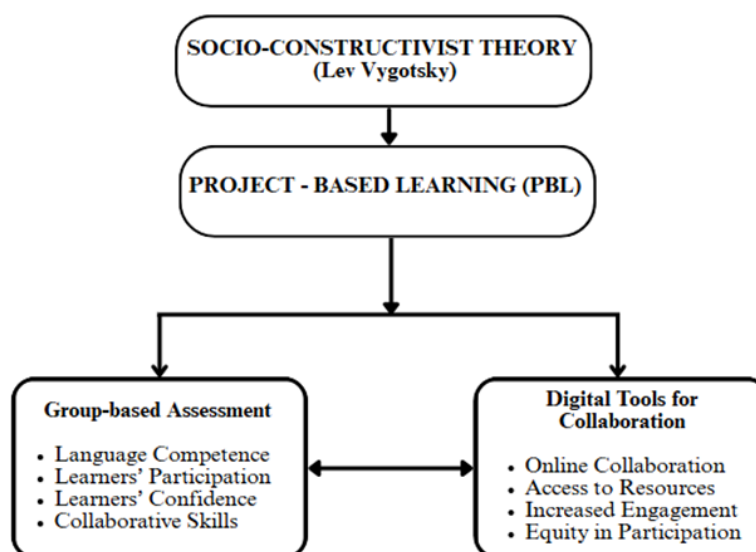
FIGURE 1. Conceptual Framework of The Study

Figure 1 illustrates the study's conceptual framework, which is grounded in Vygotsky's socio-constructivist theory. This theory highlights that learning is a social process in which knowledge is co-constructed through meaningful interaction. Given this explanation, this theoretical foundation leads to the encouragement of project-based learning implementation. This teaching approach emphasizes student collaboration, real-world problem-solving, and the active construction of knowledge. Under the PBL model, two key components are highlighted: group-based assessment and digital tools for collaboration. The group-based assessment reflects the PBL characteristics in improving students' participation, confidence, and collaboration skills, thereby helping to enhance students' language competence. Meanwhile, using digital tools during the group-based assessment promotes online collaboration among group members, offering better access to learning resources, increasing learners' engagement, and ensuring equity in participation. These elements illustrate how socio-constructivist principles are operationalized in modern educational contexts through project-based activities and technology-enhanced collaborative learning.

Methodology

Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at Lac Hong University in Dong Nai Province, Nong Lam University, and the University of Finance and Marketing in Ho Chi Minh City. These universities were selected as research sites because they have similar contexts in teaching curricula, emphasizing the implementation of group projects in EFL courses.

As the research's objective is to examine the students' digital tools practices in EFL courses, this study's target population is EFL students. 214 English majors at the three universities were invited to participate in the questionnaire. These students, aged 18 to 25, scattered from first-year students to fourth-year students, were selected in the hope of giving a broad view of students' perceptions of digital tools used in group projects. Of the 214 participants, 47 were male, and 167 were female. The unbalanced number of male and female students in this research is due to the characteristics of EFL courses in Vietnam, where most students are female. All of these students participated in EFL courses that applied project-based group assessments at least twice in the course curriculum.

Research Design

This research investigates the students' practices in utilizing digital tools in group projects and examines the benefits and challenges tertiary EFL students perceive when using digital tools for project-based group assessments. Therefore, a single research method did not provide thorough insights into the research problem. As a result, this study uses the pragmatic epistemology framework to analyze the research from multiple perspectives. The selected methodology is a mixed research methods approach for several reasons. First, according to Cohen et al. (2018, p.32), mixed methods research promotes "a more comprehensive and thorough understanding of the phenomena to be obtained than single methods approaches and answer complex research questions more meaningfully." Second, the mixed methods approach can improve data accuracy and reliability through triangulation, reduce bias in research, give practical insights into research problems, and enable compensation between research methodologies' strengths and limitations (Denscombe, 2014). Another strength of mixed methods research between quantitative and qualitative is that while quantitative data help to find evidence to check the study's hypothesis, qualitative data specify a descriptive explanation for "theory verification" (Punch, 1998, p.17).

In particular, the mixed research method of this study follows the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. According to Creswell (2018), explanatory mixed research is divided into two phases; the first is quantitative research to collect the data, and then the data is analyzed to build the next qualitative phase. In this study, the quantitative data is collected from questionnaires, and the qualitative data will be gained from semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis.

Research Instruments

Questionnaires

The questionnaire was chosen as the critical instrument of this survey for several reasons. First, using a questionnaire can eliminate the error or bias that could result from many interviewers (King et al., 2017). Second, Ackroyd and Hughes also point out that questionnaires can help collect information from many people

quickly and in a relatively cost-effective way (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981). Third, using the questionnaire could also free participants to answer the questions. As a result, learners could avoid embarrassment when answering questions about their challenges in digital tools practices in group-based assessment.

The questionnaire, which includes a five-point Likert scale and open-ended questions, was designed to gather detailed data on the following aspects:

- The types of digital tools students used during project-based group assessments
- Students' perceptions of the advantages of using digital tools in collaborative projects
- Challenges encountered by students when employing digital tools for group work

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews can accomplish what surveys cannot: they can dig deeper into topics, discover how and why individuals frame their thoughts the way they do and observe how and why they connect ideas, values, events, beliefs, and behaviors (Hochschild, 2009, as cited in Cohen et al., 2018). That is why this study chose interviews as a second research instrument. Individual semi-structured interviews were selected because they are flexible enough to accommodate scheduled open-ended questions and those that arise during the interviewer-interviewee discussion (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Among 214 questionnaire participants from three universities, 10 randomly selected students were invited to answer a 30-45 minute interview with closed-ended and open-ended questions. This interview aims to explore the reasons for the quantitative research result.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted in two phases:

Questionnaire Administration:

After completing their courses, the questionnaire was distributed to students to ensure their responses reflected their whole experience with project-based group assessments. The researchers informed participants about the purpose of the study and promised the secrecy of their responses. They were allowed sufficient time to complete the questionnaire online through a Google form.

Conducting Interviews:

Interviews were scheduled individually with the 10 randomly selected participants to suit their convenience. Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and was conducted in Vietnamese, easing the participants' understanding. Interviews were recorded with participants' permission and then transcribed afterward for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaires and interviews were analyzed sequentially to align with the explanatory mixed-methods design.

Quantitative Data Analysis

IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 was used to code and analyze the data received from the returned questionnaires. Reliability analysis was performed to determine whether the question items were reliable. Unreliable components will be removed, redesigned, or reworded. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in the data analysis. The data was organized into clusters.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews were transcribed and returned to the respondents for verification. This stage allowed respondents to evaluate the data and certify that the researcher's interpretation of their data was correct (Mirhosseini, 2020). Then, the data in Vietnamese were translated into English. Then, the NVivo software facilitated the coding process and identified key themes from the data. Data will be categorized into key clusters based on the research questions.

Findings and Discussion
TABLE 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.842	45

The reliability of the assessment tool of this study was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, a statistical measure used to determine the internal consistency of a set of items or scales. As illustrated in Table 1, the results show a Cronbach's alpha of .842, calculated over a set of 45 items. This value suggests a high internal consistency within the scale, indicating that the items are cohesively measuring the same underlying concept.

Usage of Digital Tools in Group Projects
TABLE 2. Usage of Digital Tools in Group Projects

Digital Tools	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
Zalo chat group	214	3	2	5	4.40	.052	.767
Google Docs	214	4	1	5	4.02	.061	.888
Google Drive	214	4	1	5	3.86	.060	.880
Canva	214	4	1	5	3.79	.071	1.038
ChatGPT	214	4	1	5	3.57	.075	1.102
Google Meet	214	4	1	5	3.44	.072	1.059
CapCut	214	4	1	5	3.40	.072	1.051
Microsoft Teams	214	4	1	5	2.87	.080	1.166
Google Slides	214	4	1	5	2.75	.086	1.259
Zoom	214	4	1	5	2.61	.074	1.076

*Note. Scale: 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Very often, 5=Always*

Table 2 visually compares the usage levels of different digital tools implemented in group projects. Zalo Chat group is the most used tool, with a mean usage score of 4.40, illustrating the significance of instant communication and messaging in project procedures. This preference for the Zalo Chat group emphasizes how accessible and immediate online communication tools empower students to work in groups effectively, share updates quickly, and address issues in real time, regardless of their physical location or availability. This finding aligns well with Wahl & Kitchel's (2016) report that digital tools facilitate collaboration for students separated by distance or differing schedules.

Also, the high mean scores (above 3.8) for Google Docs and Google Drive indicate that collaborative document editing and file sharing are crucial for project processes, aligning with Roliak's (2023) report. He emphasizes that these tools give students easy access to a wide range of resources, making their projects more detailed and informative.

Moreover, Canva, Chat GPT, Google Meet, and Capcut have moderate usage, with mean scores ranging from 3.4 to 3.7. This highlights their popularity for creating visual content, integrating AI into projects, online meetings, and video creation. The findings will correspond with students' experiences. In the interview, student 9 explained how his group utilized Canva in their group assessments, "We use Canva to design the most unique and creative lectures. Along with the presentation, the digital tools will help us impress our teachers and get higher scores" (S9). Similarly, Student 6 shared his application of ChatGPT and Copilot to support them in gaining deeper insights into Morphology: "We also used Chat GPT and Copilot chat to find prefixes or suffixes. I could explain further to my classmates so they could understand better. We achieved a pretty good score. My classmates gained more knowledge about the course" (S6). These findings correspond with Ting's (2013) observation that classroom video tools allow students to collaborate and share ideas even when geographically separated.

Despite having the lowest usage mean scores (around 2.7), Microsoft Teams, Google Slides, and Zoom still offer valuable collaborative learning experiences, as highlighted by students. In the interview, Student 6 responded, "Thanks to Zoom, we could study after class. Around 9-10 p.m., we met for about an hour" (S6). Student 7 also highlighted Zoom's advantages for completing a project kickoff, such as screen-sharing breakout rooms for group discussions. This aligns with Huang's (2021) findings, which noted that learners valued digital tools for collaborative learning, leading to increased confidence, making learning more engaging, and accommodating diverse learning styles.
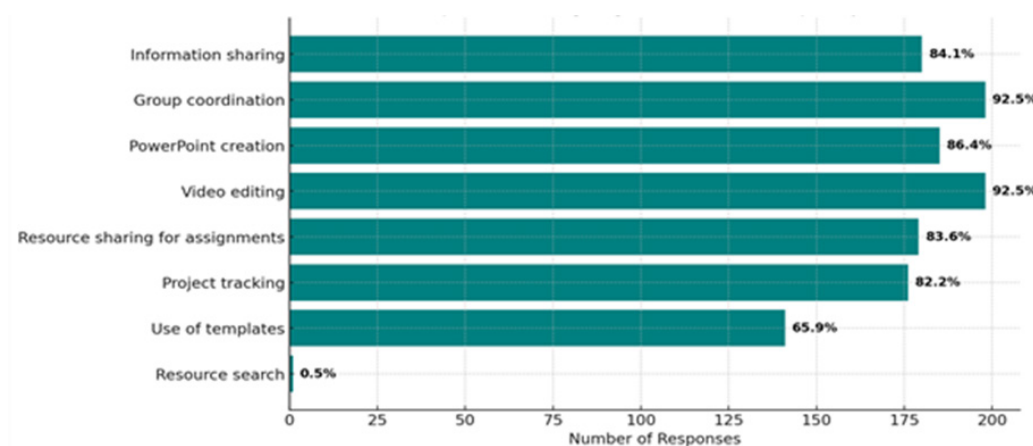
Types of Projects Utilizing Digital Tools
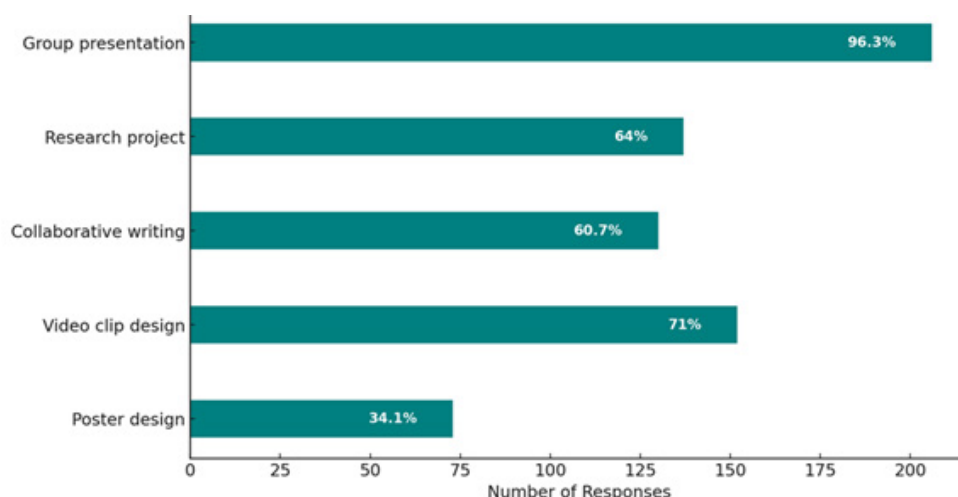
CHART 1. Types of Projects Utilizing Digital Tools

Bar chart 1 provides insights into adapting Internet-based tools across various project types in tertiary education, particularly for collaborative work and projects requiring multimedia production.

In first place is group presentation type, which received approval from 96.3% of respondents. This finding suggests that these tools were frequently integrated into collaboration presentation work. This aligns with the benefits of group-based assessment, as highlighted by Bakeerathan (2013), Pica & Doughty (1985), Dörnyei and Malderez (1997), Kazemi et al. (2020), and Fitriyah (2021). Their research emphasizes that group work enhances language competence, participation, learner confidence, and collaborative skills. Integrating digital tools appears to be a crucial factor in achieving these positive outcomes in group presentation contexts.

The second widespread use of digital tools in group-based projects is to design video clips (71%), demonstrating the students' reliance on digital platforms for video creation. The utilization of digital tools in collaborative writing and research projects is at a moderate level, 60.7% and 64%, respectively. The least frequent usage is in designing poster projects, at 34.1%. This can be attributed to factors like the simplicity of some poster designs. Student 3 explained, "We often prefer traditional design methods when designing a poster for our group presentation. We use cardboard at A4 size and color painting or authentic materials such as pieces from magazines or newspapers" (S3).

Purpose of Using Digital Tools in Group Projects

CHART 2. Purpose of Using Digital Tools in Group Projects

As shown in chart 2, the survey results indicate that group coordination and video editing are the primary applications of Internet-based tools in group projects, both utilized by 92.5% of respondents. This high usage underscores the importance of digital tools in facilitating collaboration and video creation for group projects. The other popular purposes of using are tracking projects, sharing resources for assignments, sharing information, and designing PowerPoint slides, with the percentage of responses ranging from 82.2% to 86.4%. The high

rate of responses means that Internet-based platforms are essential for completing group projects. As student 4 explained:

"In our projects, we typically use Zalo and Google Drive to exchange information and store documents while working. When saving the files to Google Drive, we will also save storage space on our computers. Additionally, by storing the links on Google Drive, we can easily share them with all members to help them read the information, approach the resources we have collected to compile materials, and then complete our group assignments" (S4).

Similarly, Student 5 mentioned the purposes of using digital tools in his project:

"We usually use ChatGPT and Copilot for work. Since everyone is at home in different places, having group meetings on Zoom is very convenient. Anyone in the group can join the online meeting at any time, regardless of location. I use Zoom, even though its free version only allows 40 to 45 minutes per session. However, the advantage is that I can share files, screens, pictures, and sounds through Zoom. This is something Google Meet cannot do, as it can share screens but not voices" (S5).

The moderate percentage is for using templates (65.9%). However, only 0.5% of respondents admitted using digital tools for resource search. Therefore, it seems that students did not consider this purpose as critical as others in group projects.

Benefits When Using Digital Tools in Group Projects

TABLE 3. Benefits of Using Digital Tools in Group Projects

Benefits	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
Increasing efficiency in completing projects	214	4	1	5	4.38	.051	.746
Time-saving	214	4	1	5	4.37	.052	.763
Becoming more proficient in using technology applications	214	4	1	5	4.36	.054	.791
Producing higher quality products in group projects	214	4	1	5	4.32	.054	.783
Project Tracking	214	4	1	5	4.26	.051	.747
Monitoring and supervising the tasks of other team members	214	4	1	5	4.25	.053	.769
Becoming more creative	214	4	1	5	4.23	.057	.834
Enhancing understanding of project content	214	4	1	5	4.19	.058	.842
Enhancing the team's ability to collaborate effectively	214	4	1	5	4.17	.060	.877
Increasing communicative skills	214	4	1	5	4.03	.061	.890
Increasing problem-solving skills	214	4	1	5	4.02	.060	.877
Increasing critical thinking skills	214	4	1	5	3.72	.064	.937

Note. Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=No idea, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 3, integrating digital tools into project-based group assessment offers numerous benefits. Specifically, the primary benefits are a significant increase in project efficiency, time savings, crucial improvement in students' technological competence, and higher quality products (mean scores exceeding 4.3). Also, the qualitative data were well-aligned with the quantitative data. Student 6 mentioned:

"Thanks to some digital tools, studying together is much easier than before. The specific case is when we did a translation project. We used Google Meet to discuss how to do that translation project. In addition to Google Meet, we also used ChatGPT to support our translation project. ChatGPT is brilliant, and its translation is very natural. However, we also translated based on our ideas and then compared with Chat GPT to see if there were any shortcomings and what our advantages were" (S6).

Student 10 highlighted the benefits he received during the application process of digital tools in his group projects:

"Using tools like Microsoft Teams helps us ensure that information is communicated clearly and promptly among group members during the project process. We often use Google Docs. It is a digital tool that allows joint work, enhancing the ability to collaborate and effectively share information among team members. I also realize that using various digital tools such as Photoshop and CapCut helps our group improve our software using skills" (S10).

Therefore, it is evident that these quantitative and qualitative findings support the argument of Huang (2021), Roliak (2023), and Tomar et al. (2024) that digital tool implementation increases learners' technological skills, confidence in learning, and collaborative experiences.

Besides the top-rated benefits, digital tools are indispensable in project tracking, monitoring and supervising the tasks of other team members, enhancing understanding of project content, and boosting creativity. These categories got a favorable response, with mean scores around 4.2. In his response, Student 6 explained:

"….. When using chat GPT, I have to search for a lot of information. It also gives me a lot of information, so I have to know how to synthesize the information, such as what to use and what not to use. I also have to cross-reference with the information on the Internet because chat GPT has the weakness of providing very inaccurate information and information without accurate sources. It enhances my critical thinking, and I have learned how to filter information and work effectively in a team." (S6).

The next benefits mentioned in the table are enhancing collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, whose mean scores range from 3.72 to 4.17. In the interview, Student 9 also listed a lot of benefits of the skills her group gets when using digital tools:

"After working in a group to complete the project assignment, I have learned a lot of useful skills. First, our group members must learn how to convey information clearly through online platforms. Second, we know how to schedule and prioritize tasks more effectively. Working in groups also means we have to collaborate efficiently with team members from a distance. What's more. We need to master using tools to plan and monitor progress, and then I have the sense of achieving proficiency in using software and project management tools. Sometimes, I need to find creative solutions to technical and communication-related issues. Eventually, each group member must adapt to various working styles. Overall, I think that I have got a lot of benefits with this learning approach." (S9)

These findings prove the positive impacts of integrating digital tools into group-based assessment. It allows students to collaborate in teams and boost essential communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. These are considered key skills for future employment (Aggarwaland & O'Brien, 2008; Hansen, 2006; Sedgwich, 2010).

Challenges of Using Digital Tools in Group Projects
TABLE 4. Challenges of Using Digital Tools in Group Projects

Challenges	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
Some team members lack technological proficiency	214	4	1	5	3.72	.066	.962
Encountering technical errors or unexpected issues while using digital tools	214	4	1	5	3.71	.059	.863
Difficult to connect due to unstable Internet	214	4	1	5	3.70	.064	.932
Team members avoid responding on group chat	214	4	1	5	3.64	.068	.991
Not proficient in using digital tools	214	4	1	5	3.53	.061	.891
Team members' responsibility avoidance"	214	4	1	5	3.46	.075	1.090
Difficult to express/explain personal opinions through digital tools	214	4	1	5	3.27	.063	.920
The message arrived at an inappropriate time	214	4	1	5	3.21	.069	1.015
Feel pressured upon receiving work-related messages	214	4	1	5	3.14	.071	1.033
Digital fatigue	214	4	1	5	3.12	.074	1.085
Difficult to track individual contribution	214	4	1	5	3.07	.066	.967
Difficult to coordinate tasks with team members	214	4	1	5	3.01	.065	.947

Note. Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=No idea, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

Besides researching the positive impacts of digital tools integration in project-based group assessment, this study also tries to find the challenges during the students' practices of this implementation. Table 4 presents the statistics of challenges associated with using digital tools in group projects based on the questionnaire responses from 214 participants. As shown in the table, all the mean scores are from 3.01 to 3.72, which means that the students did not have to deal with significant challenges in implementing digital platforms in group projects.

The highest mean scores in all categories are students' lack of technological proficiency, technical errors encountered, poor Internet connection, and group members' avoidance in responding to group chat messages, with mean scores descending from 3.72 to 3.53. Although these score ranges are not high, some students likely struggled with the challenges above. Also, group members' lack of responsibilities contributed to the difficulties

in completing the projects. Student 10 responded when asked about the challenges during the process, "Not all our group members are familiar with digital tools, which leads to the need to spend time training and supporting each other" (S10). Student 4 also admitted:

"Barriers or challenges that I first encountered are adapting to those tools. Secondly, there were some tools requiring an Internet connection. Sometimes, when the Internet was weak or unstable, it led to obstacles in communication, making teamwork more challenging for me. However, my biggest challenge was learning how to use those tools. Because the more advanced the tools are, the more functions they have, making their use more complex. That's why at first, I had to spend a lot of time learning how to use and operate them more flexibly" (S4).

These challenges correspond with Ting's (2013) observation that a lack of technology skills among students and teachers can lead to frustration and wasted time. They also prove Elam & Nesbit's (2012) statement that the challenge of an unstable Internet hinders group work, which can disrupt collaboration and impede project progress.

Meanwhile, other listed challenges in the table, such as difficulties in explaining personal opinions through digital tools, inappropriate message time, the pressure of receiving work-related messages, and digital fatigue, seem to receive neutral choices from respondents because their mean scores are pretty low (from 3.12 to 3.27). Also, there seem to be no difficulties in tracking individual contribution and team collaboration (3.07 and 3.01, respectively). This aligns well with the positive results of project tracking and promoting cooperation, as analyzed above.

However, most qualitative responses mentioned another challenge: the expense of using digital tools since the free version offers limited functions. Student 5 highlighted:

"….Secondly, there's the issue of cost. To fully access these apps' features, we actually have to pay. Honestly, if I used both Zoom and ChatGPT in a month, I'd have to spend nearly one million VND. That amount is unaffordable for us. However, the free available features can still provide some support in dealing with the immediate difficulties." (S5).

Student 7 expressed the same difficulties in affording the premiere version of digital platforms:

"As for the barriers, I think the first issue is that these tools require an internet connection. Secondly, most of us use the free versions of these tools, but the free versions are limited in terms of features. The cost of using the full or premium versions is quite high—around 500,000 to 600,000 VND per month—beyond what we, as students, can afford" (S7).

From the analysis of the benefits and challenges above, there is strong evidence that the benefits of using digital tools in group projects significantly outweigh the challenges. However, it is crucial to navigate the obstacles proactively to ensure that all students can effectively utilize digital tools and maximize their learning experience.

Teachers' Support in Group Projects
TABLE 5. Teachers' Support in Group Projects

Teachers' Support	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
Teachers' support in project content	214	4	1	5	4.06	.054	.788
Teachers' support in task delegation	214	4	1	5	3.63	.071	1.039
Teachers' support of technology	214	4	1	5	3.46	.062	.912

Note. Scale: 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Very often, 5=Always

As the teacher's role in the PBL changes from instructor to facilitator (Eng, 2000), there is a need to survey how teachers support students in project-based group assessment. Table 5 illustrates the findings of this category. The mean scores for all three aspects of teacher support are from 3.46 to 4.06, indicating a positive perception of teacher support among the respondents. Teachers' support in project content received the highest mean score (4.06), highlighting that teachers provide clear guidance in the content instruction of the projects. Teachers' support in task delegation received a moderate mean score (3.63), and technology received the lowest mean score (3.46), indicating that students perceive their teachers as providing relatively less support in addressing the technical aspects of using digital tools for group projects as Student 2 explained:

"Our teacher has introduced us to some websites and tools to support our projects, but most of the time, our group tends to explore digital tools independently and help each other learn how to use them. When we need more academic advice or professional guidance, we reach out to the lecturer, who will provide answers" (S2).

In brief, although the findings suggest that students perceive their teachers as providing valuable support in understanding project content, there is a need for more support in navigating the technical aspects of using digital tools and delegating tasks effectively within group projects.

Suggestions for Integrating Digital Tools into Project-Based Group Assessment
TABLE 6. Suggestions for Improving Digital Tool Usage

Suggestions	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
Improving Internet quality on campus	213	3	2	5	4.37	.047	.685
Teachers support and guide within group work	213	4	1	5	4.23	.049	.719
Integrating individual progress tracking	213	2	3	5	4.22	.047	.680
Provide additional technology training for students in research and learning	214	3	2	5	4.18	.045	.655
Incorporating collaborative features into digital tools	214	4	1	5	4.14	.047	.694

Note. Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=No idea, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

The findings from Table 6 emphasize the need for approaches to improving the effectiveness of digital tools in group projects. The highest priority is improving Internet quality on campus, with a mean score of 4.37. High-speed internet access is the most crucial factor for effective use of digital tools in group projects. The second popular suggestion is teachers' support and guidance (rated 4.23), highlighting the necessity for teacher involvement. This aligns with Roliak's (2023) perspective that due to technological advancements, teachers should continually update their methods and adapt pedagogically to support students throughout project completion.

Third, there is the requirement to integrate individual progress tracking with digital tools (4.2). Regarding this issue, Student 2 highlighted the need for "hidden feedback or evaluation" within digital tools, "So, if possible, I think integrating a hidden evaluation into our digital tools so that we can know that the collaboration is fairer and more transparent" (S2). Similarly, Student 1 suggests integrating peer grading and rubrics to combine peer assessment features with a structured framework for evaluating group work. This indicates a need for tools supporting peer feedback and clear assessment criteria. She stated, "Based on my experience, one proposes to integrate two digital tools (Peergrade and Rubrics) to combine the group assessment feature and the feature of classifying assessment criteria and details" (S1).

The other considerations include providing additional technology training and incorporating collaborative features into digital tools, with mean scores around 4.1. In particular, a few students in the interview expressed the wish to use digital tools with multiple functions. Students 8 and 10 responded in the interview:

"Right now, I see that many digital tools are available, but each type of tool serves a different specific purpose. So, I think it would be more convenient if a single tool could integrate multiple features and functions from the existing tools into one application. That would make things much easier" (S8).

"I wish for a smart document management system that helps with easy storage, retrieval, and sharing of documents. It should have version control features to ensure that all members always work with the most up-to-date files" (S10).

In conclusion, the findings provide valuable insights into students' perspectives on improving the use of digital tools in group projects. These suggestions ensure students acquire a good Internet connection, achieve technological proficiency, receive adequate teacher support, maintain a fair share among group members, and can approach digital tools with integrated functions suitable for group projects.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study's findings emphasize the considerable potential of digital tools to enhance the group project experiences of English majors within tertiary institutions. Various digital tools are utilized in project-based group assessment thanks to their significant benefits: improving learning outcomes, deeper engagement, fostering greater cooperation among team members regardless of geographical location, providing valuable efficiency and time-saving features, and promoting high-level skills, including collaboration, communicative, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. Meanwhile, obstacles are mentioned, such as different levels of technological proficiency among students, low-quality Internet connection, communication constraints, and even the challenges of maintaining a healthy work-life balance while engaging in online collaborative tasks. However, the results show that these obstacles are not serious, and the benefits outweigh the drawbacks of digital tools and project-based group assessment integration.

To optimize the effectiveness of digital tools in group projects for English majors, the research findings suggest the following implications for EFL educators and tertiary institution administrators. Firstly, educators should fulfill the role of facilitator in PBL by giving precise and detailed guidance to support students during their project-based group assignments. These supports should include content knowledge, peer interaction, and technological knowledge. Secondly, tertiary institutions need to invest in upgrading their Internet networks to ensure stable online working. Thirdly, administrators should prioritize developing student digital literacy through training programs and workshops. Finally, this study's positive results recommend that project-based group assessment should be encouraged in classroom assessment policy. In this way, institutions and educators can create a supportive learning environment fostering essential 21st-century skills, proactively addressing technical obstacles, and encouraging responsible technology usage. Consequently, tertiary institutions may fully utilize digital tools to improve project outcomes, enhance student learning, and prepare students for success in a digitally connected world.

The Authors

Phuong Thi Tieu Le is a PhD student in TESOL at Ho Chi Minh City Open University and a lecturer at Nong Lam University-Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Her research interests are TESOL methodology, technology in English Language Teaching, and classroom assessment. https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2226-1998
Email: phuong.lethitieu@hcmuaf.edu.vn.

Diem Thi Nguyen is a lecturer of University of Finance - Marketing, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. Her research interests are TESOL methodology, technology in English Language Teaching, assessment and testing.
Email: nt.diem@ufm.edu.vn

Nghia Thi Pham is a lecturer of Lac Hong University, Dong Nai Province, Viet Nam. Her research interests are TESOL methodology, technology in English Language Teaching, and Linguistics.
Email: nghiapham@lhu.edu.vn

Authors' Contributions

PTTL - Conceptualization, Research Design, Data Collection, Quantitative Data Analysis & Evaluation, Manuscript Writing, Revising
DTN - Research Design, Data Collection, Qualitative Data Analysis & Evaluation, Manuscript Writing, Revising
NTP - Research Design, Data Collection, Manuscript Writing, Editing

Authors' Note

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

Ackroyd, S., & Hughes, J. A. (1981). *Data collection in context*. London: Longman.

Aggarwal, P., &O'Brien, C. L. (2008). Social Loafing on Group Projects: Structural Antecedents and Effect on Student Satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 30(3), 255-264. https://doi.org/10.1177/0273475308322283

Bakeerathan, M. (2013). The impact of group work on assessing speaking skills in Task Based Language Teaching. *Proceedings of the Annual Research Symposium 2013, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Kelaniya, pp. 28.*

Bringuier, JC. Conversations with Jean Piaget. *Society* 17, 56–61 (1980). https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02694634

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). New York: Routledge.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.

Denscombe, M. (2014). *The Good Research Guide* (4th ed.). Maidenhead, U.K.: Open University Press.

Dörnyei, Z., & Malderez, A. (1997). Group dynamics and foreign language teaching. *System*, 25(1997), 65-81. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(96)00061-9

Edwards, R., & Holland, J. (2013). *What is qualitative interviewing?* (p. 128). Bloomsbury Academic.

Elam, J. R., & Nesbit, B. (2012). The effectiveness of project-based learning utilizing Web 2.0 tools in EFL. *Jaltcall Journal,* 8(2), 113-127.

Ettington, D. R., & Camp, R. R. (2002). Facilitating transfer of skills between group projects and work teams. *Journal of Management Education*, 26, 356–379.

Feng, Y. (1995). Some thoughts about applying constructivist theories of learning to guide instruction. In J. Willis, B. Robin, & D. Willis (Eds.), *Proceedings of SITE 1995—Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference* (pp. 816–819). Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE).Waynesville, NC USA: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). Retrieved October 6, 2024 from https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/46511/.

Fitriyah, I. (2021). A Systematic Literature Review on the Impact of Classroom-Based Language Assessment on the EFL Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Celt: *A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching and Literature, 21*(1), 9. https://doi.org/10.24167/CELT.V21I1.3055

Gedikli, E. T., & Basbay, M. (2020). The impact of collaborative activities on EFL learners' speaking anxiety levels and attitudes. *Cukurova University Faculty of Education Journal*, 49(2), 1184-1210. https://doi.org/10.14812/cufej.649939

Hall, D., & Buzwell, S. (2013). The problem of free-riding in group projects: Looking beyond social loafing as reason for non-contribution. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 14(1), 37-49. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787412467123

Hoesny, M. U., Setyosari, P., Praherdhiono, H., & Suryati, N. (2024). Integrating Digital Technology into Project-Based Learning: *Its Impact on Speaking Performance. Mextesol Journal*, 48(3), n3. https://doi.org/10.61871/mj.v48n3-4

Huang, H.-W. (2021). Effects of smartphone-based collaborative vlog projects on EFLlearners' speaking performance and learning engagement. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology,* 37(6), 18–40. https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.6623

Kazemi, A., Bagheri, M., & Rassaei, E. (2020). Dynamic assessment in English classrooms: Fosteringlearners' reading comprehension and motivation. *Cogent Psychology*, 7. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2020.1788912

King, A. K., Lai, Y., & May, S. (2017). Research *Methods in Language and Education.* Springer International Publishing.

Littleton, K., & Häkkinen, P. (1999). Learning together: Understanding the processes of computer-based collaborative learning. In P. Dillenbourg (Ed.), Collaborative learning: *Cognitive and computational approaches* (pp. [page range]). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Mirhosseini, S. A. (2020). *Doing qualitative research in language education*. Springer Nature.

Munianti, S., & Syukri, S. (2022). EFL Students' Perception on Strengths and Weaknesses of Group Working in Project-Based Learning. *AL LUGHAWIYAAT.*

Neu, W. A. (2012). Unintended Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Consequences of Group Assignments. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 34(1), 67-81. https://doi.org/10.1177/0273475311430806

NC State University. (n.d.). *Group work with digita*l tools. Teaching Resources. North Carolina State University DELTA. Retrieved April 23, 2025, from https://teaching-resources.delta.ncsu.edu/group-work-tools/

Nithideechaiwarachok, B., & Chano, J. (2024). Socio-Cultural and Social Constructivist Theories and Its Application in EFL Classroom for Thai Pre-Service Teachers: A Review for Further Research. *International Journal of Language Education*, 8(3), 564-572.

Pica, T., & Doughty, C. (1985). The Role of Group Work in Classroom Second Language Acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 7, 233-248. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263100005398

Punch, K. F. (2017). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Riswandi, D. (2018). The implementation of project-based learning to improvestudents' speaking skills. *International Journal of Language Teaching and Education*, 2(1), 32-40.

Tomar, S., Arundhathi, A., Gupta, S., & Sharma, M. (2024). Digital assessment: Impact on student motivation, peer learning, group dynamics. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 18(1), 9-17. https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v18i1.21138

Topçu Gedikli, E., & Basbay, M. (2020). The Impact of Collaborative Activities on EFLLearners' Speaking Anxiety Levels and Attitudes. *Çukurova Üniversitesi Egitim Fakültesi Dergisi,* 49(2), 1184-1210. https://doi.org/10.14812/cuefd.649939

Vygotsky, L. (1978). Mind in society: *The development of higher psychological processes.* Harvard University Press.

Zhang, L., & Ma, Y. (2023). A study of the impact of project-based learning on student learning effects: A meta-analysis study. *Frontiers in psychology*, 14, 1202728. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1202728

Does Guided Extensive Reading Enhance Young Learners' Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Acquisition in a Second Language?

Miyoung Song, Ph.D.
EVE English Academy, Seoul, South Korea

Abstract

This study examines the impact of guided extensive reading on reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition among young EFL learners. Over seven months, ten Korean elementary school students engaged in reading four English fiction books under the guidance of a teacher. Prior to each reading session, students received a worksheet containing four to five comprehension questions, which they answered either during or after reading. They attended regular English classes three times a week, where they discussed and compared their responses as part of the curriculum. To assess the effectiveness of the intervention, the participants completed a nationwide English proficiency test for young learners after the study. Additionally, a vocabulary test consisting of 40 words from the New General Service List by Browne (2014) was administered, with results compared to those of a control group of same-age peers who did not participate in the study. Findings revealed that participants in the guided reading group outperformed the control group in both reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. Notably, eight out of ten participants in the reading group showed greater improvement in vocabulary acquisition than in reading comprehension, whereas only three students in the control group exhibited a similar pattern. These results suggest that guided extensive reading can significantly enhance both vocabulary development and reading comprehension in young EFL learners.

Keywords: *vocabulary learning through reading; benefits of reading for EFL learners*

Introduction

Second language learning process requires a set of learning strategies, from the stage of alphabet and vocabulary acquisition to identifying the subtle meanings of specific words in contexts. Suits (2003) mentions that learning words in isolation through tracing and copying is not enough to second language learners. Instead, she insists that guided reading using leveled books which provide meaningful contexts while emphasizing on comprehension and word recognition from early stages of second language learning is beneficial for improving reading levels. Pulido (2004) also investigates the relationship between text comprehension and incidental vocabulary acquisition among second language learners and suggests the passage comprehension plays an important role in lexical gain and retention. To comprehend given texts, readers should have a sufficient range of vocabulary, but to use a specific word correctly, meaningful texts that help the readers understand the meaning of the word accurately are necessary.

A significant number of researchers and teachers emphasize the benefits of guided reading (Bouvet & Close, 2006; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Ferguson & Wilson, 2009; McGee & Ukrainetz, 2009; Suits, 2003; Wall, 2014) and extensive reading (Ateek, 2021; McQuillan, 2019; Nation, 2015; Ng, Renandya, & Chong, 2019; Renandya, 2009; Webb & Chang, 2015; Yamashita, 2013) on second

language learning. However, none of these studies have researched on what impact the combination of guided reading and extensive reading may have on young second language learners. These two reading approaches can also serve as teaching approaches from the teacher's perspective. Following a detailed review of the literature on these two reading and pedagogical approaches, an empirical study which has been conducted to analyze their combined impact on Korean elementary school students' second language learning will be introduced.

Literature Review
Guided Reading

The concept of guided reading as an instructional strategy primarily originated from Fountas and Pinnell (1996) in the context of literacy development for native English speakers. They introduced guided reading in the 1990s as part of their work on reading instruction in the classroom, focusing on small group work with the help of appropriately leveled texts. Later, Fountas and Pinnell (2012) organized the structure of a guided reading lesson, which has six essential steps and one optional extension. Under the guided reading instructions, the teacher chooses what students will read and introduces the text to scaffold the reading, but leaves some problem-solving for students to do. After students read the entire text softly or silently, the teacher invites them to discuss the text, guiding the discussion and lifting their comprehension. The teacher makes explicit teaching points based on the text helping students in solving words. To extend students' understanding of the text, writing and/or drawing can be used.

While Fountas and Pinnell's foundational work did not specifically target second language learners, their approach to guided reading has been widely adapted for English language learners focusing on strategies that enhance vocabulary acquisition, language comprehension, and cultural understanding by choosing texts that are culturally relevant to the learners' backgrounds. McGee and Ukrainetz (2009) introduce a study which adapts guided reading for second language learners. They examine strategies for scaffolding language and comprehension skills and suggest several techniques such as explicit vocabulary instruction, incorporating visuals, and engaging learners in discussion about the text to support the language development of English language learners.

Suits (2003) suggests that guided reading using meaningful texts can be an effective method for second language learners to enhance their language fluency, particularly their reading proficiency. In her study, Suits examined 39 students from Denmark, Israel, Korea, Spain, and Switzerland, whose English literacy levels were initially lower than those of native speakers. After one year of guided reading, these students improved by an average of 3.5 reading levels, compared to their native-speaking peers, who advanced by an average of 3.2 levels. Based on these findings, Suits concludes that many second language learners can transfer their native language skills to English and achieve significant progress in reading.

Extensive Reading

Extensive reading refers to the practice of reading large quantities of text for pleasure or general understanding, typically focusing on comprehension rather than detailed analysis. Day and Bamford (1998) argue that extensive reading is crucial for language learners because it provides them with real-world context and exposure to authentic language use, which aids in natural language acquisition. The key features of extensive reading can be best understood through the top ten principles for extensive reading by Day and Bamford (2002). They include selecting easy reading materials in large quantities such as graded readers, learners' autonomy through choosing what they want to read, rather fast reading speed, individual and silent reading, and so on. These principles help guide teachers and researchers in creating effective extensive reading programs for second language learners.

The benefits of extensive reading have been demonstrated in numerous studies. First, it helps second language learners acquire new vocabulary naturally by encountering words in authentic context. Horst, Cobb, and Meara (1998) show that extensive reading enables learners to encounter words repeatedly in different contexts leading to better understanding and use of the vocabulary. Enhanced comprehension skills can be another major benefit of extensive reading. Day and Bamford (1998) emphasize that reading extensively significantly enhances reading comprehension since learners can focus on overall meaning of texts while reading rather than trying to learn a few unfamiliar vocabulary items. In addition, extensive reading can contribute to the development of autonomous learning habits of the readers. They are often allowed to choose their reading materials. Nation (2009) claims that this freedom can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility in second language learners' journey.

Renandya (2009, p.134), who is a well-known extensive reading (ER) supporter, mentions that ER can contribute to input-rich classroom environment and eventually to dramatic improvements in students' language proficiency. He argues that "While we cannot create an L2 environment that resembles an L1 learning context, we can immerse our students in the language they are learning by making available a large supply of books and other print or non-print materials in the classroom... After a period of time, it is not uncommon to see dramatic improvements in students' language proficiency as a result of being exposed to an input-rich classroom environment."

Gaps in Previous Research

Previous research on guided reading and extensive reading highlight distinct aspects of each instructional approach. While most studies agree that both methods effectively enhance second language learners' vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension, none have examined the potential benefits of combining these two reading approaches. Moreover, the impact of integrating guided and extensive reading remains largely unexplored.

The primary distinction between extensive reading and guided reading lies in the role of the teacher and the selection of reading materials. In guided reading, the teacher selects the text and provides explicit instructional guidance, while in extensive reading, learners choose their own reading materials and aim to read as much as possible. However, as outlined in the top ten principles of extensive reading, the teacher still plays a crucial role in supporting students' reading. Principles nine and ten emphasize that teachers guide and orient students in their reading journey, serving as role models for effective reading.

In many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, such as in Korea, Japan and China, it is often challenging to maintain a sufficient library of books written in English. It is not only a matter of the cost of purchasing books written in English in addition to those written in the native language, but also a practical challenge to provide books that meet the diverse needs of readers, as there is a wide variation in their English proficiency levels. Additionally, in an institutional setting, comparing learners' outcomes becomes challenging when they read different texts and have varying amounts of reading time.

In light of these considerations, the present study aims to combine guided and extensive reading methods to identify an effective approach for enhancing young EFL learners' vocabulary and reading proficiency. The study seeks to address the following research questions.

(1) To what extent can the combination of guided and extensive reading improve reading comprehension in young EFL learners?
(2) What impact does guided extensive reading have on vocabulary acquisition among young EFL learners?
(3) Should guided extensive reading be maintained as a component of the curriculum for young EFL learners?

Research Methodology
Participants

The participants in this study were 20 Korean EFL learners, all of whom were enrolled in a private English academy in Seoul, where they attended regular English classes, including reading, listening, grammar, and speaking. These participants were fifth and sixth grade students from the same elementary school, with an average age of 12.3 years. Each group comprised four female and six male students. The participants were divided into two groups based on their attendance schedule at the academy: the reading group, which attended on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and the control group, which attended on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. The participants had been in the same class for approximately five months prior to the commencement of the reading project, and no significant differences in their English proficiency levels were observed when they were assigned to each group. Both groups used the same textbooks for intensive reading (Lexile level 770 – 850L), listening (intermediate level), and grammar lessons (equivalent to the second year of middle school). The only distinction was that the reading group was additionally assigned storybook chapter reading as their homework.

Reading Materials

The reading group read four books for seven months. The titles of the books are *Frindle, Because of Winn Dixie, How to Steal a Dog, and The City of Ember.* Table 1 provides additional information about the fiction storybooks used in the study.

TABLE 1. STORYBOOKS FOR THE READING GROUP

Book Titles	Authors	Genres	# of Chapters	# of Words
Frindle	Andrew Clements	Young adult fiction	15	16,022
Because of Winn Dixie	Kate DiCamillo	Children's literature	26	22,111
How to Steal a Dog	Barbara O'Connor	Young adult fiction	21	34,620
The City of Ember	Jeanne DuPrau	Science Fiction	20	60,041
Total			**82**	**132,794**

The genres of the first three books are young adult fiction or children's literature, while the last one is science fiction. The participants read the books in sequence, and during the first book, Frindle, they received more detailed instructions on how to read and locate answers for the comprehension questions. Since none of the participants had experience reading fiction storybooks beyond picture books and graded readers, they read the first few chapters together in class with their teacher. Afterward, all storybook reading was assigned as homework.

The four storybooks contain a total of 82 chapters, and since the reading group attended classes three times a week, they read an average of 3 chapters per week. The total word count across these books is 132,794. A series of worksheets, designed for participants to complete after their individual reading as homework, were provided prior to each class. Each worksheet contained four to five comprehension questions designed to verify whether the participants had read the chapter, rather than to assess their reading comprehension. Most questions focused on basic story details, such as "What happened in the story?", "Who did what?", or "Where did the event take place?". To add an element of fun, drawing tasks were occasionally included, such as illustrating a scene from the chapter, or questions like "What would you do if you were in this situation?". These creative tasks aimed to further engage the young participants and spark their interest in the reading. An example of a worksheet can be found in Appendix 1.

The procedure for the reading group is as follows:

1. The participants read a chapter individually at their own pace as homework, along with other class assignments.
2. While reading each chapter, they answer comprehension questions on the worksheet and are encouraged to provide as detailed answers as possible.
3. During each class, the participants discuss their answers to the questions. If any questions are particularly challenging, the teacher guides them to review the relevant pages and find the correct answers.

Measurement Instruments
Vocabulary Test

The 40 target vocabulary items were selected from the New General Service List (NGSL) by Charles Browne (https://www.newgeneralservicelist.com/new-general-service-list), an updated and modified version of the original General Service List (GSL) by West (1953). The NGSL, consisting of 2,809 words, includes the most essential vocabulary for general English and daily life, specifically aimed at second language learners. This list is based on the large-scale, modern Cambridge English Corpus.

For the present study, words from the 400 to 700 levels were selected. Vocabulary below this range would be too easy for the participants, while words above the 800 level would likely contain too many unfamiliar terms. The selection included 12 words from the 400 level, 10 words from the 500 and 600 levels respectively, and 8 words from the 700 level. A complete list of the words tested on the participants can be found in Appendix 2. The 40 vocabulary test items include 20 nouns, 12 verbs, 5 adjectives, and 3 adverbs, which are considered as the most essential parts of speech for sentence construction.

On the test, participants selected one English word from five choices to match the given Korean word. The four other options were also drawn from the same list and level. To reduce the burden of test-taking, a multiple-choice format was chosen, as the participants were young learners and were required to take both vocabulary and reading comprehension tests simultaneously. Despite the simple format, participants still needed to read 200 words to choose the correct answer for the vocabulary test alone. Below is an example of the format for a vocabulary question. Even though there was no time limit for the test, all participants completed the vocabulary test within 20 minutes.

다음 한글 단어에 가장 적합한 영어 단어를 고르세요.
(Choose the English word that best matches the following Korean word.)

1. 해법, 해결책 (   )
   (1) statement   (2) agreement   (3) solution   (4) advantage   (5) target

2. 줄이다 (   )
   (1) produce   (2) suppose   (3) apply   (4) reduce   (5) save

Reading Comprehension Test

For the reading comprehension test, the Test of the Skills in the English Language (TOSEL) was used. It is an English proficiency test designed primarily for non-native speakers of English, especially targeting younger learners and students in Korea. The Reading and Listening sections are divided into 10 proficiency levels. Table 2 presents the TOSEL rating scale.

TABLE 2. THE TOSEL RATINGS

Rating	Score
1	95 – 100
2	85 – 94
3	75 – 84
4	60 – 74
5	50 – 59
6	40 – 49
7	35 – 39
8	25 – 34
9	16 – 24
10	10 – 15

The TOSEL reading test consists of the following four sections:

- Part A: Sentence Completion (5 questions)

- Part B: Situational Writing (5 questions)

- Part C: Reading and Logical Thinking (10 questions)

- Part D: General Reading and Retelling (10 questions)

Each section is designed to assess different aspects of language proficiency, with the number of questions in parentheses indicating the weight of each part in the overall assessment. The reading questions align with the goals of intensive reading, where participants are expected to read a relatively short passage and identify the correct information. All 30 reading comprehension questions are in a multiple-choice format.

Findings

T   able 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the Reading Comprehension (RC) and Vocabulary (VOC) tests across two groups: the reading group and the control group. For the RC test, the reading group (N = 10) had a mean score of 70.00 with a standard deviation of 10.79, and a standard error of the mean (SEM) of 3.41. In contrast, the control group (N = 10) had a lower mean score of 52.40, with a higher standard deviation of 15.40 and a SEM of 4.87. The Reading test scores should be calculated out of 50 points, but for comparison with the vocabulary test, they were multiplied by 2 to be scaled to a 100-point system. The participants' scores indicate that the reading group's average reading scale is 4, while the control group's average is 5.

For the VOC test, the reading group achieved a mean score of 79.25 (SD = 10.41, SEM = 3.29), while the control group's mean score was 49.00, with a standard deviation of 15.95 and a SEM of 5.04. On the vocabulary test, each correct answer was awarded 2.5 points, making the total score out of 100 points.

TABLE 3. GROUP STATISTICS

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
RC	Reading Group	10	70.000	10.7909	3.4124
	Control Group	10	52.400	15.3999	4.8699
VOC	Reading Group	10	79.250	10.4117	3.2925
	Control Group	10	49.000	15.9513	5.0442

Figure 1 displays the overall results of the vocabulary and reading comprehension tests for both the reading group and the control group. The results of the vocabulary and reading comprehension tests reveal significant differences between the reading group and the control group.

The reading group, with an average age of 12 years, scored an average of 70.0 in the reading test and 79.3 in the vocabulary test. This suggests that the participants in this group demonstrated a relatively higher level of proficiency in both areas. The control group, with an average age of 12.3 years, scored significantly lower, with an average of 52.4 in the reading test and 49.0 in the vocabulary test.

The difference in average scores between the two groups is noteworthy. For the reading test, the reading group outperformed the control group by 17.4 points, while for the vocabulary test, the reading group surpassed the control group by 30.3 points. These results suggest that the reading group had a significantly higher level of proficiency in both reading comprehension and vocabulary compared to the control group, potentially indicating the positive impact of the guided extensive reading intervention.
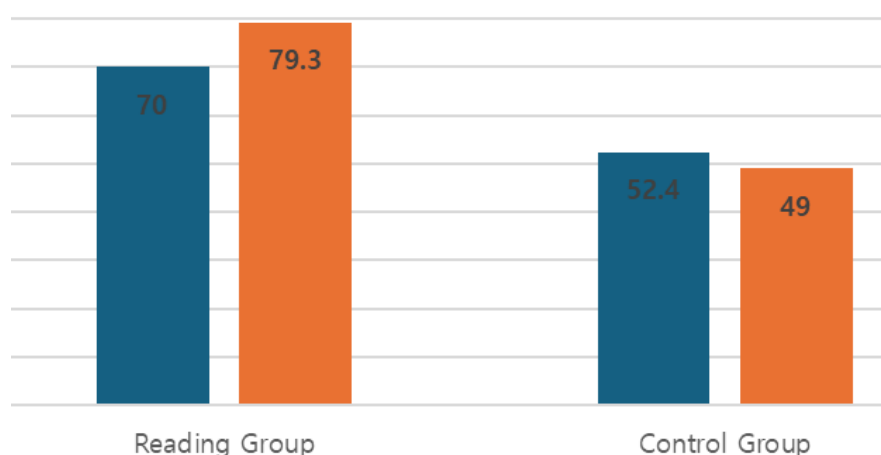
Figure 2 displays the individual test-takers' results for both the vocabulary and reading comprehension tests. Among the reading group participants, eight out of ten scored higher on the vocabulary test than on the reading comprehension test. In contrast, only three out of ten participants in the control group achieved higher scores on the vocabulary test compared to their reading comprehension test scores. This pattern suggests that the reading group may have benefited more from the reading activities, having encountered more than 130,000 words, while the control group showed less differentiation between their reading and vocabulary performance.

FIGURE 2. Individual Participants' Test Results
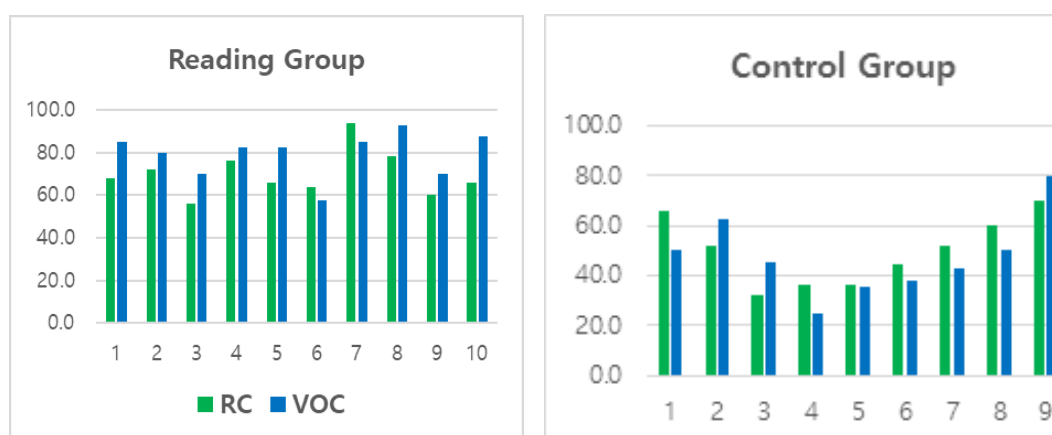
As indicated in Table 4, the results from the independent samples t-test reveal significant differences in both RC (Reading Comprehension) and VOC (Vocabulary), as indicated by the two-sided p values. On the RC test, for both "equal variances assumed" and "equal variances not assumed," the two-sided p-value is 0.004 and 0.005, respectively. Since both p-values are less than 0.05, this suggests a significant difference in reading comprehension between the two groups.

TABLE 4. Independent Samples T-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	\multicolumn{2}{c}{Significance}	Mean Differ-ence	Std. Error Differ-ence	\multicolumn{2}{c}{95% Confidence Interval of the Difference}
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided			Lower	Upper
RC	Equal variances assumed	1.834	0.192	2.960	18	0.004	0.008	17.6000	5.9464	5.1070	30.0930
	Equal variances not assumed			2.960	16.121	0.005	0.009	17.6000	5.9464	5.0018	30.1982
VOC	Equal variances assumed	1.192	0.289	5.022	18	0.000	0.000	30.2500	6.0237	17.5947	42.9053
	Equal variances not assumed			5.022	15.491	0.000	0.000	30.2500	6.0237	17.4462	43.0538

On the VOC test, both the "equal variances assumed" and "equal variances not assumed" tests show a two-sided p-value of 0.000, which is also less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference in vocabulary acquisition between the two groups.

In conclusion, both the RC and VOC tests show statistically significant differences between the reading group and the control group, as the p-values are below the commonly used significance threshold of 0.05.

Discussion

The first research question examined the extent to which a combination of guided and extensive reading enhances reading comprehension in young Korean EFL learners. The data indicates a significant improvement in reading comprehension for students in the reading group compared to the control group. The mean reading comprehension test score for the reading group (70.00) is significantly higher than that of the control group (52.40), with a mean difference of 17.6 points. The results of the independent samples t-test confirm that this difference is statistically significant (p = 0.004 for equal variances assumed and p = 0.005 for equal variances not assumed). Given that the reading group was exposed to a substantial amount of text (over 130,000 words), it suggests that guided extensive reading had a positive and measurable impact on reading comprehension. These results are consistent with previous research findings. There are many studies that have demonstrated the positive impact of guided reading on reading comprehension in second language learners. Nayak and Sylva (2013) examine that a guided reading intervention has positive effects on young learners of English in Hong Kong. Ghosn (2003) explores the viability of guided reading and explicit strategy instruction for children learning English as a second language in a Lebanese second-grade classroom. In the study, guided reading which is combined with strategy instruction proves to support young second language learners' reading development and comprehension. Molefe, Mokgosi, and Mthembu (2021) demonstrate that guided reading has a positive effect on Grade 9 English second language learners' reading fluency and comprehension. These studies collectively suggest that guided reading can significantly enhance reading comprehension among L2 learners across various age groups and educational contexts.

The second research question explored the impact of guided extensive reading on vocabulary acquisition among young EFL learners. The reading group also outperformed the control group on the vocabulary test, with a mean score of 79.25 compared to 49.00, resulting in a 30.25-point advantage. The independent samples t-test shows a p-value of 0.000, confirming a highly significant difference. The fact that most participants in the

reading group scored higher in vocabulary than in reading comprehension (8 out of 10) suggests that extensive reading is particularly effective for vocabulary acquisition. That is, guided extensive reading can lead to incidental vocabulary learning. Numerous studies (Horst, 2005; Nation, 2001; Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2017; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Song, 2020; Waring & Takaki, 2003) have provided empirical evidence supporting incidental vocabulary learning through extensive reading in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). This supports the idea that frequent exposure to new words in context leads to better vocabulary retention and usage.

The last research question assessed whether guided extensive reading should remain an integral component of the curriculum for young EFL learners. The significant improvements in both reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition suggest that guided extensive reading is highly beneficial for young EFL learners. Given the substantial differences in performance between the two groups, maintaining guided extensive reading as a curricular component would likely support long-term language development. The results indicate that structured reading exposure helps students develop both comprehension skills and vocabulary knowledge, which are crucial for overall language proficiency.

While the present study examined the relationship between guided extensive reading and young EFL learners' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, future research could investigate its effects on other language skills, such as listening and speaking. Additionally, extending the duration of reading interventions may yield further insights. In the current study, participants engaged in reading four storybooks over a seven-month period due to time constraints. Long-term intervention studies may produce more robust and encouraging outcomes.

Conclusion

The present study has explored the benefits of guided extensive reading on elementary EFL leaners' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. To address the challenge of limited English books suitable for all participants' proficiency levels, the teacher selected four fiction books, ensuring that every participant read the same materials. Efforts were also made to choose engaging storybooks featuring main characters of a similar age to the participants. The purpose of the worksheets with comprehension questions was not to ensure that participants understood the exact meaning of the passages. Although the teacher did not provide explicit instruction on developing flexibility and efficiency in decoding words, detailed guidance was given to help participants find the correct answers to comprehension questions and ultimately understand the texts. Since the reading questions were presented in the same order as they appeared in the storybook, participants did not have to flip back and forth through the pages to find the answers, reducing inconvenience.

According to Day and Bamford (2002), in an extensive reading environment, the purpose of reading should be associated with pleasure and general understanding, with reading itself serving as its own reward. In fact, most reading group participants showed great interest in their upcoming storybooks and even expressed pride in reading authentic novels. During a class discussion on "the most interesting book I have read" in the speaking section, one male participant mentioned Frindle, explaining that it was the first English storybook he had ever read.

The findings and results of the current study strongly support the integration of guided extensive reading in EFL curricula, as it significantly enhances both reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. The statistical significance of the results suggests that this approach should be sustained and potentially expanded to maximize language learning outcomes.

The Author

Miyoung Song received her PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Auckland in New Zealand. She is currently teaching young EFL learners at Eve English Academy in Seoul, Korea. With over 20 years of experience, she has taught both English and Korean to students of various ages, proficiency levels, and nationalities, ranging from young learners to adults. Her research interests focus on vocabulary learning through guided reading and the impact of extensive reading on incidental vocabulary acquisition.
Email: evelynsong2024@gmail.com

References

Ateek, M. (2021). Extensive reading in an EFL classroom: Impact and learners' perceptions. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistic*s, 7(1), 109–131.

Bouvet, E., & Close, E. (2006). Online reading strategy guidance in a foreign language. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*. 29(1).

Browne, C. (2014). The new general service list version 1.01: Getting better all the time. *Korea TESOL Journal*, 11(2), 35–50.

Browne, C. The New General Service List. https://www.newgeneralservicelist.com/new-general-service-list

Day R. R., & Bamford, J. (2002). Top ten principles for teaching extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 14(2), 136–141. https://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/October2002/articles/day/day.pdf

Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2017). Guided reading: *Responsive teaching across the grades* (3rd ed.). Heinemann.

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2012). Guided reading: The romance and the reality. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(4), 268–284. DOI: 10.1002/TRTR.01123.

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ferguson, J., & Wilson, J. (2009). Guided reading: It's for primary teachers. *Literacy Issues During Changing Times: A Call to Action*, 30, 293–306. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED507687.pdf#page=306

Ghosn, I. K. (2003). Supporting young second language learners' reading through guided reading and strategy instruction in a second-grade classroom in Lebanon. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38(3), 378-379. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228339277

Horst, M., Cobb, T., & Meara, P. (1998). Beyond a clockwork orange: acquiring second language vocabulary through reading. *Reading in a Foreign language*, 11(2).

Horst, M. (2005). Learning L2 vocabulary through extensive reading: A measurement study. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 61(3), 355–382. https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.61.3.355

McGee, L. M., & Ukrainetz, T. A. (2009). Adapting guided reading for English language learners. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(6), 493–501. https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.62.6.3

McQuillan, J. (2019). Where do we get our academic vocabulary? Comparing the efficiency of direct instruction and free voluntary reading. The Reading Matrix: *An International Online Journal*, 19(1), 129–138.

Molefe, M., Mokgosi, C. M., & Mthembu, P. (2021). The implementation of the guided reading approach in English Second Language classrooms: A case study in Gauteng province. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 12(4), 92-105. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1334796.pdf

Nation, P. (2015). Principles guiding vocabulary learning through extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 27(1), 136–145.

Nation, P. (2009). Teaching ESL/EFL reading and writing. Routledge.

Nation, P. (2001). Learning vocabulary in another language. Cambridge University Press.

Nayak, S., & Sylva, K. (2013). The effects of a guided reading intervention on young Chinese learners of English in Hong Kong. *The Language Learning Journal*, 41(2), 165-181. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2011.625214

Ng, Q. R., Renandya, W. A., & Chong, M. Y. C. (2019). Extensive Reading: *Theory, research and implementation. TEFLIN Journa*l, 30(2), 171–186.

Pellicer-Sánchez, A., & Schmitt, N. (2017). Incidental vocabulary acquisition from an authentic novel: Do things fall apart? *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 29(1), 1–21.

Pigada, M., & Schmitt, N. (2006). Vocabulary acquisition from extensive reading: *A case study. Reading in a Foreign Language*, 18(1), 1–28.

Pulido, D. (2004). The relationship between text comprehension and second language incidental vocabulary acquisition: A matter of topic familiarity? *Language Learning*, 54(3), 469–523.

Renandya, W. (2009). The power of extensive reading. Regional Language Centre Journal, 38(2).

Song, M. (2020). The impacts of extensive reading on EFL primary school students' vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. *Journal of Extensive Reading*, 5, 60–69.

Suits, B. (2003). Guided reading and second-language learners. *Multicultural Education*, 11(2), 27–34. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ775329.pdf

Wall, H. (2014). When guided reading isn't working: Strategies for effective instruction. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*. 10(2).

West, M. (1953). A general service list of English words. London, UK: Longman, Green & Co.

Waring, R., & Takaki, M. (2003). At what rate do learners learn and retain new vocabulary from reading a graded reader? *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 15(2), 130–163.

Webb, S., & Chang, A. (2015). Second language vocabulary learning through extensive reading with audio support: How do frequency and distribution of occurrence affect learning? *Language Teaching Research*, 19(6), 667–686.

Yamashita, J. (2013). Effects of extensive reading on reading attitudes in a foreign language. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 25(2), 248–263.

APPENDIX 1 < AFTER READING WORKSHEET >

Frindle by Andrew Clements

Chapter 2

위의 챕터를 읽고 다음 질문에 문장으로 답하세요. 답을 몇 페이지에서 찾았는지 괄호 안에 쓰세요. (Read the chapter above and answer the following questions in complete sentences. Indicate the page number where you found the answer in parentheses.)

1. Even though Mrs. Granger was small, what made her look giant? (p.   )

....

....

2. What does Mrs. Granger love? (p............................)

....

....

3. According to Mrs. Granger, what are essential for every student? (p............................)

....

....

4. When he ran into a word he didn't know, what did Nick do? (p.   )

....

....

5. Draw Mrs. Granger and Nick in the same classroom.

APPENDIX 2 < VOCABULARY TEST ITEMS BASED ON NEW GENERAL SERVICE LIST>

#	Words	Ranking	Parts of Speech
1	individual	409	noun
2	add	414	verb
3	activity	432	noun
4	special	443	adjective
5	sometimes	444	adverb
6	carry	446	verb
7	bear	455	noun
8	especially	460	adverb
9	difficult	470	adjective
10	difference	473	noun
11	raise	486	verb
12	approach	495	verb
13	relationship	502	noun
14	road	521	noun
15	national	537	adjective
16	teach	539	verb
17	benefit	543	noun
18	realize	554	verb
19	address	558	noun
20	culture	568	noun
21	effort	577	noun
22	reduce	584	verb
23	voice	607	noun
24	compare	614	verb
25	poor	618	adjective
26	bank	627	noun
27	attack	632	verb
28	feature	635	noun
29	represent	658	verb
30	press	674	verb
31	growth	678	noun
32	economy	699	noun
33	population	710	noun
34	alone	719	adverb
35	gain	737	verb
36	college	739	noun
37	method	755	noun
38	hospital	782	noun
39	solution	788	noun
40	specific	791	adjective

English Reading Anxiety among Thai Undergraduates

Salila Pettong
Suchanan Suneewong
Chakkraphong Wannarat
Songkhla Rajabhat University, Songkhla, Thailand

Abstract

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill for university students, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, where students are required to read extensively to acquire academic knowledge. However, reading in a foreign language presents significant challenges, as it is a cognitively demanding process that involves decoding, interpretation, and problem-solving within specific situational constraints. For Thai EFL learners, one of the primary barriers to effective reading is language anxiety, which can impede their ability to process and comprehend English texts. This study aimed to investigate the levels and sources of reading anxiety among Thai undergraduate students majoring in English. The participants were 130 students from a public university in southern Thailand, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from existing validated instruments and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean, and standard deviation. The findings revealed that participants experienced a generally high level of anxiety when reading English texts. The most prominent source of anxiety was the excessive length of reading materials, followed by the presence of unfamiliar vocabulary, difficulty in translating words, confusing punctuation or symbols, and lack of familiarity with foreign cultural content. These results highlight the importance of implementing pedagogical strategies that reduce reading anxiety and support comprehension, such as scaffolded reading tasks, vocabulary pre-teaching, and culturally relevant materials. Additionally, incorporating activities that promote learner autonomy, such as extensive reading programs, can help learners develop confidence in their reading abilities.

Keywords: *English reading; anxiety; Thai undergraduates; EFL*

Introduction

Worldwide, people use English as a universal language for communication, pursuing knowledge through employment, study, and as a tool to comprehend global community culture and vision. Learning English facilitates students in understanding and developing awareness of diverse cultures and perspectives found in the global community. English is thus incorporated in the foundational curriculum from elementary school through higher education in Thailand (Ministry of Education, 2008). The Basic Education Core Curriculum (B.E. 2008) requires students to develop proficiency in all four English language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with particular emphasis on reading skills due to their fundamental importance. Strong reading abilities foster lifelong learning and assist in obtaining information for effective decision-making. Reading is essential for education as it enhances intellectual development and creativity (Office of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards, 2011, p. 175).

Grabe (2014) asserts that reading may be the most crucial skill for second language learners in academic contexts. This position is reinforced by Kraikung Anakkhakul (2015), who indicated that reading is a

key skill for English language learners, significantly impacting their advancement and success across multiple domains related to English language education. Grabe's theory of reading in a foreign language highlights the multifaceted, dynamic nature of the reading process, where multiple cognitive and linguistic skills converge. According to this framework, reading in a foreign language entails more than just decoding textual information; it requires integration of prior knowledge, linguistic competence, and strategic processing through coordinated bottom-up and top-down processes.

Despite the recognized importance of reading skills, Thai learners continue to struggle with English proficiency. According to the 2021 English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), Thailand ranked 100th out of 112 countries, falling into the "very low proficiency" category with a score of 419 points. Within ASEAN, Thailand ranked at the bottom of member nations, highlighting a significant national educational challenge. This persistent underperformance demands closer examination of the factors impeding English language acquisition among Thai students, particularly at the university level where advanced reading skills are essential for academic success.

Multiple research studies have identified various factors contributing to difficulties in learning English as a foreign language among Thai students, including environmental constraints, lack of reading habits, vocabulary limitations, comprehension challenges, grammatical difficulties, and limited personal experience with the language (Ritthirat & Shiramanee, 2014; Duangloy, 2015). However, one critical factor that remains underexplored specifically within the Thai undergraduate context is the role of reading anxiety.

Studies focused on foreign language reading comprehension indicate that affective factors, particularly anxiety, play a crucial role in determining reading outcomes (Bensalem, 2020; Ipek, 2009; Trang, Moni & Baldauf, 2012; Tinwong, 2011; Aisyah, 2017; MacIntyre, 2017; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Sellers, 2000). According to Ipek (2009), anxiety can have both beneficial and adverse impacts on foreign language learners. Research has consistently demonstrated negative correlations between reading anxiety and performance; Rajab's (2012) research showed that higher anxiety levels were associated with lower text recall. Similarly, Shi & Liu (2006) established that foreign language reading anxiety is more prevalent among learners with poorer reading test performance.

However, there remains a significant gap in understanding the specific manifestations, causes, and implications of reading anxiety among Thai undergraduate EFL students. This population faces unique challenges shaped by Thailand's educational environment, sociolinguistic context, and cultural approaches to learning. The Thai educational system's traditional emphasis on grammar-translation methods and rote memorization, rather than communicative competence, may exacerbate reading anxiety (Canagarajah, 2012). Additionally, limited exposure to authentic English materials outside the classroom and cultural tendencies toward high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2001) potentially contribute to heightened anxiety when encountering foreign texts.

The university context adds another layer of complexity, as undergraduate students face escalating demands for advanced academic reading skills while transitioning to more independent learning approaches. Understanding how reading anxiety manifests among Thai undergraduate English majors is particularly crucial, as these students not only need to master content knowledge but also develop professional-level language proficiency for their future careers.

This study therefore aims to address this research gap by investigating the levels, sources, and impact of reading anxiety specifically among Thai undergraduate English majors, whose academic success and professional development depend significantly on advanced reading comprehension abilities. By identifying the particular anxiety-inducing factors in this population, the research seeks to inform targeted pedagogical interventions that can enhance reading proficiency and academic achievement among Thai EFL undergraduate students.

Objective of the Study

This study aimed investigate English reading anxiety of undergraduate students at a government university in the south of Thailand.

Literature Review
Theoretical Foundations of EFL Reading

The acquisition of reading skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context has been extensively investigated over the past two decades, with researchers examining cognitive, linguistic, and affective dimensions of reading comprehension through an interactive lens. Grabe and Stoller's (2002, 2011, 2020) seminal work has significantly shaped the field by emphasizing that effective reading necessitates the integration of bottom-up decoding skills, top-down comprehension strategies, and the reader's background knowledge. Their research highlights fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and metacognitive awareness as crucial elements for developing reading proficiency. Grabe (2009) further emphasizes extensive reading's role in developing automaticity, arguing that sustained exposure to L2 texts enhances both linguistic competence and reading confidence. These theoretical foundations have informed subsequent research investigating the challenges faced by EFL learners, particularly regarding affective factors such as reading anxiety.

Koda's (2005) interactive-compensatory model provides additional theoretical grounding, proposing that readers compensate for deficiencies in one processing area by relying on strengths in another. When applied to EFL contexts, this model suggests that language learners with limited linguistic knowledge may compensate by employing stronger top-down strategies such as contextual guessing and background knowledge activation. However, as Bernhardt (2011) notes in her compensatory model of second language reading, this compensation is often incomplete, contributing to comprehension difficulties and potentially heightening anxiety when readers encounter texts beyond their linguistic capabilities.

Cognitive Factors in EFL Reading

The EFL reading process is influenced by various factors that can either facilitate or impede comprehension. Cognitive factors, including working memory capacity and cognitive load, play a critical role in determining how learners process textual information. Cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988; Sweller et al., 2019) posits that excessive demands on working memory can impede learning, a concept particularly relevant to L2 reading. Unfamiliar vocabulary, complex syntax, and culturally specific references can overwhelm learners, diverting cognitive resources away from comprehension (Yamashita, 2013; Jeon & Yamashita, 2014).

Research by Brantmeier (2005) revealed that linguistically challenging texts exacerbate cognitive load, leading to reduced comprehension and heightened anxiety. Similarly, Jeon and Yamashita's (2014) meta-analysis of L2 reading comprehension and its correlates demonstrated strong associations between reading comprehension and various linguistic knowledge components, including vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. When readers lack sufficient linguistic resources, the cognitive demands of processing L2 texts increase substantially, potentially triggering anxiety responses (Boers et al., 2020).

To address these challenges, Grabe and Stoller (2020) advocate for scaffolded reading instruction that balances text difficulty with learners' proficiency levels, thereby minimizing cognitive overload. Nation (2009) recommends that learners should recognize at least 95-98% of vocabulary in a text for adequate comprehension, suggesting that vocabulary thresholds play a significant role in determining cognitive processing ease and, by extension, anxiety levels during reading.

Affective Factors and Reading Anxiety

Affective factors, particularly reading anxiety, have been identified as significant barriers to EFL reading comprehension. Reading anxiety, a specific manifestation of language anxiety, is characterized by feelings of fear, frustration, and self-doubt when engaging with L2 texts (Saito, Garza, & Horwitz, 1999). Horwitz's (2001) influential work on foreign language anxiety has been extended to the reading domain, with researchers conceptualizing reading anxiety as a situation-specific form of anxiety that interferes with the cognitive processes necessary for effective reading.

Research has consistently demonstrated that reading anxiety negatively correlates with reading performance (Zhang, 2000; Zhao, 2009; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Al-Sohbani, 2018). Anxious readers typically exhibit slower reading speeds, reduced comprehension, and avoidance behaviors, which hinder their ability to engage meaningfully with texts (Zhang, 2000; Sellers, 2000). Sellers (2000) found that highly anxious readers recalled significantly less passage content and experienced more off-task thoughts during reading than their less anxious counterparts. These findings align with Grabe and Stoller's (2011) assertion that affective factors, including anxiety, can disrupt the cognitive processes essential for effective reading.

Recent neuroimaging studies have provided physiological evidence for anxiety's impact on reading processes. Zhou et al. (2017) used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to demonstrate that elevated anxiety levels during L2 reading tasks corresponded with increased activation in brain regions associated with negative emotions and decreased activation in areas responsible for language processing. This research offers compelling evidence that reading anxiety operates at both psychological and neurological levels, further complicating the reading process for EFL learners.

Metacognitive Strategies and Reading Anxiety

The interplay between reading anxiety and metacognitive strategies has garnered increasing attention in recent research. Metacognitive strategies, such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's reading process, are critical for effective comprehension (Zhang & Zhang, 2013; Oxford, 2017). These strategies enable readers to regulate their cognitive processes, allocate attentional resources effectively, and overcome comprehension obstacles (Anderson, 2008; Phakiti, 2008).

However, anxious learners often struggle to employ these strategies effectively, as their cognitive resources are consumed by worry and self-doubt (Zhao, 2009; Alkhateeb, 2022). Eysenck and Calvo's (1992) processing efficiency theory, later expanded as attentional control theory (Eysenck et al., 2007), explains this phenomenon by proposing that anxiety impairs the efficiency of the central executive functions of working memory, which are essential for metacognitive control.

Interventions aimed at reducing reading anxiety have focused on strategy training, with promising results. For instance, Huang (2016) demonstrated that explicit instruction in metacognitive strategies significantly reduced reading anxiety and improved comprehension among EFL learners. Similarly, Chen et al. (2018) found that a metacognitive strategy intervention helped anxious readers develop greater confidence and improved their ability to monitor comprehension. Sheorey and Mokhtari's (2001) work on cross-cultural variations in metacognitive awareness during reading suggests that strategic readers across cultures demonstrate greater awareness of and control over their reading processes, which may serve as a buffer against anxiety.

These findings underscore the potential of strategy-based interventions to mitigate the negative effects of anxiety on reading performance. Chamot's (2009) Strategy Instruction Model provides a structured framework for integrating metacognitive strategy instruction into reading classrooms, potentially offering a pathway to anxiety reduction through enhanced strategic competence.

Cultural and Contextual Factors

Cultural and contextual factors further complicate the relationship between reading anxiety and L2 reading proficiency. Learners from cultures with high power distance or those who prioritize accuracy over fluency may experience heightened reading anxiety due to fear of making mistakes (Liu, 2006; Huang, 2012). Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions theory offers a framework for understanding how cultural differences might influence anxiety levels and learning behaviors. For example, students from collectivist cultures with high uncertainty avoidance, like Thailand, may experience greater anxiety when faced with ambiguous reading tasks or unfamiliar text structures (Khamkhien, 2010).

Additionally, the instructional context, including teacher expectations and classroom dynamics, can influence learners' anxiety levels (Young, 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Grabe and Stoller (2020) advocate for culturally responsive pedagogy that acknowledges learners' diverse backgrounds and fosters a supportive learning environment. Research indicates that collaborative reading activities and peer support can alleviate reading anxiety by promoting a sense of belonging and reducing the fear of judgment (Kuru Gönen, 2009; Lee, 2016).

Cultural differences in reading practices and literacy traditions also play a role in shaping reading anxiety (Koda & Zehler, 2008). For instance, Thai students' traditional emphasis on literal comprehension and rote memorization may conflict with Western academic expectations for critical reading and interpretation (Khamkhien, 2010; Wannaruk, 2008). This cultural dissonance can create anxiety when Thai students encounter texts requiring analytical approaches unfamiliar to their educational background.

Measurement of Reading Anxiety

To assess reading anxiety levels, researchers have developed and utilized various instruments, with the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) being one of the most widely adopted tools. Initially developed by Saito et al. (1999), the FLRAS has been adapted and validated in numerous studies to measure the specific anxieties EFL learners experience during reading tasks. The scale comprises 20 items addressing various

aspects of reading anxiety, including unfamiliar scripts and writing systems, cultural content, and comprehension concerns.

Zhang (2017) employed the FLRAS to investigate reading anxiety among Chinese EFL learners, revealing a strong correlation between high anxiety levels and poor reading performance. Similarly, Al-Shboul et al. (2013) used the FLRAS to explore reading anxiety among Jordanian EFL students, identifying unfamiliar cultural content and fear of making errors as primary anxiety triggers. More recently, researchers have developed context-specific instruments to capture the unique anxieties experienced by learners in different cultural and educational settings. For example, Zoghi (2012) further developed the FLRAS for EFL contexts in particular and added two more factors—students' reading skills and teachers' teaching methods. The questionnaire was renamed 'English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory' (EFLRAI). The sources of reading anxiety described in the EFLRAI were comprehensive and specific as readers, texts, and instructors (Zoghi, 2012). The study conducted by Vibulphol and Miao (2021) thus employed EFLRAI to investigate the factors affecting Chinese university students' EFL reading anxiety.

Other measurement approaches include qualitative methods such as stimulated recall interviews (Zhao et al., 2016), think-aloud protocols (Sellers, 2000), and classroom observations (Lee, 2016), which provide rich, contextual data about learners' anxiety experiences. Mixed-methods approaches that combine quantitative scales with qualitative data collection have proven particularly effective in capturing the multidimensional nature of reading anxiety (Bektas-Cetinkaya, 2011; Huang, 2012).

Based on the reviewed literature, a comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding EFL reading anxiety among Thai undergraduate students is proposed. This framework, visualized in Figure 1, integrates cognitive, affective, metacognitive, and cultural dimensions of the reading process and illustrates their interrelationships.

FIGURE 1. Conceptual Framework for EFL Reading Anxiety
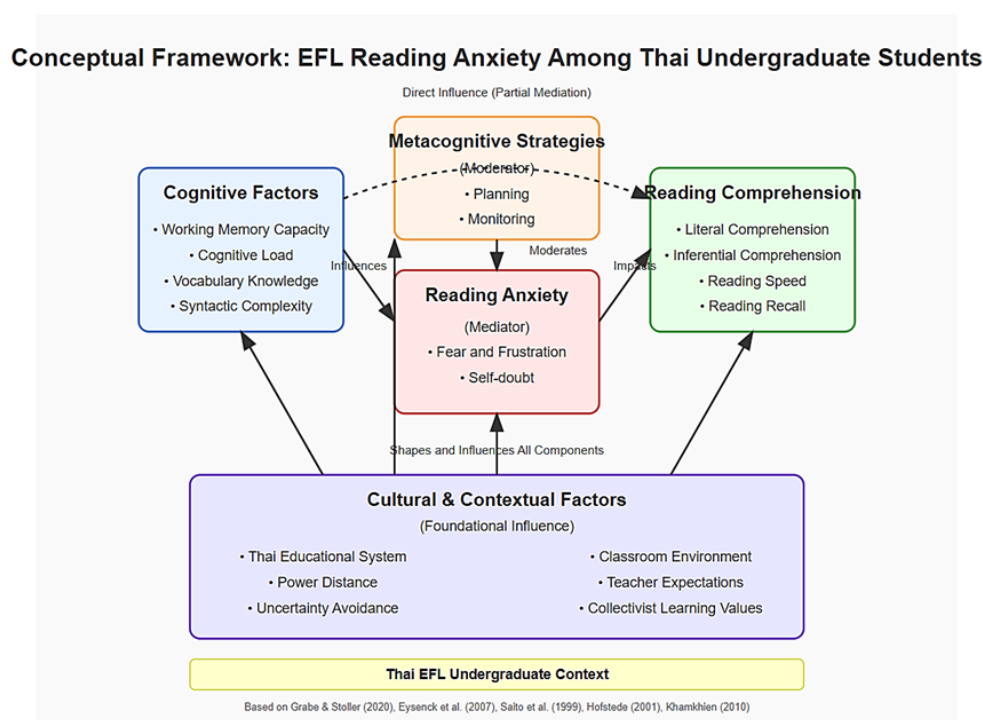
This conceptual framework provides a comprehensive lens for examining EFL reading anxiety among Thai undergraduate students, accounting for the complex interplay of cognitive, affective, metacognitive, and cultural factors that shape their reading experiences. By identifying the mediating role of anxiety and the moderating potential of metacognitive strategies, the framework offers clear pathways for pedagogical intervention to enhance reading outcomes in this population.

Method

This survey research provided quantitative data. Quantitative data was derived from numerical data through statistics. After completing a questionnaire on the amount of anxiety while reading English. The methodology for conducting research is as follows:

Participants and Settings

The study was conducted at a government university in the south of Thailand in 2022. The population consisted of first-year undergraduate students enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2022 at a Thai university. By referring to numbers from the main database system that lists the names of students in each year of enrollment, there are a total of 2,552 people.

The samples were 130 first-year English majors enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2022 at the Thai university, selected by purposive sampling technique.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in the research was the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) developed by Saito et al. (1999) has a total of 20 items. It was translated in to Thai by Taylor & Torudom (2017). The questionnaire is divided into 2 parts:

Part 1: **General information of the respondents. The respondents were asked to specify their gender, age range, and field of study.**

Part 2: **Questions about the level of anxiety in reading English.**

The entire questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale as follows:

1 means "strongly disagree"
2 means "disagree"
3 means "feeling neutral"
4 means "agree"
5 means "most agree

The negatively worded items were reverse scored, so that high scores on the anxiety instrument represented high levels of anxiety. The Cronbach's analysis of scale reliability was .88, which indicated that the scale was a reliable measure of reading anxiety.

Comparative assessment according to the criteria of the Likert Scale, which has 5 levels (Bunchom Srisa-at, 1992)

4.51 – 5.00 means most agree
3.51 – 4.50 means very much agree
2.51 – 3.50 means moderate agreement
1.51 – 2.50 means little agreement
1.00 – 1.50 means least agreement

Procedure

Data were collected online. Consent was gained from the students prior to participation. Participants who volunteered to answer the survey were briefed about the purpose of the study. They were assured of the confidentiality of all shared background information. Completion of the questionnaire was anonymous. The questionnaire was translated into Thai by Taylor & Torudom (2017). The researcher worked with the assumption that a Thai version would increase the participation rate as students were more comfortable with Thai. The survey took about 15-20 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by frequency, mean, and standard deviation

Result

TABLE 1. Demographic Data of the Participants

Response Items	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Response
Sex		
Male	30	23.1
Female	100	76.9
Age		
17 – 19	128	98.5
20 – 24	2	1.5
Field of Study		
B.A. English	53	40.8
B.A. English for Hospitality Business	46	35.4
B.Ed. English	31	23.8
Total	**130**	**100.00**

Table1. summarizes the demographic data of the participants. The majority of the sample were female, 100 people, accounting for 76.9 percent, and males, 30 people, accounting for 23.1 percent. It was found that the majority of the sample was aged 17 - 19 years, numbering 128 people, accounting for 98.5 percent, followed by those aged 20 - 24 years, accounting for 1.5 percent. It was found that the majority of the sample studied the B.A. program in English, 53 people, accounting for 40.8 percent, studied the B.A. program in English for Business Services, 46 people, accounting for 35.4 percent, and studied the B.Ed. program. English: 31 people, accounting for 23.8 percent.

TABLE 2. English Reading Anxiety Scores on FLRAS

Statement	$\overline{x}$	SD
1. When I don't understand for sure what I'm reading in English, I get frustrated.	4.35	0.85
2. I often understand the words of a text in English but I can't grasp what the author is saying.	4.41	0.72
3. When I'm reading a text in English, I often get very confused so much so I can't remember the content I'm reading	4.45	0.77
4. It is very intimidating to read a whole page in English.	4.76	0.43
5. When I read a text in English with an unfamiliar topic I get nervous.	4.50	0.66
6. When I read a passage in English and come across unknown grammar I get upset.	4.15	0.54
7. I get confused and nervous if I don't understand each word of the text that I'm reading in English.	4.15	0.62
8. It is annoying to come across words that are hard to pronounce when reading a text in English.	4.15	0.65
9. I generally resort to word-by-word translation when I'm reading a passage in English.	4.69	0.74
10. I usually forget what I'm reading about once I pass the unfamiliar letters in English.	4.62	0.67
11. I am concerned about phonics rules I have to learn in order to read a text in English.	4.56	0.78
12. Reading a passage in English is fun.*	1.82	1.11
13. I read passages in English with confidence.*	1.67	0.84
14. Reading English texts becomes easy once one gets used to it.*	1.70	1.11
15. Learning how to read is the most difficult task of learning English.	4.04	1.19
16. I would be more interested in learning to speak English rather than learning to read English.	2.79	0.96
17. I would rather read English to myself than read aloud as that makes me feel uncomfortable.	4.22	1.20
18. I am not satisfied with my current level of reading ability in English.	2.71	1.52
19. I'm not familiar with Anglo-Saxon culture and ideas.	4.05	1.03
20. Knowledge about Anglo-Saxon history and culture is necessary in order to be able to read English.	4.35	0.87
Total	**3.8**	**0.26**

*Note. *Items are reverse-coded*

Table 2 presents the English reading anxiety scores derived from the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS). The table lists 20 statements related to students' experiences and perceptions when reading in English, along with their mean ($\overline{X}$) and standard deviations (S.D.), followed by the corresponding level of agreement.

The overall mean score for English reading anxiety is 3.8 (S.D. = 0.26), indicating a high level of anxiety among the participants. Statements such as "When I don't understand for sure what I'm reading in English I get frustrated" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.35, S.D. = 0.85) and "I often understand the words of a text in English but I can't grasp what the author is saying" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.41, S.D. = 0.72) show a strong agreement, reflecting considerable frustration and difficulty in comprehension. The statement "When I'm reading a text in English I often get very confused so much so I can't remember the content I'm reading" has one of the highest mean scores ($\overline{X}$ = 4.45, S.D. = 0.77), further emphasizing the high anxiety levels linked to confusion during reading. Reading a whole page in English is perceived as highly intimidating ($\overline{X}$ = 4.76, S.D. = 0.43), showing the highest mean score, indicating significant anxiety about volume and content comprehension. Participants also express nervousness when encountering unfamiliar topics ($\overline{X}$ = 4.50, S.D. = 0.66) and unknown grammar ($\overline{X}$ = 4.15, S.D. = 0.54), highlighting specific anxiety triggers. Statements about confusion due to not understanding each word ($\overline{X}$ = 4.15, S.D. = 0.62) and annoyance at difficult pronunciation ($\overline{X}$ = 4.15, S.D. = 0.65) further illustrate the challenges faced by the respondents. Resorting to word-by-word translation (x = 4.69, S.D. = 0.74) and forgetting content due to unfamiliar letters ($\overline{X}$ = 4.62, S.D. = 0.67) indicate reliance on translation and memory issues. Concerns about phonics rules ($\overline{X}$ = 4.56, S.D. = 0.78) indicate anxiety about the technical aspects of reading English.

Reverse-coded items like "Reading a passage in English is fun" ($\overline{X}$ = 1.82, S.D. = 1.11) and "I read passages in English with confidence" ($\overline{X}$ = 1.67, S.D. = 0.84) suggest that participants generally disagree with these positive sentiments, indicating higher anxiety.

There is a moderate agreement that participants would rather speak than read English ($\overline{X}$ = 2.79, S.D. = 0.96). Statements indicating unfamiliarity with Anglo-Saxon culture (x = 4.05, S.D. = 1.03) and the necessity of such knowledge for reading English ($\overline{X}$ = 4.35, S.D. = 0.87) underline the cultural barriers affecting reading confidence.

Discussion

The findings reveal the English reading anxiety scores derived from the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS), providing valuable insights into the specific anxieties experienced by EFL learners when engaging with English texts. The overall mean score of 3.8 (S.D. = 0.26) indicates a high level of reading anxiety among the participants, consistent with findings from previous studies that have identified reading anxiety as a significant barrier to EFL reading comprehension (Saito, Garza, & Horwitz, 1999; Zhang, 2000; Zhao, 2009). This discussion will analyze the key findings from the table in light of academic research, focusing on the cognitive, affective, and cultural factors that contribute to reading anxiety.

Cognitive and affective factors in reading anxiety

The high mean scores for statements such as "When I don't understand for sure what I'm reading in English, I get frustrated" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.35) and "I often understand the words of a text in English but I can't grasp what the author is saying" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.41) reflect the cognitive and affective challenges faced by EFL learners. These findings align with Grabe and Stoller's (2011) assertion that reading comprehension is a complex process that requires the integration of bottom-up decoding skills and top-down comprehension strategies. When learners struggle to connect individual words to the overall meaning of a text, they experience frustration and confusion, which can exacerbate anxiety (Zhang, 2000). This is further supported by the statement "When I'm reading a text in English, I often get very confused so much so I can't remember the content I'm reading" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.45), which highlights the cognitive overload experienced by anxious readers. Cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988) posits that excessive demands on working memory can impede learning, and in the context of EFL reading, unfamiliar vocabulary and complex syntax can overwhelm learners, diverting cognitive resources away from comprehension (Yamashita, 2013).

The statement "It is very intimidating to read a whole page in English" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.76) received the highest mean score, indicating that the volume and complexity of English texts are significant sources of anxiety. This finding is consistent with Brantmeier's (2005) research, which found that linguistically challenging texts ex-

acerbate cognitive load and anxiety, leading to reduced comprehension. Additionally, the nervousness expressed when encountering unfamiliar topics ($\overline{X}$ = 4.50) and unknown grammar ($\overline{X}$ = 4.15) underscores the role of linguistic and content-related challenges in triggering reading anxiety. These findings suggest that EFL learners may benefit from scaffolded reading instruction that gradually introduces more complex texts, as advocated by Grabe and Stoller (2020).

Reliance on translation and memory issues

The high mean scores for statements such as "I generally resort to word-by-word translation when I'm reading a passage in English" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.69) and "I usually forget what I'm reading about once I pass the unfamiliar letters in English" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.62) indicate a reliance on translation and memory issues, which are common among anxious EFL readers. Zhang (2000) found that anxious readers often exhibit slower reading speeds and reduced comprehension due to their reliance on word-by-word translation, which disrupts the flow of reading and hinders overall understanding. This reliance on translation may stem from a lack of confidence in their ability to comprehend texts holistically, as reflected in the reverse-coded statement "I read passages in English with confidence" ($\overline{X}$ = 1.67), which received a low mean score. These findings highlight the need for instructional strategies that promote fluency and automaticity in reading, such as extensive reading programs (Grabe, 2009). In addition, this also indicates a need for instructional strategies that promote holistic understanding and contextual guessing strategies rather than over-reliance on direct translation (Inal, 2021)

Technical challenges

Technical aspects of reading, such as phonics rules and pronunciation difficulties, also contribute to reading anxiety. Participants' concern about phonics rules ($\overline{X}$ = 4.56) and the annoyance at hard-to-pronounce words ($\overline{X}$ = 4.15) reflect anxiety associated with decoding and phonological processing, supported by Cheng (2002) and Macdonald et al. (2021) emphasized the role of phonological awareness in reading anxiety.

Cultural familiarity

Cultural factors also play a significant role in shaping EFL learners' reading anxiety. The statements "I'm not familiar with Anglo-Saxon culture and ideas" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.05) and "Knowledge about Anglo-Saxon history and culture is necessary in order to be able to read English"

($\overline{X}$ = 4.35) reflect the cultural barriers that contribute to reading anxiety. Liu (2006) found that learners from cultures with high power distance or those who prioritize accuracy over fluency may experience heightened anxiety due to fear of making mistakes. Additionally, unfamiliar cultural content in texts can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and confusion, as noted by Al-Shboul et al. (2013). These findings underscore the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy that acknowledges learners' diverse backgrounds and incorporates culturally relevant materials into the curriculum (Grabe & Stoller, 2020).

Positive experiences and preferences

Interestingly, reverse-coded items such as "Reading a passage in English is fun" ($\overline{X}$ = 1.82) and "I read passages in English with confidence" ($\overline{X}$ = 1.67) show that positive experiences are not common among the participants. This suggests a predominantly negative perception of reading in English, reinforcing the need for creating more positive and supportive reading experiences. Additionally, the preference for speaking over reading ($\overline{X}$ = 2.79) indicates that oral proficiency might be more valued or less anxiety-inducing, a pattern observed in previous studies by Gregersen & Horwitz (2002) and Tsang (2022)

Pedagogical Implcations
Instruction in Reading Strategies

A key method for alleviating English reading anxiety is the explicit instruction of reading strategies. Teaching learners how to effectively employ strategies such as previewing, skimming, scanning, and summarizing equips them with tools to navigate texts more confidently. Empirical evidence suggests that strategy instruction not only enhances reading comprehension but also contributes to a significant reduction in anxiety levels (Hamid & Payam, 2017; Liao & Wang, 2018; Valizadeh, 2021). By internalizing these strategies, learners become more autonomous and better prepared to handle challenging reading tasks, which, in turn, fosters a more positive affective response to reading in English.

Use of Comprehensible and Engaging Materials

The selection of reading materials is another crucial factor in mitigating reading anxiety. Materials that are appropriately aligned with learners' language proficiency—featuring familiar vocabulary, accessible syntax, and culturally relevant topics—can ease cognitive load and enhance comprehension. Furthermore, the integration of authentic and engaging texts, such as current news articles or narrative stories, has been shown to boost learner motivation and interest, thus reducing affective barriers to reading (Lien, 2011; Wijaya, 2022). Carefully curated reading materials can foster a more enjoyable and less intimidating reading experience.

Creation of a Supportive Classroom Environment

A supportive and low-anxiety classroom atmosphere is fundamental in reducing English reading anxiety. Instructors play a pivotal role in establishing a positive learning environment through encouragement, constructive feedback, and the promotion of a growth mindset. Collaborative activities and peer support further contribute to an inclusive atmosphere where learners feel safe to take risks. Additionally, fostering learner autonomy through practices such as extensive reading programs can bolster students' confidence and reading fluency, ultimately leading to reduced anxiety (Abbasnezhad & Zoghi, 2016; Lien, 2011).

Metacognitive Strategy Instruction

The incorporation of metacognitive strategy instruction has also demonstrated effectiveness in reducing English reading anxiety. Strategies that promote learners' ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their reading processes increase their metacognitive awareness and self-regulation skills. Research indicates that when learners are trained to apply such strategies, they not only improve their comprehension performance but also develop greater resilience in the face of reading difficulties, thereby experiencing lower levels of anxiety (Ghaith, 2020; Kim, 2021). Enhancing learners' metacognitive control may thus serve as a key component in anxiety-reduction interventions.

Recommendation for Further Research

Further studies should be conducted to identify the exact types of texts that generate the most anxiety, as well as to discover methods that may successfully minimize reading anxiety. Longitudinal research could shed light on how anxiety levels evolve over time with various instructional approaches. Understanding the relationship between reading and other language skills can potentially provide an expanded overview of language learning anxiety.

Finally, the high levels of English reading anxiety observed in this study highlight the need for targeted instructional strategies and additional research to assist students in overcoming these challenges and achieving reading proficiency in English.

The Authors

Salila Pettong is an English lecturer at Songkhla Rajabhat University, Thailand. She holds a Ph.D. in English as an International Language (EIL) from Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. Her areas of interest include learning strategies, second/foreign language reading, and digital literacy.
Email: salila.vo@skru.ac.th

Suchanan Suneewong is an undergraduate English major at Songkhla Rajabhat University.
Email: ssuneewong@gmail.com

Chakkraphong Wannarat is an undergraduate English major at Songkhla Rajabhat University.
Email: BKChak@gmail.com

Authors' Contributions

Salila Pettong – Conceptualization, Research Design, Statistical Analysis, Data Analysis & Discussion, Manuscript Writing (revised it critically for important intellectual content)
Suchanan Suneewong – Data Collection, Draft Manuscript
Chakkraphong Wannarat - Data Collection, Draft Manuscript

References

Abbasnezhad, H., & Zoghi, M. (2016). The impact of extensive reading on EFL learners' reading anxiety and reading comprehension. *International Journal of Research in English Education,* 1(1), 42–54.

Aisyah, J. (2017). The relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension among EFL learners. *Journal of English and Education,* 5(2), 1-10.

Al-Shboul, M. M., Ahmad, I. S., Nordin, M. S., & Rahman, Z. A. (2013). Foreign language reading anxiety in a Jordanian EFL context: A qualitative study. *English Language Teaching*, 6(6), 38-56.

Al-Sohbani, Y. A. (2018). Foreign language reading anxiety among Yemeni secondary school students. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies,* 6(1), 57-65.

Alkhateeb, H. M. (2022). The relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and reading comprehension: A meta-analysis. *Reading Psychology, 43*(1), 49-75.

Anderson, N. J. (2008). Metacognition and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Ed.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp. 99-109). Cambridge University Press.

Bektas-Cetinkaya, Y. (2011). Foreign language reading anxiety: A Turkish case. *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning,* 1(2), 44-56.

Bensalem, E. (2020). Foreign language reading anxiety: Causes and solutions. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,* 11(3), 449-456.

Bernhardt, E. B. (2011). *Understanding advanced second-language reading.* Routledge.

Boers, F., Warren, P., Grimshaw, G., & Siyanova-Chanturia, A. (2020). On the benefits of multimodal annotations for vocabulary uptake from reading. *Computer Assisted Language Learning,* 33(1-2), 31-52.

Brantmeier, C. (2005). Anxiety about L2 reading or L2 reading tasks? A study with advanced language learners. *The Reading Matrix,* 5(2), 67-85.

Bunchom Srisa-at. (1992). *Research methods in social sciences.* Bangkok: Suweeriyasan.

Canagarajah, S. (2012). Teacher development in a global profession: An autoethnography. *TESOL Quarterly,* 46(2), 258-279.

Chamot, A. U. (2009). The CALLA handbook: *Implementing the cognitive academic language learning approach* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.

Chen, C. M., Li, M. C., & Chen, T. C. (2018). A web-based collaborative reading annotation system with gamification mechanisms to improve reading performance. *Computers & Education*, 127, 130-145.

Cheng, Y. (2002). Factors associated with foreign language writing anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals,* 35(5), 647-656.

Duangloy, S. (2015). Factors affecting English reading comprehension of Thai undergraduate students. *Journal of Education, Mahasarakham University,* 9(4), 1-10.

Eysenck, M. W., Derakshan, N., Santos, R., & Calvo, M. G. (2007). Anxiety and cognitive performance: *Attentional control theory. Emotion,* 7(2), 336-353.

Ghaith, G. (2020). Foreign language reading anxiety and metacognitive strategies in undergraduates' reading comprehension. *Issues in Educational Research,* 30(4), 1310–1328.

Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice.* Cambridge University Press.

Grabe, W. (2014). Key issues in L2 reading development. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 26(1), 1-31.

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2002). *Teaching and researching reading.* Pearson Education.

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2011). *Teaching and researching reading* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2020). *Teaching and researching reading* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Gregersen, T., & Horwitz, E. K. (2002). Language learning and perfectionism: Anxious and non-anxious language learners' reactions to their own oral performance. *The Modern Language Journal,* 86(4), 562-570.

Hamid, M. R., & Payam, M. R. (2017). The effect of teaching reading strategies on EFL learners' reading anxiety and reading comprehension. *International Journal of Educational Investigations*, 4(8), 1–15.

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Horwitz, E. K. (2001). Language anxiety and achievement. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, 112-126.

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal,* 70(2), 125-132.

Huang, H. (2016). The effects of metacognitive reading strategy training on reading anxiety and reading comprehension of EFL learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,* 7(6), 1147-1154.

Huang, H. Y. (2016). Students and the teacher's perceptions on incorporating the blog task and peer feedback into EFL writing classes through blogs. *English Language Teaching,* 9(11), 38-47.

Huang, Q. (2012). Study on correlation of foreign language anxiety and English reading anxiety. *Theory and Practice in Language Studie*s, 2(7), 1520-1525.

Inal, S. (2021). The role of translation in foreign language reading comprehension. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies,* 17(1), 1-15.

Ipek, H. (2009). Comparing and contrasting first and second language acquisition: Implications for language teachers. *English Language Teaching,* 2(2), 155-163.

Jeon, E. H., & Yamashita, J. (2014). L2 reading comprehension and its correlates: A meta-analysis. *Language Learning*, 64(1), 160-212.

Kim, H. I. (2021). The underlying factors of foreign language reading anxiety: Their effects on strategy use and orientation toward reading. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 11(2), 213–234.

Koda, K. (2005). *Insights into second language reading: A cross-linguistic approach.* Cambridge University Press.

Koda, K., & Zehler, A. M. (2008). *Learning to read across languages: Cross-linguistic relationships in first- and second-language literacy development.* Routledge.

Khamkhien, A. (2010). Teaching English speaking and English speaking tests in the Thai context: A reflection from Thai perspective. *English Language Teaching,* 3(1), 184-190.

Kraikung Anakkhakul. (2015). The relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension among Thai EFL learners. *Journal of Education, Mahasarakham University,* 9(4), 1-10.

Kuru Gönen, S. I. (2009). The relationship between students' reading anxiety and their reading comprehension. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies,* 5(1), 1-15.

Lee, J. (2016). Exploring non-native English-speaking teachers' beliefs about the monolingual approach: Differences between pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development,* 37(8), 759-773.

Lien, H.-Y. (2011). EFL Learners' Reading Strategy Use in Relation to Reading Anxiety. *Language Education in Asia,* 2(2), 199–212.

Liao, H.-C., & Wang, Y. (2018). Using comprehension strategies for students' self-efficacy, anxiety, and proficiency in reading English as a foreign language. *Social Behavior and Personality,* 46(3), 447–458.

Liu, M. (2006). Anxiety in Chinese EFL students at different proficiency levels. *System*, 34(3), 301-316.

Macdonald, D., Badger, R., & White, G. (2021). The role of phonological awareness in reading anxiety. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research,* 50(3), 567-582.

MacIntyre, P. D. (2017). An overview of language anxiety research and trends in its development. New Insights into Language Anxiety: Theory, *Research and Educational Implications,* 1(1), 11-30.

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1989). Anxiety and second-language learning: Toward a theoretical clarification. *Language Learning,* 39(2), 251-275.

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The subtle effects of language anxiety on cognitive processing in the second language. *Language Learning,* 44(2), 283-305.

Miao, Q., & Vibulphol, J. (2021). English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety of Chinese University Students. *International Education Studies,* 14(3), 64-71.

Ministry of Education. (2008). *Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551* (A.D. 2008). Bangkok: Ministry of Education.

Nation, I. S. P. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL reading and writing.* Routledge.

Nathinee Tinwong. (2011). The relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension among Thai EFL learners. *Journal of Education, Mahasarakham University,* 9(4), 1-10.

Office of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards. (2011). *Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E.* 2554 (A.D. 2011). Bangkok: Ministry of Education.

Oxford, R. L. (2017). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies: Self-regulation in context* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Phakiti, A. (2008). Construct validation of Bachman and Palmer's (1996) strategic competence model over time in EFL reading tests. *Language Testing*, 25(2), 237-272.

Rajab, A. (2012). The relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension among EFL learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,* 3(5), 931-938.

Ritthirat, N., & Chiramanee, T. (2014). Factors affecting English reading comprehension ability: A case study of Thai undergraduate students. *Journal of Education, Mahasarakham University,* 9(4), 1-10.

Saito, Y., Garza, T. J., & Horwitz, E. K. (1999). Foreign language reading anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal,* 83(2), 202-218.

Sellers, V. D. (2000). Anxiety and reading comprehension in Spanish as a foreign language. *Foreign Language Annals,* 33(5), 512-520.

Shi, Y., & Liu, Z. (2006). A study of the relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research,* 38(5), 272-277.

Sweller, J. (1988). Cognitive load during problem solving: Effects on learning. *Cognitive Science,* 12(2), 257-285.

Sweller, J., van Merriënboer, J. J. G., & Paas, F. (2019). Cognitive architecture and instructional design: 20 years later. *Educational Psychology Review,* 31(2), 261-292.

Trang, T. T. T., Moni, K., & Baldauf, R. B. (2012). Foreign language anxiety and its effects on students' determination to study English: To abandon or not to abandon? *TESOL in Context,* 3, 1-14.

Taylor, P., & Torudom, K. (2017). Translation and validation of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) into Thai. *Journal of Language and Education,* 3(1), 45-60.

Trang, T. T. T., Moni, K., & Baldauf, R. B. (2012). Foreign language anxiety: Understanding its status and insiders' awareness and attitudes. *TESOL Quarterly,* 46(4), 669-694.

Tsang, A. (2022). Oral proficiency and reading anxiety in EFL learners. *Journal of Language and Education,* 8(2), 67-82.

Valizadeh, M. (2021). The Effect of Reading Comprehension Strategies Instruction on EFL Learners' Reading Anxiety Level. *Education* 3-13, 9, 53–58.

Wannaruk, A. (2008). Pragmatic transfer in Thai EFL refusals. *RELC Journal,* 39(3), 318-337.

Wijaya, K. F. (2022). Strategies to Overcome Foreign Language Reading Anxiety among Globalized EFL Learners. *SALEE,* 3(2), 138–152.

Yamashita, J. (2013). Effects of extensive reading on reading attitudes in a foreign language. *Reading in a Foreign Language,* 25(2), 248-263.

Young, D. J. (1991). Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: What does language anxiety research suggest? *The Modern Language Journal,* 75(4), 426-439.

Zhang, L. J. (2000). Foreign language reading anxiety and reading comprehension. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,* 1(1), 45-60.

Zhang, L. J., & Zhang, D. (2013). Thinking metacognitively about metacognition in second and foreign language learning, teaching, and research: Toward a dynamic metacognitive system perspective. *Contemporary Foreign Language Studies,* 396(12), 111-121.

Zhang, X. (2017). Reading anxiety among Chinese EFL learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,* 8(1), 45-60.

Zhao, A. (2009). Foreign language reading anxiety: Investigating English-speaking university students learning Chinese as a foreign language in the United States. *Foreign Language Annals,* 42(1), 89-106.

Zhao, A., Guo, Y., & Dynia, J. (2016). Foreign language reading anxiety: Chinese as a foreign language in the United States. *The Modern Language Journal,* 97(3), 764-778.

Zhou, Y., Wei, Y., Rosenberg, P., & Mo, L. (2017). Neural mechanism of foreign language anxiety: Evidence from an fMRI study. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research,* 5(18), 23-34.

Zoghi, M. (2012). An instrument for EFL reading anxiety: Inventory construction and preliminary validation. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 9(1), 31-56.

Enhancing Students' English Communication Skills: A Cooperative Learning Approach

Pittaya Yamo
Seksan Inchana
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Uttaradit Rajabhat University
Watcharee Wongthanet
Foreign Languages Program, Faculty of Education, Uttaradit Rajabhat University

Abstract

This qualitative study explored students' perspectives on developing English communication skills through cooperative learning strategies in a rural Thai secondary school. The participants were 30 seventh-grade students enrolled in the Enhancement Program of Mathematics and English, who took part in an English for Hospitality Industry course during the 2023 academic year. Data were collected through student reflective journals and analysed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed four major themes: vocabulary and communication, feelings about peer activities, favourite activities in English learning, and development of communication skills. The first theme consisted of three sub-themes: learning vocabulary, application English for hospitality contexts, and integrating language skills. The second theme was divided into three sub-themes: enjoyment and fun, sense of community, and relaxation and satisfaction. The third theme had three sub-themes: collaboration and teamwork, engaging with contextual vocabulary, and perceived instructional effectiveness. The last theme was made up of three sub-themes: improved communication abilities, increased cultural awareness, and growth in creativity and critical thinking. The results highlight the effectiveness of cooperative learning in fostering communicative competence, cultural awareness, and critical thinking. These insights are valuable for institutions seeking to refine instructional practices, for teachers designing collaborative learning tasks, and for students aiming to improve their English skills through interactive peer engagement.

Keywords: *English communication skill; cooperative learning strategy; peer interaction*

Introduction

Cooperative learning is an instructional approach that promotes teamwork and collaboration among students with diverse skills and backgrounds to achieve shared learning goals. Typically organised into small groups of four to six members, cooperative learning enables students to engage in meaningful tasks while exchanging knowledge and developing interpersonal skills (Kandasamy & Habil, 2018). Instructors play a key role as facilitators who provide guidance and supplementary resources to support student learning.

Effective cooperative learning is grounded in five core elements: positive interdependence, individual accountability, interpersonal and group skills, face-to-face interaction, and group processing. These elements not only foster academic development but also cultivate vital social skills such as leadership, communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution (Wang, 2020). By organising diverse groups and encouraging role assignment, this approach ensures equitable participation and active engagement, especially when supported by a learner-centred classroom environment.

From a second language acquisition (SLA) perspective, cooperative learning aligns with communicative language teaching principles, which emphasise authentic interaction and meaningful language use. When

learners negotiate meaning and scaffold each other's understanding through peer interaction, they activate both cognitive and social dimensions of language learning, which are crucial factors in developing communicative competence.

The integration of digital tools into cooperative learning further enhances language acquisition by offering access to multimedia resources, interactive tasks, and contextual language use. In rural educational settings where exposure to English and access to fluent speakers may be limited, digital tools can simulate authentic environments and extend opportunities for practice and engagement beyond the classroom.

In the Thai educational context, particularly in rural schools, students often face barriers to English language development due to outdated instructional methods and limited exposure to practical English use (Suwannaprut & Siriwan, 2019). These issues are especially critical in regions where traditional teaching focuses on grammar and rote memorisation, which leaves students underprepared for real-world communication demands.

To address these challenges, this study investigates the impact of cooperative learning strategies, supported by thematic, contextualised instruction, on the development of English communication skills among seventh-grade students in a rural Thai school. The study centers on students enrolled in an enrichment program for Mathematics and English, using qualitative data to explore their perceptions and experiences. By synthesising cooperative learning theory, SLA principles, and the application of digital tools, the research aims to provide insight into how collaborative classroom environments can improve communicative competence among young English learners in under-resourced areas.

Research Purpose and Question

The purpose of this study was to explore seventh-grade students' perspectives on developing English communication skills through cooperative learning activities. This exploration focuses on identifying how these strategies influence students' engagement, learning outcomes, and overall development of communication skills. To achieve this purpose, the study addressed the following research question:
- What are seventh-grade students' opinions on cooperative learning activities?

Research Context

This research was conducted at an opportunity expansion school located a rural province in northern Thailand. The region presents significant obstacles for English language learning, as limited tourism and a small number of foreign residents restrict students' exposure to the language outside the classroom. Consequently, students often perceive English as irrelevant to their daily lives compared to peers in more urbanised or tourist-oriented regions of the country.

The school primarily serves underprivileged students, many of whom come from small, insufficient schools in rural outlying areas. These schools often lack resources and qualified teachers, providing limited English instruction. Families with greater financial means tend to send their children to competitive provincial schools, leaving this school to cater to students from remote and under-resourced communities. As a result, students frequently face academic challenges, particularly in English, due to weak foundational skills. These difficulties are compounded by a shortage of qualified English teachers, with many instructors relying on outdated methods such as rote memorisation and grammar-focused instruction. These practices hinder the development of students' communicative competence.

To address these challenges, this study implemented cooperative learning strategies as practical and engaging tools to improve English proficiency. This approach aimed to foster a positive mindset toward English learning and support the development of lifelong learning skills. The study specifically focused on students enrolled in the "English for Hospitality Industry" course, a program designed by a public university in northern Thailand as part of its lifelong learning initiative. This course provided a structured environment to investigate how cooperative learning activities could enhance students' English communication skills.

Given the limited research on cooperative learning in rural Thai schools, this study provides insights into how such strategies can address the unique challenges faced by students in under-resourced settings.

Theoretical Frameworks
Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy that emphasises collaborative efforts among students to achieve shared learning objectives. In this approach, students work together in small groups, with each member held individually accountable for their learning while contributing to the group's success. Cooperative learning fosters positive interdependence, interpersonal skills, face-to-face interaction, and reflective processing (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). By actively engaging in this collaborative environment, students improve their communication skills and gain a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives.

This method enhances both motivation and academic performance. Research highlights that cooperative techniques, such as peer teaching and structured group discussions, promote greater information retention and engagement with learning materials (Slavin, 2014). Specifically, language instruction benefits from cooperative learning by providing real-world communication practice. For instance, strategies such as Rally Robin and Quiz Quiz Trade encourage active interaction, fostering language acquisition and social skills simultaneously (Kagan & Kagan, 2009). Teachers can create dynamic classroom environments that support lifelong learning principles by incorporating cooperative learning strategies, equipping students with essential skills for academic and professional success.

In summary, cooperative learning is a powerful instructional approach that promotes teamwork, individual accountability, and communication skills. It motivates students and improves academic performance, offering practical opportunities for authentic communication. By fostering collaboration and active engagement, cooperative learning prepares students for future academic and professional challenges.

Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition (SLA) refers to the process of learning a language beyond one's native tongue. In Thailand, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL), with instruction beginning as early as kindergarten. However, most Thai learners lack exposure to English outside of the classroom, significantly hindering their ability to develop fluency and communicative competence. Despite over a decade of English education, many Thai university students struggle with intralingual errors and insufficient grammar knowledge (Tipprachaban, 2023). Factors such as a predominantly Thai-speaking environment, limited L2 materials, and a lack of real-world English use further exacerbate these challenges.

Interestingly, despite these challenges, Thai EFL students remain highly motivated to improve their English skills. Research by Imsa-Ard (2020) highlights that encouraging students to engage in real-life language use based on their interests, such as travelling abroad or interacting with native speakers, could enhance their proficiency. Additionally, in the digital era, technology provides valuable opportunities for SLA. Digital resources, including internet-based tools, allow students to access supplementary learning materials both inside and outside the classroom (Kawaguchi, 2021). Instructors should design curricula that integrate technology to promote digital literacy and self-directed learning, equipping students with critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills. By leveraging digital tools and fostering collaboration, educators can support learners in developing essential competencies for the modern world (Kawinkoonlasate, 2020).

The English communication abilities of Thai EFL students can be greatly improved by integrating cooperative learning into second language acquisition (SLA). Rally Robin and Quiz Quiz Trade are two examples of cooperative learning techniques that promote peer interaction, active engagement, and cooperative problem-solving (Kagan & Kagan, 2009). These methods give students the chance to practise speaking English in everyday situations in a friendly group setting. Students can exchange knowledge, fix one another's errors, and gain confidence in their language skills by cooperating. Cooperative learning provides a dynamic platform for practicing conversational skills and applying grammar and vocabulary in context, addressing the enduring gaps in Thai learners' language proficiency. Thai learners are frequently not exposed to English outside of the classroom (Johnson & Johnson, 2017).
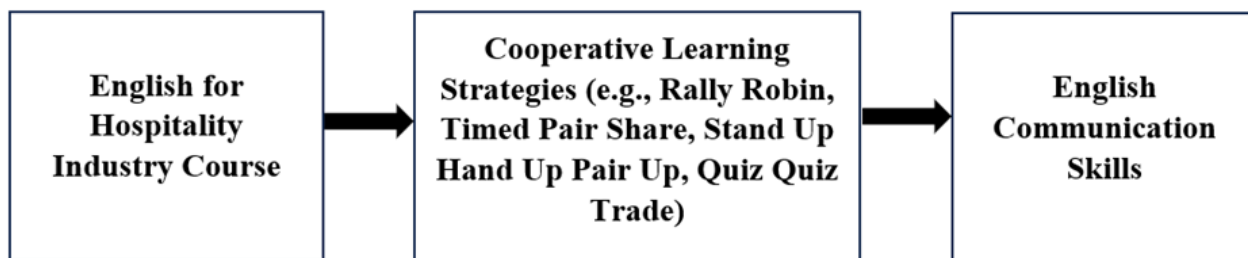
Cooperative learning enhances English communication abilities by giving students access to a variety of educational materials and real-world language experiences when paired with digital tools. For example, students can connect with native speakers, work together on group projects, or participate in virtual discussions using online platforms (Kawaguchi, 2021). Cooperative learning that incorporates technology not only inspires students but also supports their digital literacy, which is an essential 21st-century skill. By teaching students how to use digital tools for language practice and real-world communication, educators can promote language

proficiency and teamwork. Teachers can create a dynamic and engaging environment that encourages lifelong learning and gives students the communication skills they need for success in school and the workplace by fusing digital resources with cooperative learning (Kawinkoonlasate, 2020).

English Communication Skills Development Through Cooperative Learning

The framework in the figure below shows how cooperative learning strategies help improve English communication skills in this study.

FIGURE 1. English Communication Skills using Cooperative Learning Framework

As shown in Figure 1, cooperative learning strategies such as Rally Robin and Quiz Quiz Trade were used to improve English communication skills (listening, speaking, and vocabulary) as part of the university's English for Hospitality Industry course. This framework was used as a guideline to improve not only students' listening and speaking skills, but also their reading and writing skills, because cooperative learning strategies require students to integrate all four English skills while taking the chosen course for 45 hours of study time.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research methodology within the interpretivism framework to investigate English communication skills. A qualitative approach was chosen to capture the richness and nuance of students' perspectives, given the direct influence of their experiences on language skill development. The study's research design is illustrated in Figure 2, which outlines the key steps and processes involved in data collection and analysis. The use of reflective journals allowed for the collection of detailed and context-specific data, offering a comprehensive view of the students' experiences (Silverman, 2013).

The interpretive nature of the study facilitated an exploration of "how" and "what" questions related to English communication skills. This focus enabled researchers to examine the interactions, motivations, and challenges students faced while learning these skills. By analysing qualitative data through this lens, the study uncovered significant patterns and insights that address the barriers to effective communication in English. These findings are particularly relevant in the context of lifelong learning and skill development (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

FIGURE 2. Research Design
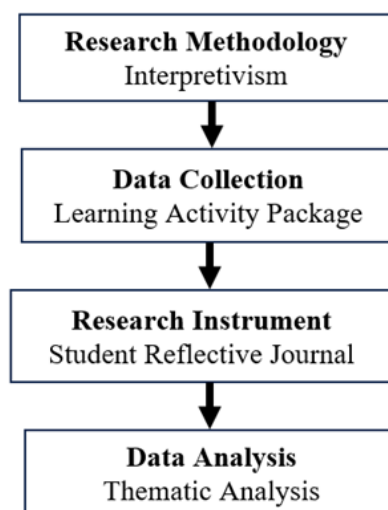
To ensure a rigorous analysis, the study followed a systematic process for data collection and interpretation. Reflective journals captured students' thoughts and feelings over time, offering a better understanding of how cooperative learning impacted their communication skills.

English for Hospitality Industry Course

This study was conducted as part of the "English for Hospitality Industry" course offered by the university's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Designed by the Business English Program, this course aligns with the study's objective of enhancing English communication skills through cooperative learning strategies.

The course was specifically chosen due to its relevance to the research questions, which focused on improving English communication skills and exploring students' experiences with cooperative learning activities. Targeting seventh-grade students in the Mathematics and English enrichment program, the course provided a structured framework for implementing and evaluating cooperative learning techniques. Its real-world application of language skills made it an ideal setting to investigate how collaborative activities could promote lifelong learning abilities.

Purposive sampling was used to select this course as an information-rich case that directly addressed the research objectives (Patton, 2002). Cooperative learning exercises centered on the course units involved participants directly, fostering collaboration and active engagement. This approach ensured a comprehensive examination of the effects of cooperative learning on language acquisition (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). By embedding cooperative learning strategies into the course's design, the study not only aligned with the university's lifelong learning initiatives but also offered actionable insights to improve teaching practices in similar educational settings.

This well-integrated approach ensured that students developed essential language skills while engaging in meaningful and collaborative learning experiences.

Participants

The study involved thirty seventh-grade students enrolled in the university's "English for Hospitality Industry" course during the 2023 academic year. These students were part of the Mathematics and English enrichment program at a municipal school. Participants were purposefully selected for their ability to provide insights into the research objectives, as they were actively engaged in teaching and learning activities and capable of offering detailed responses during interviews and assessments (Patton, 2002).

The participant group comprised 16 female and 14 male students, aged between 12 and 13, representing a range of English proficiency levels. Their involvement in the enrichment program made them suitable for using cooperative learning strategies such as Quiz Quiz Trade, Timed Pair Share, Round Robin, Rally Coach, and Rally Robin. These strategies fostered collaboration among students with varying levels of English proficiency, encouraging stronger students to support their peers in a shared learning environment.

The cooperative learning strategies used in the study not only facilitated active participation but also created an inclusive atmosphere for improving communication skills. By promoting interaction and teamwork, these methods allowed participants to engage with the material more effectively and develop essential language competencies.

Data Collection

This study utilised students' reflective journals as the primary source of qualitative data to address the research question. Reflective journals included prompts and questions designed to elicit students' thoughts and impressions about their experiences with cooperative learning activities. Students completed their entries at the end of each unit or learning activity package. This process allowed them to recall their recent educational experiences and provided the researchers with insights into their perceptions and attitudes.

Reflective journals served a dual purpose in this study. First, they offered students an opportunity for self-reflection, encouraging them to critically examine their learning processes, challenges, and accomplishments. This reflective practice not only enhanced their understanding of language concepts but also fostered critical thinking and self-awareness. Second, the journals provided longitudinal data that allowed researchers to track students' progress over time, revealing changes in their attitudes and perceptions about learning English through cooperative activities.

The reflective journal entries also shed light on the impact of cooperative learning techniques on students' interpersonal skills and teamwork. Students frequently highlighted the supportive role of their peers in overcoming language-related challenges. Cooperative learning activities provided a platform for developing both academic and social competencies, emphasising teamwork and peer learning.

By documenting their experiences, students shared how cooperative learning strategies, such as role-playing and collaborative problem-solving, contributed to their English communication skills. These reflections enriched the data and demonstrated how cooperative learning fosters a positive, interactive, and effective learning environment.

Data Analysis

The researchers employed thematic analysis to examine the qualitative data collected from students' reflective journals. Thematic analysis is a systematic approach for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data, providing insights into the phenomenon being studied (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008). This method ensured a detailed understanding of the students' perspectives on cooperative learning and its impact on their English communication skills.

In the first phase, the researchers familiarised themselves with the data by reading and rereading the Thai-language reflective journals. This allowed the researchers to understand the students' perspectives on English communication skills. In the second phase, they generated initial codes by reviewing the data and identifying key elements. This process was essential for qualitative analysis and helped in developing meaningful categories (Bryman, 2016). The researchers used "in-vivo codes," which referenced the actual words used by the participants, ensuring that the data accurately represented the students' experiences (King, 2008). During the third phase, they searched for themes by examining the codes and organising them into conceptual hierarchies. In the fourth phase, the researchers reviewed the identified themes to ensure their relevance to English communication skills and cooperative learning strategies. In the fifth phase, they defined and named each theme, ensuring clarity and relevance to the study. Finally, in the sixth phase, the researchers produced a report that connected their interpretations of the themes to answer the research questions, focusing on the benefits of cooperative learning strategies for enhancing English communication skills.

By adhering to this rigorous process, the researchers identified themes that shed light on the effectiveness of cooperative learning activities. The analysis revealed insights into how students perceived their experiences and how these strategies enhanced their communication skills, interpersonal interactions, and overall learning outcomes.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the University Human Research Ethics Committee prior to data collection to ensure compliance with ethical research standards. The researchers took measures to safeguard participants' confidentiality and privacy while emphasising that participation was entirely voluntary.

The researchers sought access to potential participants by consulting the director and teachers of the school's Mathematics and English enrichment programs. Written consent was obtained from these stakeholders before inviting students to participate. Each student received detailed information about the study, including its purpose, data collection methods, and assurances regarding confidentiality. Consent forms were provided to both the students and their parents to ensure informed participation.

To maintain confidentiality, all personal identifiers were removed from the data and replaced with coded references. This ensured that participants' identities could not be traced in any reports or publications arising from the study. The reflective journal entries were securely stored, and access was restricted to the researchers.

Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. These measures aimed to create a safe and ethical environment for students to share their experiences openly and honestly.

Result and Discussion

The analysis of the qualitative data from students' reflective journals yielded four overarching themes, each with associated sub-themes, capturing the students' perspectives on cooperative learning activities. These themes are summarised in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Themes and Sub-themes of Students' Opinions on Cooperative Learning Activity from Students' Reflective Journal

Themes and Sub-themes	Number of Supporting Codes	Percentage
Theme 1: Vocabulary and Communication		
1.1 Learning Vocabulary	14	10.30
1.2 Applying English for Hospitality Contexts	12	8.83
1.3 Integrating Language Skills	8	5.88
Theme 2: Feelings about Peer Activities		
2.1 Enjoyment and Fun	16	11.76
2.2 Sense of Community	10	7.35
2.3 Relaxation and Satisfaction	8	5.88
Theme 3: Favourite Activities in English Learning		
3.1 Collaboration and Teamwork	12	8.83
3.2 Engaging with Contextual Vocabulary	15	11.03
3.3 Perceived Instructional Effectiveness	9	6.61
Theme 4: Development of Communication Skills		
4.1 Improved Communication Abilities	13	9.55
4.2 Increased Cultural Awareness	7	5.15
4.3 Growth in Creativity and Critical Thinking	12	8.83
Total	**136**	**100**

Theme 1: Vocabulary and Communication

Incorporating cooperative learning into vocabulary and communication lessons provides students with a dynamic, supportive, and practical learning environment that improves their language skills and prepares them for real-world communication. The theme consists of three sub-themes: learning vocabulary, applying English for hospitality contexts, and integrating language skills.

For learning vocabulary, it has a significant impact on students' communication skills, cultural competence, academic performance, and overall confidence. Cooperative learning strategies enable students to not only learn new words but also understand their practical applications, making language use more effective and contextually relevant. This comprehensive approach prepares students for real-world interactions and professional settings while improving their language skills and cultural understanding. For example, with a broader vocabulary, students can express themselves more clearly and effectively in a variety of situations. This leads to increased confidence and fluency in communication. Participants might not know how to describe different dishes or take orders in a restaurant setting. In a role play, they used terms like "appetiser," "entrée," "dessert," and "beverage" to communicate effectively with customers, improving service quality.

For applying English for hospitality contexts, it gives students numerous opportunities to improve their communication skills in a practical, real-world context. Daily interactions, industry-specific vocabulary, and the need for clear, effective communication all contribute to students' increased proficiency and confidence in their English language skills. This hands-on experience not only improves their language skills, but also positions them for successful careers in the hospitality industry and beyond. For example, participants learning specific hospitality-related vocabulary can better handle guest inquiries and provide detailed information about hotel services.

Integrating language skills improves communication skills by offering a comprehensive, context-relevant, and practical approach to language learning. Students develop a well-rounded proficiency through real-world application, interactive activities, cultural competence, and continuous feedback, preparing them to communicate effectively in a variety of professional and personal contexts. This comprehensive approach not only improves language skills, but it also boosts confidence and cultural awareness, both of which are necessary for success in today's globalised world. Participants reported that "I enjoy activities about tourist attractions because they learn about different places and new vocabulary" and "Learning new vocabulary is directly applicable in hotel services to improve communication with foreign guests."

Theme 2: Feelings about Peer Activities

Feelings about peers activities are important in promoting cooperative learning. These emotions boost motivation, improve learning outcomes, boost confidence, strengthen social skills, and promote peer learning and teaching. Such an environment makes learning more engaging and effective because students support one another and collaborate to achieve common goals. The theme consists of three sub-themes: enjoyment and fun, sense of community, and relaxation and satisfaction.

For enjoyment and fun, it is essential for improving English communication skills because it increases motivation and engagement, reduces anxiety, improves retention and recall, promotes social interaction, provides meaningful contexts for language use, and fosters a positive attitude toward learning. These components create an effective and supportive environment for language acquisition, resulting in improved communication skills. Participants reported, "I enjoy working in groups to create menus, set prices, and design restaurant concepts because of the dedication and support from group members", "I enjoy activities that involve everyone pairing up with vocabulary words like Spa, Jacuzzi, and other words", "I like to ask and answer questions because it will practise courage to speak English", and "I like activities that involve pairing up, like taking turns to guess, because they are fun".

For sense of community, it significantly improves English communication skills by fostering a welcoming and supportive learning environment, encouraging active participation, providing peer support and feedback, expanding practice opportunities, improving knowledge retention and application, and developing social and communication skills. These factors, taken together, make language learning more effective and enjoyable. It is evident, "I enjoy working in groups to create menus, set prices, and design restaurant concepts because of the dedication and support from group members" and "I like group activities where we sit in a circle and read out the names of menu items the teacher imagines for a restaurant".

For relaxation and satisfaction, they play an important role in promoting English communication skills by increasing engagement, improving retention, encouraging peer interaction, building confidence, and creating a positive and motivating learning environment. These factors contribute to a more efficient and enjoyable language learning experience, resulting in improved communication skills. Participants reported, "I think I have developed a lot of knowledge, abilities, and English language communication skills", "I think I have developed a moderate level of English language communication skills because I have fun listening to the teacher's explanations", and "I like everything in the lessons because it gives knowledge in various aspects of food and beverage, which should be known the most about food and drinks from other countries".

Theme 3: Favourite Activities in English Learning

Students' favourite activities English learning is closely related to cooperative learning because they emphasise interaction, collaboration, shared experiences, practical application, cultural learning, confidence development, and anxiety reduction. These elements create a dynamic and supportive learning environment in which students can significantly improve their English communication skills. The theme consists of three sub-themes: collaboration and teamwork, engaging with contextual vocabulary, and perceived instructional effectiveness.

For collaboration and teamwork, they promote interaction, collaborative learning, active communication, and increased motivation. These activities foster a supportive environment in which students can improve their language skills through meaningful interactions with their peers. Students enjoy collaboration because it requires active participation and interaction with their peers. Working in groups to complete language-related tasks encourages students to communicate ideas, express opinions, and negotiate meanings in English. As they engage in meaningful group conversations, their speaking and listening skills improve. Participants mentioned, "I like activities where they draw lots to pair up and then read one by one in a circle", "I like activities when everyone matches vocabulary", and "Members think and create a restaurant as a group because it involves fun thinking".

For engaging with contextual vocabulary, it appears to be a popular activity among students seeking to improve their English communication skills because it improves contextual understanding, promotes retention, allows for practical application in communication, and encourages active participation. By incorporating vocabulary into meaningful contexts, educators can create a more dynamic and effective language learning environment in which students are motivated to explore and apply their English language skills authentically. Participants reported, "I like activities that involve thinking about vocabulary because they make learning more enjoyable and effective", "I enjoy using vocabulary in context because it helps communicate more clearly", "I love using vocabulary in context, such as using learned vocabulary to describe restaurants or talk about travel experiences that are easy to

understand", and "I like activities that require using various vocabulary because it helps understand vocabulary better".

Setting clear objectives, using engaging methods, providing feedback, offering language models, and ensuring cultural relevance all contribute to perceived instructional effectiveness when teaching English communication skills. These components work together to create a supportive learning environment in which students are motivated to improve their language skills gradually and confidently. Effective instruction enables students to communicate fluently and accurately in English, preparing them for academic, professional, and social settings in which English proficiency is required. Participants stated that clear learning objectives in teaching help learning more effective, interesting teaching helps learning more effective, such as using many educational games, feedback and assessment help students improve English communication skills, using examples and models helps learning English communication skills better, and teaching related to culture and context helps learning more effective.

Theme 4: Development of Communication Skills

The combination of improved communication skills, cultural awareness, creativity, and critical thinking provides a solid foundation for developing proficiency in English communication. These competencies not only help with effective language use, but they also promote deeper understanding, empathy, and creativity in interpersonal interactions in a variety of settings. The theme consists of three sub-themes: improved communication abilities, increased cultural awareness, and growth in creativity and critical thinking.

For improved communication abilities, they significantly improve students' English communication skills by fostering clarity, confidence, fluency, listening comprehension, interpersonal skills, adaptability, critical thinking, and overall academic and professional success. These abilities are required for students to successfully navigate and excel in English-speaking academic, social, and professional settings. Participants reported, "Through practice and learning new vocabulary, I've become more articulate in English, able to express my thoughts clearly and precisely.", "Engaging in role-playing and group discussions has boosted my confidence in speaking English", and "Collaborating with peers has not only improved my English communication but also my ability to do activities effectively in teams."

For increased cultural awareness, it improves English communication skills by promoting contextual understanding, encouraging respectful communication, expanding vocabulary, cultivating a global perspective, and honing cross-cultural communication abilities. These factors contribute to more effective and nuanced language use in both personal and professional settings. Participants mentioned that activities like matching job titles and duties and learning about various foods and beverages, such as soup of the day, starter, and shrimp cocktail, contribute to understanding different cultures and cuisines. They also enjoy learning about different customs, places, and vocabulary associated with tourism, "I got to know various districts in the province and helped to think and do" and "I like cultural activities because they were fun and informative".

For growth in creativity and critical thinking, they play an important role in improving English communication skills by encouraging creative expression, improving problem-solving abilities, promoting adaptability in communication, developing collaborative skills, and encouraging originality in language use. These skills enable learners to communicate clearly, confidently, and creatively across various contexts and audiences. Participants reported that activities involving creativity and critical thinking, such as creating menus and brainstorming restaurant names, are particularly enjoyed. They mentioned, "I like thinking and creating restaurant activities because they use fun thinking" and "I like creating restaurant menu activities because they can determine everything about the restaurant".

Discussion

For the first theme, the findings underscore the intricate relationship between benefits and motivation within cooperative learning environments, revealing three interconnected sub-themes: enjoyment and engagement, desire for improvement and growth, and motivation and aspirations. Enjoyment and Engagement emerged as fundamental components of cooperative learning, enhancing student participation and involvement in learning tasks. This aligns with recent research by Järvenoja and Järvelä investigation, which highlights the positive impact of enjoyable learning activities on student engagement and academic performance (Järvenoja & Järvelä, 2021). Furthermore, the desire for improvement and growth aspect emphasises the collaborative nature of cooperative learning, fostering a growth mindset and a commitment to continuous development. This resonates

with the findings of Hwang's study, who emphasise the role of peer support in promoting a growth mindset among students (Hwang, Park, & Kim, 2020). Lastly, motivation and aspirations illustrate how cooperative learning cultivates intrinsic motivation and empowers students to pursue their academic goals. This is consistent with the research of Deci and Ryan, who emphasise the importance of intrinsic motivation in fostering academic achievement and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2020). Together, these findings highlight the multifaceted benefits of cooperative learning in enhancing student motivation and contributing to their overall academic success.

For the second theme, the findings highlight how important the learning environment and activities are in forming group dynamics and developing students' collaborative abilities. A conducive physical layout of the classroom, characterised by clustered or circular desk arrangements, facilitates interaction and cooperation among students. Moreover, establishing norms and expectations that promote respect, active participation, and collaboration is essential. Recent research supports the notion that a psychologically supportive environment, emphasising open communication, diverse perspectives, and a sense of belonging, contributes significantly to cooperative learning success (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Structuring learning activities to necessitate active participation and contribution from all group members is paramount. Assignments involving problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making tasks are particularly effective, as they encourage students to share ideas, negotiate solutions, and learn from one another (Slavin, 2014). Positive group dynamics further enhance the co-operative learning experience, fostering teamwork, mutual support, and effective communication among students. Interactive and collaborative learning environments, which emphasise active engagement, participation, and peer collaboration, have been shown to enhance learning outcomes. By offering varied learning opportunities tailored to diverse student needs and preferences, educators can enrich the cooperative learning experience and promote meaningful learning outcomes for all students (Tomlinson, 2017). Overall, these findings emphasise the importance of creating an environment that fosters interaction, collaboration, and engagement to maximise the benefits of cooperative learning.

For the third theme, the findings highlight the efficacy of cooperative learning in fostering a rich and dynamic environment conducive to language skills development. Cooperative learning strategies facilitate interaction among students, providing ample opportunities for peer support, diverse perspectives, collaborative problem-solving, and integrated language practice across skills. The themes identified, communication skills enhancement, vocabulary acquisition, and language proficiency improvement, underscore the multifaceted benefits of cooperative learning. Communication skills enhancement is evidenced through discussions, debates, and collaborative tasks that promote effective verbal and nonverbal communication, as affirmed by participants' reported improvements in listening and speaking skills. Vocabulary acquisition is facilitated through engaging activities like vocabulary games and collaborative discussions, leading to increased lexical knowledge and a strong interest in learning new linguistic terms. Language proficiency improvement is evident in learners' enhanced ability to practise language skills in authentic contexts, with cooperative learning providing opportunities for integration across speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The findings corroborate recent research emphasising the effectiveness of cooperative learning in language education (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Slavin, 2014). They underscore the importance of implementing cooperative learning strategies to create a supportive and interactive environment conducive to language skills development.

For the last theme, the findings highlight how important it is for learners to receive feedback and engage in reflection in cooperative learning settings, as this promotes ongoing personal and professional development. Through peer feedback and self-reflection, students engage in a dynamic process of assessing their own work and that of their peers, thereby enhancing their understanding of concepts, refining critical thinking skills, and ultimately improving learning outcomes (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). Encouraging dialogue and collaboration, as highlighted by participants' experiences, not only facilitates effective communication but also builds confidence in expressing ideas and engaging in respectful discourse (Roseth, 2021). Moreover, self-reflection empowers learners to take ownership of their learning journey, set meaningful goals, and evaluate progress, promoting autonomy and accountability (Tanner, 2012). Participants' reflections on language development underscore the importance of self-awareness and improvement, emphasising the need for ongoing reflection on communication dynamics and individual roles within the collaborative setting (Topping, 2018). Overall, these findings underscore the multifaceted benefits of integrating feedback and reflection into cooperative learning practices, highlighting their pivotal role in promoting deeper engagement, collaboration, and learning among learners.

Conclusion

This research provides meaningful insights into how cooperative learning strategies can enhance English communication skills, particularly within the context of a rural Thai school. By presenting a practical pedagogical model, the research bridges theoretical perspectives with real-world classroom applications, which offers educators a framework for designing instructional activities that actively support the development of communicative competence.

The findings have practical implications for multiple stakeholders. Educational institutions can draw from this study to improve curriculum design and instructional approaches that prioritise interactive and student-centered learning. For course instructors, the research offers concrete strategies for integrating cooperative learning techniques into their teaching, helping to foster a more engaging and collaborative learning environment. Moreover, students themselves may benefit from a greater awareness of how peer interaction and shared learning experiences can contribute to their language development and overall communicative ability.

In addition to its immediate contributions, the research pens several promising avenues for future research. These include exploring effective speaking practice strategies, examining the role of cross-cultural communication in hospitality-related English training, and investigating vocabulary acquisition within specific hospitality service contexts. Such research can further inform how communication skills training may be adapted to meet the evolving needs of learners and professionals in diverse, real-world settings.

Acknowledgements

The Authors

Pittaya Yamo teaches English at the Business English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Uttaradit Rajabhat University, Thailand. **Email: pittaya.yam@uru.ac.th**

Watcharee Wongthanet is an English lecturer at the Foreign Languages Program, Faculty of Education, Uttaradit Rajabhat University, Thailand. **Email: watcharee.won@uru.ac.th**

Seksan Inchana teaches English at the Business English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Uttaradit Rajabhat University, Thailand. **Email: seksan.inc@uru.ac.th**

Authors' Contributions

PY – Conceptualisation, Research Design, Data Collection & Analysis, Evaluation, Manuscript Writing

WW – Conceptulisation, Data Collection & Analysis, Evaluation, Manuscript Writing

SI – Data Analysis, Evaluation, Manuscript Writing

References

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3(2), 77-101.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2020). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development, and health. *Canadian Psychology,* 61(3), 237-244. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012801

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2008). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 80-92.

Hwang, A., Park, E., & Kim, M. (2020). The role of peer support and teacher support in promoting students' growth mindset. *Journal of Educational Psychology,* 112(4), 865-881.

Imsa-Ard, P. (2020). Motivation and attitudes towards English language learning in Thailand: A large-scale survey of secondary school students. *rEFLections*, 27(2), 140–161.

Järvenoja, H., & Järvelä, S. (2021). Fostering engagement and learning through enjoyable collaborative learning tasks. *Educational Psychology Review*, 33(1), 131-156.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2017). Cooperative learning: *The power of positive interdependence.* Routledge.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2009). An educational psychology success story: Social interdependence theory and cooperative learning. *Educational Researcher,* 38(5), 365-379.

Kagan, S., & Kagan, M. (2009). *Kagan cooperative learning*. Kagan Publishing.

Kandasamy, C., & Habil, H. (2018). Exploring cooperative learning method to enhance speaking skills. *LSP International Journal*, 5(2), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.11113/lspi.v5n2.59

Kawaguchi, S. (2021). Technology in SLA: A bridge to effective learning. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education*, 37(2), 123-130.

Kawinkoonlasate, P. (2020). Digital literacy in Thai EFL classrooms: Enhancing language learning through technology. *Asian EFL Journal*, 22(6), 45-60.

King, A. (2008). *In vivo coding.* Sage Publications.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2011). *Designing qualitative research.* Sage Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry a personal,* experiential perspective. Qualitative *Social Work*, 1(3), 261-283. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325002001003636

Roseth, C. J. (2021). *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education.* Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research, fourth edition.* London: Sage Publications.

Slavin, R. E. (2014). Cooperative learning and academic achievement: Why does groupwork work? *Annals of Psychology,* 30(3), 785–791. https://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.30.3.201181

Suwannaprut, T., & Siriwan, A. (2019). Communication strategies use by VRU students enrolled in listening and speaking strategies for learners of English as a foreign language. *Valaya Alongkorn Review*, 9(3), 140-156.

Tanner, K. D. (2012). Promoting student metacognition. *CBE-Life Sciences Education*, 11(2), 113-120. https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.12-03-0033

Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). *How to differentiate instruction in academically diverse classrooms*. ASCD.

Topping, K. J. (2018). Peer assessment. *In Handbook of research on educational communications and technology* (pp. 803-821). Springer.

Wang, G. (2020). On the application of cooperative learning in college English. *International Education Studies*, 13(6), 62-66. https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v13n6p62

Implementing Online Platforms, namely Telegram and Google Docs to Enhance the Writing Skills of Foundation-Year Business Management Students: Digital Literacies, Language Learning, and Technology

Shakhnozakhon Fakhriddinova
Elena Khanzadyan
Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Abstract

The use of online platforms has been a long-lasting trend in educational research. Numerous studies have examined the use of technology-driven resources in the sphere of primary and secondary schools, as well as online learning in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, due to the rapid development of cutting-edge technologies, technology-enhanced instruction and learning are becoming applicable to a wider range of contexts. Digital technology and online platforms offer many benefits regarding language learning and academic writing instruction for business and management university students, in particular. This study aims to investigate the advantages of integrating online platforms, namely Telegram and Google Docs, in the academic writing teaching and learning of business management university foundation year students to enhance their academic performance. Also, this research seeks to investigate the ways online-based platforms and their adequate implementation facilitate solid writing skills development, practice, as well as feedback and assessment methods in the Academic Writing University programme. The paper employs a mixed-method methodology. Data were collected through a series of surveys, essay evaluation of 60 Foundation Year students and semi-structured interviews with 20 students who had participated in post-essay evaluation. The results of the study offer valuable insights into the importance of both objective and subjective factors when analyzing improvement in academic writing performance. It also demonstrates how digital tools can enhance writing awareness, and build confidence and student-teacher relationships in educational frameworks of foundation-year business management students.

Keywords: Digital technology, online platforms, academic writing, teacher-student relationship.

Introduction
Background

Education is by far the most stable yet ever-changing field of study. With the introduction of digital technology, education has undergone a revolutionary path in all its segments including higher education practices. The integration of tech into the classroom has opened a whole new world for education scholars who focus on seeking better ways for student interest engagement, and learning outcomes. Writing is a crucial form of effective business communication in business and operations management, marketing, and other fields. Academic Writing ability does not only demonstrate students' understanding of the course, but it also shows their ability to clearly express themselves, and their ability to inform, persuade and lead others. Throughout our experience at higher institutions in Uzbekistan, we have noticed that writing ability is one of the most serious challenges faced by the majority of Foundation Year students in their transition to the degree program. Given that writing is not a tool they are equipped with in secondary school, the university programme becomes quite a challenge for many, as it requires excessive use of writing in academic, business, and general contexts. Assignments, essays, and presen-

tations all require particular writing competencies. This article investigates the understanding and use of online platforms, namely Telegram and Google Docs, to enhance the writing proficiency of Foundation-year students of business and management. This idea closely aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching and collaborative learning approach because it increases the students' opportunity to use English as the target language and resolve the issues related to language learning together, in a more relaxed and student-friendly atmosphere (Neuman and McDonough, 2015).

The integration of digital platforms, like Telegram and Google Docs in education practices, has offered several effective tools that help to enhance writing proficiency among students through collaborative learning, instant feedback, and easy accessibility. It has also transformed the English classroom into a more interactive, student-centered and independent learning environment. That is why, understanding the mechanism behind digital tools will help educators enhance and support language learning and outcomes.

Problem Statement

Numerous studies show that the transition from secondary to higher levels of education is never easy. For example, Nelavai and Ramesh (2020) found that Foundation Year students might face numerous challenges including language barriers, understanding reading and writing materials and getting used to new subjects and university policies. While some research indicates that freshmen typically report average-to-high levels of writing proficiency and a moderate level of motivation to write in English (Simel and Mengesha, 2024), students in Uzbekistan often face difficulties with academic writing due to several various factors, such as lack of writing instruction and feedback at school levels, and limited need to use writing in their everyday life. These can become a problem to overcome for both students and teachers despite the vast availability of various digital writing tools. While students often use tools like Telegram for their everyday communication, many educators might feel uncertain about where to start and how to use those tools efficiently in their classroom.

Research Aim and Objectives

This study aims to investigate the impact of Telegram and Google Docs implementation on the academic writing skills of Foundation year students of business and management studies. The objectives in focus are:

- To understand the level of writing competencies of students before the implementation of the platforms in the classroom.
- To evaluate the writing performance of students after the implementation of the platforms.
- To analyze student engagement, collaborative learning, and instant feedback when using the platforms.
- To analyze student-teacher relationship enhancement through the platforms used.

Research Questions
The study has two research questions as its main research focus:

1. What are the hands-on benefits (if any) of integrating digital technology and online platforms when it comes to language learning and academic writing instruction for business and management university students?

The first research question seeks to analyse the hands-on benefits of integrating digital technology and online platforms into language learning and academic writing instruction for business and management university students. Numerous studies show that using digital platforms offers a whole bunch of benefits, such as better learner engagement and collaboration (Gonzalez et al., 2018, Akkilinc, 2024), and higher learners' autonomy and responsibility for the learning process. Also, according to Hague and Payton (2016), tech platforms promote digital literacy, as they offer students endless ways of navigating and using technology for their everyday lives and career opportunities. Another obvious benefit of digital platforms is their easy accessibility of writing practice resources and tools that enable students to use a variety of writing materials and also encourage the development of learners such skills as independence and responsibility for their writing success and performance (Donnelly et al., 2015). Finally, collaborative features of such platforms, as Telegram, enhance the sense of community among learners. On the pedagogical side, applying a collaborative approach through digital technology is also supported by one of the major theories of language learning, the social constructivism theory. Vygotsky (1978), the father of the theory, highlighted the importance of allowing students to practice their knowledge of English in a meaningful context, enhancing the sense of community as a vital tool for building an effective learning environment.

2. In what ways can online platforms like Telegram and Google Docs facilitate solid writing skills development, practice, as well as feedback and assessment methods in the Academic Writing University programme?

The second research question aims to examine of Telegram Google Docs apps' potential in terms of effective feedback and assessment within a university academic writing curriculum. In this respect, numerous researches highlight several advantages of digital platforms. First, according to Stockwell and Hubbard (2013), such platforms offer structured writing practice through collaboration and real-life industry cases and scenarios. Next, apps like Telegram with their embedded features promote peer review, sharing, feedback giving, and constructive criticism as an ongoing process. This means that students learn from each other, strengthen their abilities and work on their mistakes. Such an immediate feedback mechanism is central to achieving a higher level of writing ability (Graham and Perin, 2007). Finally, apps like Google Docs have revolutionized assessment methods, as they allow for progress tracking. Through those practices, online platforms facilitate reflexivity in students which adds to a better understanding of their writing personality and potential.

In conclusion, online platforms have become an integral part of our objective reality, including the education sphere. Educators must be equipped with a deep understanding of its educational potential and are eager to apply this knowledge in their classrooms. This article hopes to contribute to the existing pool of knowledge on the given topic by analyzing particular benefits of Telegram and Google Docs use in promoting better understanding and knowledge of academic writing skills among the foundation year students of business and management university programs. We believe that these insights will benefit education professionals and will foster further research into the given topic.

Literature Review

Digital Literacy in Education

Digital technology has entered every field of life and nearly revolutionized the way we do things including the sphere of education and learning (Bates and Sangra, 2011). Not only have digital technologies facilitated the learning and teaching processes, but they have also recognized the full diversity of learners and learning environments, such as various learning styles, teaching and learning contexts, and previous learner exposure to the target language. Technically, digital tools have changed how we plan, implement, and process learning practices in the classroom, including academic writing context. According to Gonzalez et al., (2018), platforms like Google Docs and Telegram enable real-life student-student and student-teacher collaboration, fostering group work, instant feedback and a sense of community.

This literature review explores the hands-on benefits of incorporating digital tools, specifically Telegram and Google Docs, in enhancing the writing skills of foundation-year business management students. It addresses two primary research questions:

(1) What are the hands-on benefits of integrating digital technology and online platforms for language learning and academic writing instruction? (2) In what ways can online platforms like Telegram and Google Docs facilitate solid writing skills development, practice, as well as feedback and assessment methods in the Academic Writing university program?

Theoretical Framework

Social constructivism theory states that the learner builds knowledge through social interactions and collaboration. This theory is relevant when discussing language learning because it highlights the role of negotiation and interaction between the learners (Vygotsky, 1978). According to the Swain output hypothesis theory, developed in 2015, the output (language production) is central to language learning. The theory suggests that language learners improve their EFL skills by producing language output, both written and spoken, as it helps them notice gaps in their knowledge and practice their linguistic skills (Yanmin and Yi, 2019). Together, these two theories emphasize the role of collaborative learning in the development of writing skills, where learners can negotiate meaning and obtain instant feedback from their peers.

Online platforms offer innovative tools that can facilitate a collaborative and active learning environment through discussion and engaging students in synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The use of online platforms promotes a sense of community and shared responsibility, as well as self-reflection, peer review, and constructive feedback (Aldaghri and Oraif, 2024).

Digital Literacy

As stated by Hague and Payton (2010), digital literacy includes a whole range of skills and abilities (to locate, select, evaluate, and utilize information from various digital sources) using digital technologies. Modern technology-driven employment context requires proficiency in digital tools. By fostering digital literacy, HE institutions will prepare students for their future careers.

When it comes to business management students, skills like information literacy, and tech proficiency will be valuable assets in their future careers. For example, information literacy will teach students how to identify credible sources and work with them efficiently (Bates and Sangra, 2011), while technological proficiency will equip them with a wide range of technological tools and apps. Additionally, digital literacy fosters the development of critical thinking and problem-solving, which are vital for success in a dynamic business context. By integrating these components into the university curriculum, educational institutions will nurture well-prepared and highly educated specialists for the modern workplace.

The Role of Digital Literacy in Language Learning

Digital literacy includes a whole range of skills and abilities and offers some obvious benefits in the context of higher university academic writing classrooms.

Greater Student Engagement and Motivation

To begin with, in a more dynamic and interactive learning environment, offered by digital platforms, students tend to get actively involved in the discussion and acting on the given scenarios and cases, express motivation and desire to collaborate with their peers and learn from each other (Lai and Hwang, 2016). As business and management university programs have often been criticized for lack of real-world, hands-on field practice, digital tools here offer to solve this problem.

Developing Digital Literacy

Today's digital economy requires several skills when working with information from various digital sources. With this in mind, integrating digital platforms into university classrooms will enhance student's digital literacy and will help them operate successfully and become proficient in communication and collaboration in accordance with the requirements of the modern world.

Telegram and Google Docs were chosen for this research, as these are the two most widely used digital platforms in Uzbekistan; and because they facilitate student-teacher communication outside the classroom and offer easy access to various writing facilities. Taken together these factors can foster students' writing skills and allow for self-paced learning (Hattie and Timperley, 2007)

Learning through Collaboration and Immediate feedback

We believe that learning through collaboration is essential to learners' success, especially in language learning and communication. Learning how to write can be a very stressful experience for learners with limited previous experience in writing contexts, as is a common situation in Uzbekistan. Research shows that a supportive environment is a key component when creating a writing classroom routine, as peer interaction and peer learning increase language learning outcomes and significantly reduce stress that is often caused by learning how to do academic writing. It also provides good practice (Johnson et al., 2014). Also, platforms like Google Docs provide good help to first-year students in their transition to university life (Graham and Perin, 2007). Finally, feedback is crucial to writing success. Telegram and Google Docs make immediate feedback possible without any delays, common for traditional learning practices (Hattie and Timperley, 2007).

However, digital tools are not a blessing, as many students find it difficult to develop digital literacy skills. When addressing digital technology as an effective learning tool, we should not neglect such factors as limited access to technology, lack of skills among teaching staff and students, and various learning styles.

Online Platforms for Language Learning

Research shows that students using online platforms report higher levels of language acquisition (Stockwell and Hubbard, 2013).

Effective means of communication and collaboration are key in the era of digital education. Two tools worth mentioning in this respect are Telegram and Google Docs, they both have special feature set that will respond to students' and teacher's needs.

Overview of Telegram as an Educational Tool

The interactive nature of Telegram offers enormous opportunities for continuous practice and reinforcement of vocabulary retention, grammar use, and overall writing proficiency outside classroom hours (Pudyastuti and Palandi, 2023).

Telegram is an all-in-one messaging platform which can greatly benefit educational communication. Real-time communication between students and the teacher is one of its major benefits. Group chats mean that you can have an organic conversation where people can suggest ideas, ask questions and get instantaneous responses to writing tasks.' (Dollah, et al 2021). Such immediate interaction encourages a cooperative learning atmosphere where students get to interact with both their peers and the instructor.

What is more, Telegram provides the ability to share files, which is an indispensable part of learning a language. Students may share files, pictures, and sound files, which can be used for language learning in several different settings. Teachers can share reading or writing prompts in the chat itself to give students access to resources and work together on tasks, for instance (Syahreza, & St. Hartina, 2023). The tool can form channels as well in this way teachers can pass the information very quickly to everyone so that all the students get the updates or the instruction in time.

Overview of Google Docs as an Educational Tool

Google Docs is an excellent example of collaboration in writing activities. The ability to edit in real-time means that more than one student can open a document at the same time, provide feedback to peers, and experience what it's like in the revision process. This social factor promotes students criticizing each other's compositions positively, resulting in an enhancement of their written production (Hopi, 2021). And because students can watch as their peers add to or tinker with their writing in real time, Google Docs encourages a feeling of communal responsibility for the writing process.

Linking to this is a valuable source for developing the skills discipline of writing within Google Docs 'Comment' feature. Students can write comments on individual parts of a document, leading to conversations about clarity, structure and content. This cascading model of feedback not only refines writing but also teaches students how to provide and solicit feedback (Andrage and Roshay, 2023). As such, students get better at expressing their ideas and improving their writing through collaborative work.

To sum up, Telegram and Google Docs are potent applications for education that facilitate communication, networking and feedback when it comes to writing assignments. If Telegram is great for dynamic discussions and resource sharing, Google Docs is best to enable real-time collaboration and constructive peer review. Combined, these platforms build a better teaching facility encouraging language acquisition and writing development.

Academic Writing Skills Development through Online Platforms

University setting sets high expectations on students' writing ability, particularly in the context of business management. Harris (2017) mentions various writing instruction and practice methods widely implemented in university academic writing classrooms. However, there is not enough information on how digital tools can contribute to or complement these traditional methods to improve learning outcomes.

Effective academic writing includes a focus on clarity, coherence, grammar, argumentation, and adherence to academic norms (Swales and Feak, 2012). Logical structuring of ideas while using relevant language and style is essential for academic writing. Technology can add to traditional writing instruction by providing necessary support and resources.

Facilitating Writing Skills Development through Online Platforms

To begin with, among the obvious benefits offered by online platforms in this respect, are structured writing practices and peer review. Google Docs offers collaborative features like student engagement in various real-world writing tasks (preparing presentations, writing reports) and immediate peer input (Stockwell and Hubbard, 2013). Students can try different styles, experiment, alter their text, and check it against academic writing requirements. Peer review is essential here, as using online platforms makes sharing and feedback very natural and easy. This encourages collaboration and constructive criticism, helps to develop ethics and mutual respect, and enhances effective communication among peers.

The next useful aspect of implementing online platforms is real-time collaboration and communication. The writing instruction process in its traditional form does not feature active real-time collaboration between teacher and student. However, online platforms like Telegram can scientifically enhance teacher-student and student-student relationships (Donnelly et al., 2015). This active collaboration may result in lower anxiety levels and improved connectivity between all participants of the process.

Writing instruction is not limited to explanation and writing. It also includes important components of assessment and reflection. Digital platforms offer innovative approaches to assessing writing performance. While the traditional approach features simply the submission of the written work (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). Google Docs, for example, allows the teacher to trace changes over time, not only the final product but all the writing development stages. Also, the "Version history" feature at Google Docs helps students reflect on their writing journey, and analyse their writing habits, and weaknesses. Teachers can also offer students additional reflexive tasks that will help them take a better hold of their learning (Farahian and Noori, 2023).

Teacher-Student Relationships

According to Mahdi (2023), effective communication between students and teachers is a crucial component of learners' success. However, the communication gap is a common problem in a language-learning classroom. Digital platforms enhance engagement through communication and also help to build trust between teachers and students by creating a supportive learning environment (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001).

Telegram, for example, enables real-time discussions, and sharing of various media, voice and imagery. This in turn can lead to higher student motivation and participation.

Summary

The literature suggests an increased interest in the implementation of technology in a language-learning classroom. There is enough evidence to claim that online platforms, both in MALL (mobile-assisted learning and CALL (computer-assisted learning) offer substantial benefits to students. However, there is limited research into the use of Telegram and Google Docs in enhancing academic writing skills among foundation-year business and management students. This study aims to fill the gap by exploring the potential of these platforms in business and management academic writing programs in Uzbekistan. Among the proposed benefits of active implementation of these platforms are students' engagement and motivation, structured writing practice, immediate feedback and peer review mechanisms, as well as innovative assessment methods.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-method approach, where a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods seems reasonable for a deeper understanding and analysis of the impact of the implementation of online platforms on students' writing skills (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). Such an approach ensures a higher validity of data and helps to compensate for the weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative methods implemented alone. Here, quantitative data can lay bare the important trends and correlations in data, while the qualitative approach can help see a deeper understanding of reasons, students' attitudes and motivation when using or refraining from implementation of particular online platforms. We hope that by using a mixed-method approach we will be able to see a better representation of how Telegram and Google Docs influence the development of academic writing skills among Foundation Year students in business and management.

Participants

The participants were Foundation Year business management students of the Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent. A total of 60 students (2 groups) were selected, both males (45%) and females (55%), aged between 18-25 years old. Students had varied language learning backgrounds; some of them had completed specialized IELTS preparation courses, some had no prior exposure to academic English and some had completed high school with a linguistic focus. Additionally, as a part of the Pre-survey stage, students were asked to mention their experience with digital platforms before the given research. This information was needed for a better analysis of the research context. In this current research, there were two focus groups. The first group (Group A) used traditional teaching methods while the second group (Focus Group) used online platforms. These two groups were observed during the nine weeks.

Data Collection Methods

The study employed a pre-post experimental design with two groups of participants. Data were obtained using the following 4 methods:

1. Pre-Essay Writing Task: In week one, students had to complete an initial essay-writing task to be used as a baseline competencies assessment. This essay mocked a typical writing assignment for their final academic writing exam. That is why it can be used as a valid context for evaluation.

2. Surveys: Pre-Survey included two parts. Pre-survey part one assessed students' attitudes towards digital tools and their implementation and writing competencies (self-reported). Pre-Survey part two evaluated students' awareness and understanding of academic writing skills. The surveys include open-ended questions and attitude questions based on the Likert scale. Such design was predefined by the attempt to capture a larger range of perspectives.

3. Post-Essay Writing Task: After a period of 9 weeks of use of Telegram and Google Docs, students had to write another essay and submit it for evaluation. The essay was then compared against their Pre-Essay Writing Task results to analyse writing quality and possible improvement in writing performance.

4. Post-essay Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to collect their opinions and attitudes towards the research-based learning experience with online platforms.

Survey Design

Open-ended questions provided the qualitative pool of data to add to the quantitative data and to reveal students' deeper attitudes and personal experiences towards digital learning tools and their awareness and understanding of academic writing skills. Likert-scale questions aimed at assessing the level of confidence in students' writing ability.

Essay Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of Pre-Essay and Post-Essay tasks focused on clarity, organization, grammar and vocabulary range and accuracy, vocabulary retention, understanding of academic writing standards and rules, research, paraphrasing skills, and utilizing correct referencing along with in-text citations (Swales and Feak, 2012). An assessment rubric was created to provide an objective evaluation of students' writing and to facilitate the analysis of the research findings. Students who participated in the research were also provided constructive feedback to enhance their writing competency.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis Framework

Essays were assessed with the help of statistical comparisons run by SPSS software to identify noticeable differences in writing skills pre- and post-intervention (Pre-Essay and Post-Essay Tasks). Qualitative data from interviews were reported and analyzed thematically to identify patterns and insights related to student engagement and teacher-student dynamics.

The descriptive statistics method was used to analyse the information in the survey and the Pre-Essay and Post-Essay evaluation. According to Zhang et al. (2018), descriptive statistics are used to describe the main features of an entire set of data collected in a study, while inferential statistics are usually used to draw conclusions and make predictions about an entire population based on the data from a representative sample.

Qualitative Analysis Framework

Thematic analysis was conducted on interview transcripts following Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines which involved coding data inductively before identifying broader themes that emerged from partici-pants' responses. Authors offer a four-step approach to analyzing qualitative data: 1. Familiarization with the data; 2. Generating initial codes; 3. Searching for themes; 4. Reviewing themes.

Ethical Considerations

Before the study, all participants were informed of the research parameters. They had a right to withdraw their participation anytime during or after the data collection. Their confidentiality was guaranteed. Also, we obtained official permission from the university to proceed with our research and use their students' samples.

Findings and Results
Overview

Pre-Surveys evaluation. According to the data collected from Pre-surveys, it can be inferred that most students (75%) expressed willingness to use digital platforms for their writing progress. Pre-Essay 1 Task revealed that many respondents who had an IELTS learning background were familiar with the basics of academic writing (essay structure, paragraphing, and some task vocabulary). However, their result in coherence and structures was very low. The Pre-Survey results also show that students report low confidence levels in their writing skills and understanding of essay types and paraphrasing. Only 30% of respondents expressed a high level of confidence in academic writing. The survey provided a very clear picture of students' self-perception of their writing skills before the writing interventions. 70% of respondents reported feelings of anxiety and uncertainty about their writing ability in English. One of the common problems mentioned by respondents was their lack of structure (65%) and relevant ideas or examples (55%). Others reported difficulties using proper academic grammar and vocabulary (60%). Also, the majority of students (83%) had difficulty dealing with citations, paraphrasing and plagiarism.

A dramatically low percentage of respondents (1%) reported their familiarity with such common digital tools as Mendeley, Grammarly, Turnitin, Zotero, and Google Docs. This result was not surprising though, given the respondents were Foundation-year program students, with quite limited previous exposure to academic writing in English. All respondents, on the other hand, have reported their familiarity with the Telegram app, with 12% saying that they were using the platform for their IELTS preparation and practice of writing, reading and speaking ability. These results set the background and target areas for interventions and improvement.

Improvements in Writing Skills

Pre-Essay and Post-Essay evaluation. Table 1 demonstrates the marks students in both groups have received for their essays. Marks were given out of 100 marks. Post-Essay Task results showed a marked improvement in respondents' writing performance compared to the Pre-Essay Task. Marking results have demonstrated improvement in both groups. It is interesting to notice that Focus Group who were initially weaker in their Essay Scores (the average mark of 48.20 as compared to 51.97 in Group A). However, after their exposure to Telegram and Google Docs for writing, they demonstrated higher average score results than that of Group A (78.13 and 67.30 respectively), which means that writing has improved by 10.17% in Focus Group and by 3.77% in Group A.

TABLE 1. Students performance in academic Essay1-2 Writing

Respondents	Group A		Focus Group	
	Pre-Essay Score	**Post-Essay Score**	**Pre-Essay Score**	**Post-Essay Score**
1	35	51	19	61
2	17	54	57	54
3	57	76	29	78
4	29	63	63	54
5	63	80	64	81
6	74	75	38	74
7	28	39	18	38
8	19	51	71	41
9	71	65	24	78
10	24	54	56	54
11	86	81	28	88
12	28	68	37	58
13	27	59	48	78

Respondents	Group A		Focus Group	
	Pre-Essay Score	Post-Essay Score	Pre-Essay Score	Post-Essay Score
14	48	77	74	71
15	63	69	57	54
16	47	51	25	45
17	15	54	39	75
18	39	81	48	89
19	48	78	56	89
20	56	84	37	87
21	37	81	88	86
22	86	87	79	81
23	89	90	88	87
24	88	43	17	45
25	17	50	43	51
26	43	60	44	64
27	54	59	51	69
28	61	78	68	79
29	68	82	45	93
30	45	79	35	69
Average Score (of 100)	**51.97**	**67.30**	**48.20**	**78.13**

Note. Total of Respondents = 60. Group A = 30, focus Group = 30

T-test for both groups, run by the SPSS software, determined that the results are not statistically significant to claim there is a relationship between online platform use and writing performance, as opposed to traditional learning methods (p-value of .05). It can be suggested that a longer period of study is needed to accurately measure the progress in academic writing proficiency and draw conclusions.

TABLE 2. Mean Scores and Difference between two groups

	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation
Score Pre-Essay	A	48.73	22.738
	Focus	48.20	20.133
Score Post-Essay	A	67.30	14.329
	Focus	69.03	16.296

Note. Total of Respondents = 60. Group A = 30, focus Group = 30

However, the qualitative data from the interviews that were analysed using QDA Miner have demonstrated a highly contrasting result, with students in Focus Group feeling much better and more confident about their writing performance. These results match the marking results for Pre-Essay and Post-Essay marking outcomes. Table 3 demonstrates this change. Factors related to writing competency, namely writing confidence, vocabulary use, paraphrasing, understanding structure, use of in-text citations and time management, have seen a moderate to remarkable increase.

TABLE 3. Focus Group Students attitudes towards their academic writing performance in Pre-and Post-Essays (QDA Miner)

Codes	Pre-Essay	Post-Essay
Writing confidence	35%	51%
Vocabulary use	45%	57%
Paraphrasing	10%	76%
Understanding structure	45%	91%
In-text citations	2%	85%
Motivation	20%	65%
Stress	85%	59%
Time management	50%	68%
Feedback	12%	35%
Student-Teacher interaction	24%	84%

Note. Total of Respondents = 20.

The data from the interviews further supported these findings by providing the context that the authors of this study were not aware of before the commencement of this research. Numerous improvements not related to the academic writing process itself were revealed. Participants saw an obvious connection between their academic writing success and the collaboration and communication offered by the platforms themselves, highlighting the important role of peer feedback, peer support and instructor guidance in their learning experience. At the same time, writing stress and anxiety have shown a dramatic decrease from 85% to 59%.

Altogether, the data analysis presents evidence that the implementation of online platforms like Telegram and Google Docs can enhance the academic writing skills of foundation-year students of business and management. This difference offers some interesting insights for future research, as this might imply that Telegram and Google Docs work better with weaker students who haven't developed basic academic writing proficiency yet.

Overall, the results suggest that the implementation of Telegram and Google Docs with a focus on academic writing and practice can be a useful asset to the academic writing classroom.

Specific Areas of Improvement

The analysis of the Essays results has revealed the following areas of noticeable improvement:

Organization: Students have grasped the structure of essay writing and obtained a better understanding of argumentation and ideas across their writing.

Clarity: increased levels of clarity were demonstrated. Comment session in Telegram is thought to have contributed greatly to this result, as it offered students an opportunity to provide constructive peer feedback, refine their language and use clear messages when communicating their ideas.

Grammar accuracy: students tend to be more attentive to their grammar and vocabulary structures. For example, Essay 1 Task featured an average of 15 language errors per paper, while Essay Task 2 had 10 mistakes per paper on average, with some of the students in Focus Group 2 featuring a great improvement to only 5 mistakes per paper.

Argumentation: Essay 2 Task in both groups showed a deeper critical analysis of ideas, research and citation skills. As one of the learning routines on Telegram included sharing researched ideas and citations, where students had to contribute actively to the ideas/topic offered by the teacher, they got equipped with a paraphrasing and citation tool for that matter. This parameter has reported the highest improvement average in both groups.

Collaborative Learning

As suggested in the Literature Review part, obtaining peer feedback offered by the features of Google Docs and Telegram, enabled students to take a noticeable level of self-learning and responsibility, improving involvement and interest among students. During the Post-Interviews stage, many students were excited and expressed their motivation when participating in writing projects offered by the teacher via Telegram. As we know,

motivation and a sense of community go together. This vital ingredient contributed greatly to building trust and goodwill among students and teachers.

Students were eager to express their thoughts, contribute ideas and provide constructive feedback to their peers. For many of them, it was a new experience and they found it valuable and practical. Google Docs with its feature of real-time peer-editing was another benefit mentioned by students. Using this feature fostered students' collaboration and engagement, as well as a deeper understanding of the writing process itself. Students said that peer-editing often led to significant improvement in their drafts and helped identify mistakes and weaknesses in their writing, that they were not aware of before.

Also, such practice has minimized the levels of uncertainty related to the writing process, so that students can take an active part in their learning and become more responsible and independent learners. They gained the courage and motivation to ask questions and seek and offer help during their collaborative activities. They also learnt to become better communicators, avoiding judgement, and not being afraid of criticism. This fostered a supportive learning environment in both focus groups and boosted students' confidence and involvement.

Teacher-Student Relationship Dynamics

During the interviews, respondents said that they felt no fear seeking help or advice from their instructor via Telegram. They believed that it improved their relationship with the teacher, and made them feel less hesitation and more respect towards them. Receiving timely feedback also had a positive effect on their writing progress.

Students said that building supportive relationships helped them enormously. Having direct, less formalized access to their instructors via Telegram encouraged students to ask questions promptly, without hesitation and delays. Usually, before the implementation of Telegram, they had to ask questions only during class (and often felt embarrassed or reluctant to do so) or to keep their questions till the office hours (which seemed to be already untimely or not so important). This shift towards a more informal communication channel contributed to minimizing traditional barriers in student-teacher interaction.

Also, many students who had a language barrier when expressing their thoughts in speaking found it more comfortable to do so through writing via Telegram. This resulted in more meaningful conversations and discussions, again contributing to a supportive learning environment.

Finally, students reported that instructors' availability via Telegram motivated them to take more responsibility for their learning and to engage deeply with the course material; read more, research more, and go one extra mile in their personal development.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that digital platforms like Telegram and Google Docs can improve students' academic writing ability through collaboration and enhancing teacher-student relationships, providing immediate feedback and innovative assessment mechanisms. Given the growing role of technology in teaching and learning in higher educational contexts and the need for digital literacy for success, this paper highlights the importance of integrating proficiency in the use of digital tools into the curriculum. Future researchers should explore the long-term implications and adaptation of these platforms for developing writing competencies in various educational contexts.

Discussion
Interpretation of Findings

The findings suggest that online platforms, specifically Telegram and Google Docs, enhance the academic writing skills of foundation-year business management students. There are several interrelated factors that can be attributed to the significant writing progress observed in students.

Firstly, Google Docs offers students an opportunity to use real-time editing and feedback of their own and their peers' writing. Such a collaborative nature of Google Docs promotes a sense of community among students, as a side benefit plus to improved writing ability. Placed into such an environment students are encouraged to critique each other's work and use collective brainstorming techniques to generate and share ideas and solutions. With many students holding a belief that writing is stressful and difficult, such an approach demystifies

the writing process and makes it clearer and more straightforward for students. As a result, they stop struggling and feeling low about their academic writing ability.

Secondly, being an informal communication channel, Telegram can bridge the communication gap between students and instructors, as it offers open dialogue, direct feedback and accessibility to instructors without the pressure of a traditional classroom. Altogether, this can increase learners' confidence and positive attitude towards their teacher.

Furthermore, the implementation of such platforms in language classrooms will facilitate digital literacy among both students and teachers. Digital literacy is an important prerequisite for success in professional settings nowadays, which is why mastering digital tools extends far beyond the writing context. Certainly, collaboration, critical thinking and adaptability are valued highly in both academic and workplace settings.

Alignment with Existing Literature

The findings of this study match closely with the existing literature. The study has its emphasis on the benefits of MALL (mobile-assisted learning) and CALL (computer-assisted learning) in language learning and academic writing. For example, research by Lai and Hwang (2016) highlights the importance of collaborative learning in language acquisition and writing.

Next, Stockwell and Hubbard (2013) discuss the potential of digital platforms for various learners' needs. Such platforms boost student motivation and learning.

Moreover, this study highlights the positive dynamics of teacher-student relationships. This idea supports the previous research by Nias (1989) and Mahdi (2023) that praises the role of effective communication in educational settings. Both researchers state that strong teacher-student relationships boost student motivation and engagement. This idea is further reinforced in this study by demonstrating how informal communication networks (Telegram) strengthen teacher-student relationships through building trust and a supportive learning environment.

Practical Implications for Educators

To maximize the benefits to educators, observed in this study several practical recommendations can be proposed:

Professional Development for Teachers: developing digital literacies is not only important for students. Universities should ensure their educators are equipped with the necessary skills to use digital platforms. Workshops should be offered on integrating various technologies into the curriculum. Only with a proper understanding of these digital tools and their functionality potential can instructors come up with engaging and useful learning materials and enhance learners' experience.

Curriculum Design: Course design and hours allocation should cover the implementation of digital tools. Teacher's awareness and initiative should not be the only driving force in this process. Embedding tech into the assignments (for example, group projects that require peer review through Google Docs) can encourage students to extend their learning routine beyond traditional tools.

Ongoing Support: Help desks offering access to technical support, technical support manuals or demonstration videos will encourage both students and teachers to adopt technology as an effective and necessary tool, not a burden. It will also promote a culture of innovation and boost digital literacy in the institution.

Assessment Strategies: Traditional assessment methods do not reflect the features of digital platforms. A good idea and probably a necessary step would be to incorporate digital tech into assessment strategies. For example, peer evaluation and reflective practice can be included in the grading process. This will foster a responsible attitude among students, raising awareness of their learning and success.

Feedback Mechanisms: feedback mechanisms should be clear and constructive. For example, comments features of Google Docs can be used here, allowing students to revise and edit their work based on the instructor's feedback before final submission. This approach will not only improve students' performance and results but also make a growth mindset possible among learners.

Fostering a Digital Culture: higher institutions should work on creating opportunities for a digital literacy culture as a core competency. Teachers and students should be encouraged to explore and navigate innovative methods in teaching and learning and understand what practices work better for them.

Conclusion

Summary of Key Findings

This study shows that the implementation of digital platforms, namely Telegram and Google Docs, can facilitate academic writing skills among foundation-year students of business and management. Through better learner engagement and collaboration, as well as effective interaction between teachers and students, these digital tools can revolutionize the writing process. The study results showed that students who used these platforms reported improvements both in their writing proficiency and communication skills; managed to boost their confidence levels; and gained a deeper understanding of clarity, coherence, and adherence to academic standards and rules. Collaborative features of Telegram and Google Docs encouraged peer feedback and problem-solving skills and made the writing process less stressful and more productive and straightforward.

The study also showed the potential of Telegram to act as an effective informal network-building tool between students and instructors. It helped eliminate anxiety and hesitation typical of traditional (formal) classroom settings. This open dialogue resulted in higher motivation and confidence among students.

Contributions to the Field and Limitations of the Study

The research offers valuable insights into the use of digital tools in the context of higher education and language learning. Although this study offers valuable insights for education specialists interested in the topic, it has some limitations. First of all, it's the number of participants. As the research was only limited to 60 foundation-year students studying business and management in one particular university, the participants were rather homogenous in nature (age, nationality, ethnic and educational backgrounds), so its results might not apply to a broader population). To increase the applicability of the results, future research should consider larger samples.

Also, qualitative data collected during the interview might be subject to bias. These limitations should be considered for future research.

To sum up, by employing a mixed-methods approach and incorporating diverse data collection techniques, this study aims to contribute meaningful insights into effective pedagogical strategies in higher education settings.

Future Research Directions

One possible way of exploring this topic further could be to consider the long-term impacts of digital tools on writing skills development or to examine how the benefits mentioned in this study can be noticed in senior students or students of other directions of study. Moreover, focusing on other digital platforms could complement the given research. Platforms like Grammarly or Mendeley could provide meaningful insights into research writing accuracy and building a better grasp of mechanics in writing.

Another interesting aspect of the study could be to consider the impact of various demographic factors (age, gender, ethnic and cultural or religious background, early exposure to technology) on the interventions analyzed in the given paper. For example, this knowledge could be used to design more inclusive writing programs for various learners and educational settings.

To conclude, online platforms like Telegram and Google Docs enhance the writing skills of foundation-year business management students. This study offers some evidence that in the era when digital literacy is becoming a valuable professional asset, educators and institutions must raise their awareness of innovative teaching practices that leverage technology to foster collaboration, engagement, and effective communication. This approach will better prepare students for academic success and equip them with essential skills needed in an increasingly digital world.

The Authors

Shakhnozakhon Fakhriddinova is a Leading Lecturer at the Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Teaches English and leads lectures on Tourism and Hospitality. TESOL and TEFL certified English teacher with over ten years of experience. Her research interests include Academic Writing, English for Academic Purposes, and Materials Design.
Email: shfakhriddinova@mdist.uz

Elena Khanzadyan is a clinical psychologist and a Leading Lecturer at Management Development Institute of Singapore in Tashkent, a trainer-trainer in governmental projects. She is a dedicated professional with a 19-year teaching experience in ELT, Academic Writing, Communication Skills, Business Ethics and Psychology, running academic programs, course development and testing.
Email: ekhanzadyan.mdist.uz

Authors' Contributions

In this study, both authors contributed equally to the research design, data analysis and evaluation, as well as article writing and editing.

ShF – Conceptualization, Research Design, Data Collection, Data Analysis and Evaluation, Editing, Formatting and Revising.

EKh – Conceptualization, Research Design, Data Analysis, Statistical Analysis and Interpretation, Manuscript Writing.

References

Akkilinc, F. R. (2024). Online Learning and Traditional Face-To-Face Learning: A Comparison Exploring Learning and Learning Experiences Among Students in the HE of the Eastern Mediterranean (2024). [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Liverpool. https://doi.org/10.17718/tojde.1137290

Aldaghri, A. & Oraif, I. (2024). The Impact of Online Teaching on Students' Engagement In Writing. Turkish *Online Journal of Distance Education* 23(3): 16-229. https://livrepository.liverpool. ac.uk/3180546/1/201208244%20April%202024%20pdf.

Andrage, C., & Roshay, A. (2023). Using Google Docs for Collaborative Writing Feedback With International Students. *The CATESOL Journal.* 2023, 34.1. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1417158.pdf.

Bates, A. W., & Sangra, A. (2011). Managing technology in higher education: *Strategies for transforming teaching and learning.* Jossey-Bass.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research.* Sage.

Dollah, M., Madhawa nair S., Wider W. (2021). The Effects of Utilizing Telegram App to Enhance Students' ESL Writing Skills. *International Journal of Educational Studies* 4(1):10-16. https://doi.org/10.53935/2641-533x.v4i1.55

Donnelly, D. (2015). Understanding teacher-student communication. *Teaching in Higher Education,* 20(5), 487-499. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2015.1029890

Farahian, M., & Noori, T. (2023). The Effectiveness of Peer Feedback through Google Docs for Improving EFL Students' Classroom Engagement and Writing Achievement. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems,* 47(1), 98-115. https://ijreeonline.com/article-1-666-en.html

Gonzalez, M. (2018). Collaborative learning through Google Docs: A case study. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 47(1), 98-115. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047239517716265

Gonzalez-Lloret, M., Canals, L., Hoyos, J. (2021). Role of Technology in Language Teaching and Learning amid the Crisis Generated by the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Íkala Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura* 26(3), 477-482. https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v26n3a01

Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools. *Journal of Educational Psychology,* 99(3), 445-476. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.99.3.445

Hague, C., & Payton, S. (2010). *Digital literacy across the curriculum.* Futurelab.

Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81-112. https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487

Hopi, N. P. (2021). The Use of Google Classroom As An Online Learning Platform for English As A Foreign Language (EFL) Students. SUSKA: *Master's Thesis,* 77(1), 81-112. https://repository.uin-suska. ac.id/65846/1/NANDA%20PARENTSA%20HOPI%20-%20GABUNGAN.pdf

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Smith, K. A. (2014). Cooperative learning: Improving university instruction by basing practice on validated theory. *Journal of Excellence in College Teaching,* 25(3), 85-118.

Lai, M. J., & Hwang, G. J. (2016). Seamless learning: A comprehensive approach. *Educational Technology & Society,* 19(1), 31-42.

Mahdi, S. (2023). Effective communication in learning: Teacher strategies and their impact on student learning outcomes. *International Journal of Linguistics Communication and Broadcasting,* 1(4), 26-30.

Nelavai, N., & Ramesh, S. (2020). An Insight into the challenges faced by First Year Engineering Students: Poor Foundational Knowledge. *Procedia Computer Science*, 172(2020): 823-830. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2020.05.118

Neumann, H. & McDonough, K. (2015). Exploring student interaction during collaborative prewriting discussions and its relationship to L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 27, 84–104. https://doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2014.09.009

Nias, J. (1996). Thinking about teachers' thinking: Developing teacher identities. *International Journal of Educational Research,* 25(7-8), 655-671. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-0355(96)00029-8

Pudyastuti, Z., & Palandi, J. F. (2023). Using Telegram application to promote student engagement in ESP classroom. Insania: *Jurnal Pemikiran Alternatif Kependidikan,*28(1a). https://doi.org/10.24090/insania.v28i1a.9001

Simel, T., Mengesha M., Beshah, M. (2024). *Writing challenges of undergraduate students. Heliyon* , 10(2024). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e36876

Stockwell, G., & Hubbard, P. (2013). Some emerging principles for mobile-assisted language learning. *Language Learning & Technology,* 17(2), 2-11.

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2012). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (3rd ed.). University of Michigan Press.

Syahreza, & St. Hartina (2023). Teaching Writing Through Telegram Bot: The Impact on Students Writing Performance. *JLE Journal of Literate of English Education Study Program* 4(01): 1-8. https://doi.org/10.47435/jle.v4i01.2091

Tabrizi, H., & Onvani, N. (2017). The impact of employing Telegram app on Iranian EFL beginners' vocabulary teaching and learning. *Applied Research on English Language,* 7(2), 145-165.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. K. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17(7), 783-805. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(01)00036-1

Vygotsky, L. (1978). Mind in society: *The development of higher psychological processes.* Harvard University Press.

Yanmin, W., & Yi, P. (2019). A Review of the Application and Development of Output Hypothesis Theory in Foreign Language Teaching. *IRA International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies* 15(3):88. https://doi.org/10.21013/jems.v15.n3.p1

Implementing Productive English Learning: Innovative Materials Design Strategies.

Guzal Mirzaeva
Vosiq International School, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Aziza Kulakhmedova
NEE "FUN BRAIN", Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Abstract

This article examines the importance of Innovative Materials Design Strategies in English language education, namely preparing students for IELTS, emphasizing its vital role in implementing research-based teaching strategies using AI, applying authentic language, identifying challenges on academic IELTS reading and listening tests and enhancing students' proficiency.

By means of an accurate assessment of present materials and empirical data, this paper highlights the dramatic impact of creating appropriate material designs approaches on language acquisition, improving reading, listening skills, as well as vocabulary development, analysis of errors, and research skill development. In this case study 40 participants from grade 10 and 11, whose scores in the academic reading sub-score were 5-5.5 and listening 5.5-6.0 on a scale of 1/9 took part in. The information was collected through observation and continuous assessment (each week 5 lessons of listening and 5 lessons of reading). For each lesson they are given 10–13 academic reading and listening comprehension questions to complete on their own.

The results showed that the participants had trouble discovering specific information, interpreting words or phrases in the reading text, comprehending the main concepts at the paragraph level, drawing conclusions, and interpreting the writer's goal and point of view, and in listening paraphrasing, recognizing correct answers in multiple choice questions, using identifying synonyms. From Innovative Materials Design Strategies, it is suggested that academic reading as well as listening difficulties and their linguistic and cognitive causes can be overcome using AI in the learning process.

Key words: *AI(Twee); IELTS reading; listening problems; authentic materials; inference; materials design strategies.*

Introduction

IELTS test is becoming increasingly common for youngsters all over the world, including Uzbekistan. This article demonstrates an understanding of the transformational power of real language data in shaping language instruction. IELTS instructors today have unlimited access to vast datasets of authentic materials thanks to the internet as well as AI developments in preparing students to the test. Ilkka (2018), claimed that using AI would not only increase the effectiveness of current education, but it would also alter the setting in which learning takes place and make it more socially relevant.

What are the reasons of Materials Design Strategies in IELTS necessary for learners? Why Vosiq International Schools students have been chosen for current research work?

Using available materials for the test, students are not able to get desired scores from receptive skills which can enable them to achieve desired score and enroll in prestigious universities.

In order to overcome these problems, some approaches and methods of materials design using ICT have been discussed and implemented. Facilitating technology to learning is one of the reasons of productive ways in engaging learners to the learning process, since using technology can help to meet objectives of the lessons.

The second reason of choosing Vosiq international school learners is that they bear responsibility to be obligated for the results of the test. They are already serious and critical thinkers at this age, the need of receptive skills, along with wide vocabulary range and grammar which can be used for interpretation of ideas and recognize sentence structure correctly is assumed to lead to future progress.

The third reason is Adaptive Learning; the platform supports personalized learning paths, allowing students to progress at their own pace. This adaptability is crucial for IELTS preparation, where learners may have varying levels of proficiency.

The next reason is Collaborative Learning, learners can work together on projects, exchange feedback, and practice speaking skills, mimicking real-life communication scenarios. In addition, educators can design specific assessments that align with IELTS criteria, ensuring that students practice relevant skills. The ability to create custom quizzes and exercises helps reinforce learning objectives.

Finally, it provides a Tracking Progress, enabling educators to identify areas where learners struggle. This data-driven approach helps tailor instruction to meet individual needs and with features like interactive quizzes and speaking prompts,

The primary research question is: How does using AI "Twee" can enhance vocabulary acquisition, IELTS language skills(reading, listening,), and learner engagement in middle school English language learners?

Methodology

The widespread use of English has led to more creative ways in teaching the language to leaners. There are a number of useful websites and AI tools in the field of teaching English and preparing students for IELTS test. In order to overcome the problems, connected to the classroom management, increasing students' motivation level in today's globalized world, some approaches and methods of materials design using ICT have been discussed and implemented. According to Nicky Hockly, technology opened the way for interaction and learning for both teachers and learners (2013b). AI "Twee" is one of the modern tools to tailor the learners' needs and provides wide opportunities for educators to design materials creatively and appropriate for the target group. There are several reasons why Twee has been selected for Materials Development in IELTS; One of the reasons is Engaging Content Creation where Twee enables educators to create engaging and interactive content tailored to the diverse needs of IELTS learners. Its user-friendly interface allows for the incorporation of multimedia elements, making learning more dynamic. Even it can create materials on any topic providing complete tasks. Moreover, Twee offers students the chance to practice key IELTS skills in a supportive environment, boosting their confidence and readiness for the exam.Twee is related to the category of Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC). "AIGC aims to increase the accessibility and efficiency of the content creation process so that high-quality content may be produced more quickly" (Cao et, al.,2023).

Technology-integrated teaching, learning, and courses, according to Hanson-Smith (2018), not only encourage active, attentive, and conscious learning and student involvement, but also boost student-teacher and student-student contact. Generating AI is able to create a new content. Holmes, W., & Miao, F. (2023) stated, that symbolic representations of human thought may be compromised by the formats in which the content is presented, including software code, graphics, music, and writings written in natural languages. As Hanson-Smith (2018) mentioned "where much of a traditional language class consists of tests or performance orientation, CALL materials readily offer students the basis for mastery orientation (p.3,2018)" that, facilitating technology to learning is one of the productive ways in engaging learners to the learning process, since using technology can help to meet objectives of the lessons.

Using websites and ready materials are not new instructional method in our country. But using AI Twee" for creating differentiated materials for learners has not been widespread yet. Learners can improve all skills, including grammar in an effective way of teaching with more involving learning process, which creates learner-centered lessons where students discuss, exchange their opinions. Language learners will acquire the language in accordance with authentic materials. In most cases, using same materials repeatedly to teach grammar, and other essential language skills can make students feel bored leading to challenges for learners. But, working

authentic real- world readings, listening and podcast will engage students completely, and preparation becomes more enjoyable. Students can work individually for creating different types of questions where they always make mistakes.

Apart from above mentioned advantages Using Twee for IELTS materials development can enhance the learning experience by making it more engaging, personalized, and collaborative. Its diverse features cater to the specific needs of IELTS preparation, ultimately supporting learners in achieving their goals. It fosters collaboration among students through its social features

Participants

The study involved 40 middle school students, aged 15-16, from different backgrounds and they had been studying English for six years. All participants had completed General English B2+ level of Gateway by Spenser and have started academic English since September 2024.The participants were divided into two groups based on the diagnostic test and named experimental group which used AI "Twee" from the sources such as " The Guardian" BBC News World, Physiology today, New Scientist and Economics for reading , for Listening (The real story BBC), https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kurzgesagt+in+a+nutshell, and   control group which used the IELTS preparation books, the Guardian with articles for different levels, and Essential 4000 words and Grammar way 3.

Procedure

The research was carried out over a period of three months, during which both groups attended 10 hours of English classes that focused on improving vocabulary skills, grammar, reading, and listening skills.

Class structure. The weekly class was held as following ways:

Reading:	3 hours
Listening :	3 hours
Vocabulary:	2 hours
Grammar:	1 hours

In order to monitor students progress continuous assessment was implemented in each session including continuous assessment to monitor student progress. After each assessment, students involved in detailed discussions about their errors, giving the way to students to understand and rectify mistakes. This reflecting technique was essential for enhancing learning.

Materials Used

Materials presented by Twee have been modified and up-to-date and the experimental group used them:

- Vocabulary exercises
- Grammar activities
- Matching headings tasks
- Multiple-choice questions
- True/False/Not Given questions
- Summary completion exercises
- Collocations extracted from accurate sources such as
  BBC News, Psychology Today, New Scientist, and The Guardian.

However, the control group focused on improving vocabulary skills, grammar, reading, and listening skills with the following materials

- A hard copy of Collins IELTS books
- Essential 4000 words
- The Guardian old version
- Grammarway 3 by Jenny Dooley, Virginiya Evans

Assessment and evaluation

Both groups were evaluated by taking two practice exams at the conclusion of the three-month program. Their speaking, writing, listening, and reading abilities were all thoroughly evaluated by these exams. The purpose of the mock exams was to replicate actual exam settings and offer an accurate evaluation of each student's abilities.

The experimental group's results were much higher than those of the control ones.

Data Collection

Information was collected through:

1. Pre- and post-test vocabulary tests to measure vocabulary acquisition in reading. **Appendix 1**
2. Feedback of students' questioners to evaluate engagement and benefits of using AI "Twee" in IELTS.
3. Mock exam to assess improvements in reading and listening skills. **Appendix 3, Appendix 4.**
4. Observations of students' activeness to monitor engagement in the learning process. **Appendix 5.**

Data Analysis

The feedback of the students questioners about engagements of AI (Table 1) and the data from Mock tests were examined quantitively using the statistics to compare the results and performance of the experimental which used updated materials and control groups , which worked with traditional method and ready IELTS materials. The analysis revealed that AI "Twee" could bring productive results in the learning process.

Results

Vocabulary acquisition and using them in reading

The results of the Mock showed a crucial improvement in vocabulary in reading , and listening in the experiment group with comparisons to control group. On average , the students who used Twee modification materials scored at about 15% higher than those controlled group. Mainly , the experimental group presented a strong ability in comprehension which tests they learned during the trial period

Listening Skills and Predicting

The listening assignments revealed clear enhancements in the listening skills of the experimental group. Experimental students produced paraphrasing more productively facilitating a wide range of vocabulary and did less mistakes in multiple choice questions and note completion, taking into account sentence structure. A vast majority of students could predict answers before listening to them. However, the control group's listening was lower at about 15% who only practiced tests. **Appendix 3(Reading). Appendix 4(Listening).**

Listening Skills and Predicting

The listening assignments revealed clear enhancements in the listening skills of the experimental group. Experimental students produced paraphrasing more productively facilitating a wide range of vocabulary and did less mistakes in multiple choice questions and note completion, taking into account sentence structure. A vast majority of students could predict answers before listening to them. However, the control group's listening was lower at about 15% who only practiced tests.

Student Engagement and Autonomy

Teaching English to teenagers can be difficult, but it can also be enjoyable and rewarding. While teaching teens it is good to keep in mind that they are extremely efficient language learners. They maintain some of the qualities of young learners, such as childish fun, but they also have the ability to speculate and think critically like adults. Allowing your adolescent English language learners to pick how they demonstrate their understanding of subject and new language promotes learner autonomy while also encouraging teamwork and creativity.

Vocabulary knowledge is an important predictor of literacy and broader academic outcomes. For this reason, in data collection Pre- and post-test vocabulary tests to measure vocabulary acquisition in reading and listening were used tasks including gap filling, multiple choice and matching activities.

Furthermore, according to the results of the questionnaire of students' engagement in the process of preparing to the IELTS and the advantageous aspects of utilizing AI TWEE it was revealed that 30 students out of 40 commenced working autonomously outside the classroom and as a result of numerous practices they demonstrated much higher result than others.

Classroom Interaction

In the process of preparing to IELTS with the assistance of the application AI TWEE students demonstrated not only their academic abilities but also versatile approaches to learning, such as communication skills, research skills, thinking skills, social skills and self-management skills. For instance, after finishing their

reading and listening tests they were allowed to make sure whether their responses were right and then share their answers with pairs and discuss. Thus peer observation, peer learning, peer evaluation took place and as the last stage they were provided with the actual answer keys to the tests and whole class discussion came about. Although it usually takes much of the valuable time of both teachers and students, it provides effective learning with thorough comprehension of the answers and strategies used in the process of finding the correct answer.

Discussion

The integration of AI TWEE in the process of learning IELTS has shown its effectiveness among the students of particular experiment group in the context of higher grades in the school they study. It can be proven by the increased percentage of students' results on specific types of questions in the reading/listening sections, namely matching headings, multiple choice, True/False/Not Given, Yes/No, Not Given questions, gap filling, sentence completion, summary completion. Moreover, the effectiveness of incorporating of AI TWEE can be observed in the tremendous effort of enlarging students' vocabulary range, appropriate usage of collocations, as well as enhancing their productive skills.

Although the findings of this study are intriguing, there are several caveats to consider. The study was conducted in a single educational setting, however future research might look into the scalability of implementing useful AI tools as TWEE across schools and cultural contexts.

Furthermore, the long-term impact of utilizing AI tools on enhancement students' language skills and preparing them to pass the IELTS with higher score 7+ and more should be explored to see if the reported improvements in all language skills remain over time.

Conclusion

This study illustrates that using AI "Twee" to create reading and listening with the target language in seconds can be productive based on the levels of the students rather than spending hours looking through materials, adapting or creating texts. By providing students with the access to authentic reading and listening materials, Twee promotes active learning, critical reading and thinking, learner autonomy, creativity and collaboration. Using Twee for preparation IELTS proves to be productive and motivating tool for students' language development and proficiency in middle school students in language teaching.

Future study should be continued to explore the potential of AI tools in teaching and learning IELTS, analyzing their positive influence in various level learners and a long-term benefit of implementing and incorporating technology in language teaching.

Appendix

6. Appendix 1. Pre-test vocabulary tests to measure vocabulary acquisition in reading

The current vocabulary test is intended to measure the range of vocabulary acquisition in reading. The language proficiency level of the text is upper-intermediate and is suitable for high grades (grades 10-11-12) at school, as well as college or lyceum language learners. In particular task the necessary words are chosen according to the meaning of the text as Richards, J.C. (1976) claimed the best way to identify the acquisition of vocabulary knowledge is to check it in accordance with the context. The text consists of 382 words with 13 gaps in which the test takers should put the appropriate answer. The first one is given as an example.

Reading
Read the article and circle the best option to complete the text – a, b, c, or d.

Should I get a dog?
 In the last decade there has been a lot of 0)..........indicating that the average domestic dog can provide many benefits to one's mental and physical wellbeing. But we need to remember that dogs are not a miracle 1).......... for mental or physical illness. Owning a dog is beneficial and comforting only for those who love and 2).......... domestic animals. And just as 3).........., you need to have the time and money to keep a dog happy and healthy. If you're simply not a

'dog person,' or are 4).......... time or financial resources, dog ownership is not going to provide you with any health benefits. Even if you love dogs, it's important to understand everything that 5).......... for a dog entails. Owning a dog is a commitment that will last the 6).......... of the animal. This is usually between ten and fifteen years. And at the end of that period, you'll have to go through the grief and mourning that comes with 7).......... a beloved companion. Dog ownership has other drawbacks too. Firstly, dogs require time and attention. As any dog owner will tell you, there's nothing 8).......... to your mental health about coming home to a dog who has been locked up in the house on his own all day long. Dogs need daily exercise and mental 9)........... It helps them stay calm and well-balanced. You also need to remember that owning a dog can get in the way of your social life. It is your job to 10).......... you can handle your dog appropriately. It's true that by training your dog, you'll be able to take him with you to visit friends, run errands, or sit outside a coffee shop, for example. But you won't be able to leave for a spur of the moment weekend away. As many dog owners will testify, dogs can be destructive. Plus any dog can have an occasional accident at home. It 11).......... happens if he's sick or been left alone for too long. Also, some dogs have a tendency to chew shoes or destroy cushions. You can control this negative, destructive behaviour by providing your dog with training and exercise, but if the dog is left alone for long periods of time these 12).......... will be less effective.

Example:	**a) talk**	**b) research**	**c) hope**	**d) help**
1.	a) prescription	b) cure	c) diagnosis	d) surprise
2.	a) accomplish	b) appreciate	c) approve	d) maintain
3.	a) importantly	b) famously	c) trivially	d) formally
4.	a) lacking in	b) rich in	c) open to	d) available to
5.	a) passing	b) feeling	c) looking	d) caring
6.	a) importance	b) value	c) lifetime	d) companionship
7.	a) giving away	b) choosing	c) preparing	d) losing
8.	a) beneficial	b) fun	c) comparable	d) significant
9.	a) note	b) stimulation	c) picture	d) block
10.	a) find out	b) make sure	c) promise	d) train
11.	a) rarely	b) never	c) usually	d) surprisingly
12.	a) method	b) behaviours	c) measures	d) tendencies

Post-test vocabulary tests to measure vocabulary acquisition in reading
Read the text and answer the questions below. Circle the correct option, a, b, c, or d.

Delhi's Air Pollution Leading to a Health Crisis.

Experts have long suggested a link between Delhi's toxic air and allergies and other serious medical conditions. But evidence from a recent car-free experiment collected by Professor Raj Kumar, a specialist from the University of Delhi, suggests that action to cut pollution might be effective. For a few hours last week, all private cars were banned from driving into the heart of old Delhi. This so called 'car free day' experiment was considered a success: scientists monitoring the air found a dramatic 60% drop in the amount of dangerous pollutants compared to the previous day.

Professor Kumar claims that Delhi is the most polluted city in the world, with other doctors and scientists agreeing that the locals are facing a public health crisis because pollutants worsen health issues such as asthma or heart disease. Clinics have to open for double their normal working hours in order to .... with demand. Even then, corridors are overrun with wheezing patients, queuing for oxygen masks to take respite breaths as they wait. It is the rapid development of the country in recent years that has led to India having 13 of the world's 20 most polluted cities. The World Health Organisation found that Delhi had an average of 153 micrograms of the smallest particles*, known as PM2.5s, per cubic metre in its air. The international 'safe' level for these particles is only 6 micrograms per cubic metre.

'Scientists have different opinions about what is the main cause of this pollution,' said Professor Kumar. He continued, 'There are over 8m vehicles on the roads already, with 1,400 new ones added every day. Most of these new vehicles burn diesel and have poor emissions standards, belching out clouds of the tiny PM2.5 particles that can be most harmful to health. .... vehicles, there are an increasing number of diesel-burning electrical generators attached to modern apartment blocks in the capital. Farms and coal-burning factories around the region further worsen the air.'

Health problems are happening now but the vehicle and factory emissions also contain greenhouse gases such as nitrous oxide, ozone and carbon dioxide. These will remain in the atmosphere for many decades and .... future climate change across the planet. India's cities are facing the problems right now but the pollution (and its problems) is a warning about what many more developing nations will face in future.

The Indian government says it is aware of the issue. Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said he wants to fast-track the construction of a bypass that would enable around 50,000 polluting lorries to avoid driving into the city every day. And he wants the car companies to clean up their vehicles to the stricter standards in Europe. 'We want to migrate early but the auto industry is not ready', said the Environment Minister. The car industry in India could produce vehicles which comply with the Euro-6 standard, he said, but they have been lagging behind. 'We will deal with this threat of air pollution and we will win the battle and we will see a marked difference in the next two years.'

Delhi did manage to clean up its air before. At the turn of the century, the local government moved polluting industries out of the city, shut down coal-burning power plants and forced public transport vehicles to move from diesel and petrol to cleaner alternatives. 'The air quality improved steadily until 2007', said Anumita Roychowdhury of the Centre for Science and Environment. 'But if you look at the data from 2009 onwards, you will find the levels are increasing again and have gone up so high that now what we are saying is that we have lost the gains of the action taken by the first generation.'

For Professor Kumar, all Delhi citizens need to do their part in dealing with the pollution problem .... increased industrialisation. Health professionals need to petition authorities to act and individuals must work out how to keep the city growing without just buying more cars.

*particle: (noun) - a minute portion, piece, fragment, or amount; a tiny or very small bit: a particle of dust.

Example: The article blames the health crisis in Delhi on:

a) polluted air.
b) ineffective healthcare system.
c) inadequate waste disposal.
d) an experiment that went wrong.

1. Which of the following statements best describes the outcome of the recent car free day?

a) It didn't work at all.
b) It had some dramatic long term results.
c) It produced promising scientific data.
d) It should take place more regularly.

2. In Paragraph 2, the best verb to complete the gap is:

a) make up
b) keep up
c) hold up
d) take up

3. In Paragraph 2, the underlined verb 'led to' can be best replaced with:

a) caused
b) promoted
c) shown
d) resulted in

4. The health service in Delhi:

a) has introduced new medical treatments specifically for asthmatics.
b) struggles to cope with the number of patients.
c) is considered to be the most inefficient in India.
d) does not have the medical equipment to assist most patients.

5. The World Health Organisation discovered the quality of the air in Delhi:

a) falls just below the international safety standards.
b) is comparable with the majority of large cities.
c) at times falls short of the international safety standards.
d) drastically falls below the international safety standards.

6. In Paragraph 3, the best phrase to complete the gap is:

    a) In addition to
    b) In comparison to
    c) In opposition to
    d) In relation to

7. The air quality in Delhi:

    a) hasn't improved, despite a decrease in the number of factories.
    b) is blamed entirely on vehicle emissions.
    c) has resulted in more electrical generators being installed.
    d) is partly blamed on farms.

8. In Paragraph 4, the best verb to complete the gap is:

    a) date back to
    b) contribute to
    c) look up to
    d) report to

9. According to the author, the situation in Delhi now:

    a) will have an impact on the rest of the world.
    b) will ensure other cities do not make the same mistake.
    c) directly contradicts the scientific data available.
    d) is so bad it cannot be reversed.

10. In Paragraph 5, the underlined verb 'comply with' can be best replaced with:

    a) meet
    b) agree with
    c) request
    d) side with

11. The delay in the introduction of the new standards for the car industry is caused by:

    a) the government.
    b) the industry itself.
    c) new standards being too demanding.
    d) consumers.

12. Anumita Roychowdhury believes that air pollution in Delhi is now:

    a) at an acceptable level, but worsening.
    b) deteriorating again after a period of improvement.
    c) at about the same level as it was in 2007.
   d) quickly improving due to the improvement work already undertaken.

13. In Paragraph 7, the best phrase to complete the gap is:

    a) leading to
   b) affecting
    c) compared to
    d) resulting from

14. Which statement best describes Professor Kumar's opinion?

    a) Polluting industries should be moved out of the city.
    b) The responsibility for addressing the issues rests with everyone.
    c) The pollution crisis needs further international media coverage.
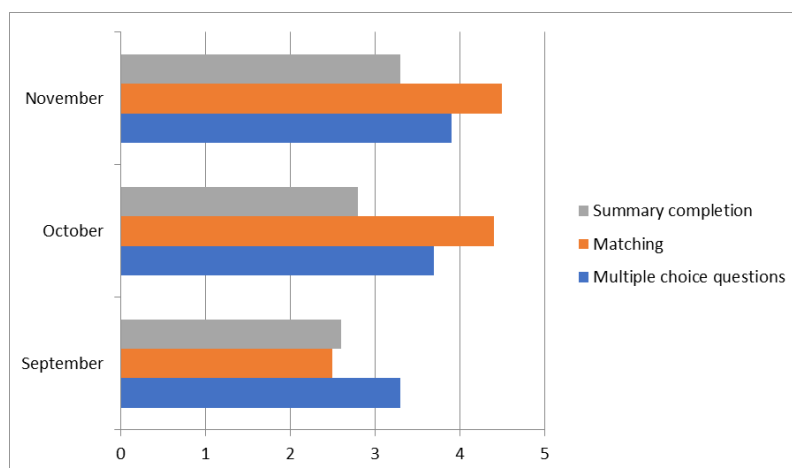   d) Pollution cannot be avoided due to industrialisation.

Appendix 2.
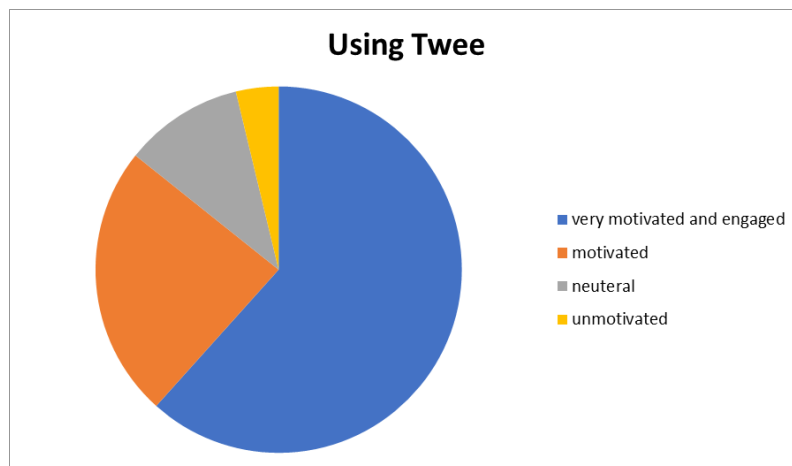
Appendix 3. (Reading)
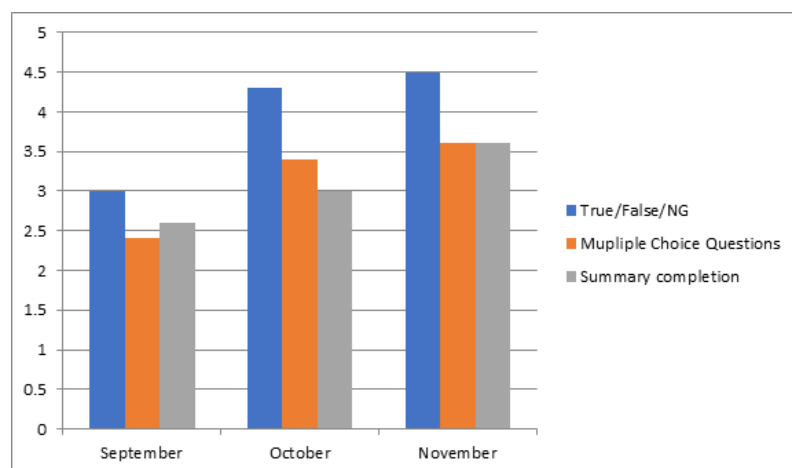
Appendix 4.(Listening)

Appendix 5.

Student name: …………………………………………………………………………………
Date of the observation: …………………………………………………………………………………
Class/Group: …………………………………………………………………………………

#	Criteria	Very motivated	Motivated	Neutral	Unmotivated
1	How engaging do you find the listening materials?				
2	How relevant do you find the materials prepared by Twee AI to your learning objectives?				
3	How clear are instructions of IELTS				
4	How useful are the materials for your study and preparation?				
5	How satisfied are you with the vocabulary?				
6	How satisfied are you with reading task materials?				
7	What do thing about Twee?				

References

Cao, Y., Li, S., Liu, Y., Yan, Z., Dai, Y., Yu, P. S., & Sun, L. (2023). A comprehensive survey of ai-generated content (aigc): A history of generative ai from gan to chatgpt. *arXiv preprint arXiv*:2303.04226.

Holmes, W., & Miao, F. (2023). *Guidance for generative AI in education and research.* UNESCO Publishing.

Hanson-Smith, E. (2018). T*echnology-enhanced language teaching: Promoting active learning and student interaction.* TESOL Quarterly.

Ilkka, T. (2018). *The impact of artificial intelligence on learning, teaching, and education.* European Union.

GA IESOL Level 2/C1 Candidate Booklet (Reading) HIPPO Sample

Kiddle, T. (2013). *Technology in language teaching: Aligning tools with learner needs.* TESOL International Journal.

Poulaki, S., Dowlatabadi, H. R., Ahmadian, M., & Yazdani, H. (2020). Dynamic assessment: A diagnostic tool to capture academic second language reading difficulties in the IELTS context. *Journal of Modern Research in English Language Studies*, 7(4), 55-87

Richards, J.C. 1976. The role of vocabulary teaching. TESOL Quarterly, Vol.10. No 1.
        https://hippo-thecontest.org/sample-papers/

Insights from the Initial Implementation of Xreading

Andrew Gallacher
Andrew Thompson
Amy Toms
Yuko Tanoue
Fukuoka Women's University, Fukuoka, Japan
Dragana Lazic
Kansai University, Osaka, Japan

Abstract

This study examines the integration of X-Reading, an online extensive reading platform, into the Academic Career English (ACE) program at a university in southern Japan. Implemented in the fall of 2022, the study aimed to determine the most effective approach for incorporating the platform within the curriculum. An action-based controlled experiment was conducted with first-year students (N = 134) to assess the impact of a post-reading reflective task on reading-related learner outcomes as measured by changes in reading speed and book level. The intervention group engaged in sustained silent reading (SSR) in class, followed by discussion and a reflective task, while the control group participated in SSR and discussed the material they read but did not complete the reflective task. Bayesian paired samples t-tests revealed strong evidence for improvement in the intervention group's reading speed (BF = 23.98) and moderate evidence for improvement in book level (BF = 4.22), while the control group showed only anecdotal or weak evidence of gains. Findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on extensive reading (ER) pedagogy by furthering the notion that extensive reading practices are most effective when supplemented with additional tasks. These results suggest that structured reflection enhances digital ER's effectiveness in fostering reading fluency and learner autonomy.

Keywords: *Extensive Reading, X-Reading, Virtual Libraries, Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Autonomous Learning, Second Language Acquisition (SLA)*

Introduction

The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) released the English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization in 2014. The plan aimed to enhance international communication and global competitiveness by improving English language proficiency among Japanese students (MEXT, 2014). This was done, in part, in preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. The initiative introduced significant changes across all educational levels. In elementary schools, English education was made compulsory from the 5th grade, with plans to extend this to the 3rd grade by 2020. In junior high schools, English became the medium of instruction in all English classes, which began emphasizing practical communication skills over receptive learning. At the high school level, instruction shifted from traditional grammar-centric methods, towards the development of students' abilities to understand and express abstract ideas on a wide range of topics in English. In addition, the reform attempted to empower teachers by providing the additional training needed to teach English in English. Leaders that emerged from this training, at all levels of education, were also incentivized with the chance of promotion.

While the 2014 reforms represented a significant shift in Japan's approach to English education, they were not the first attempt at improving English proficiency at a national level. Earlier efforts, such as the

Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program established in 1987, aimed to introduce English-speaking university graduates from foreign countries into public schools to enhance communicative competence. However, studies have shown that despite decades of exposure to proficient English speakers, the predominant grammar-translation method and teacher-centered instruction limited students' ability to develop real-world communication skills (Gorsuch, 2001). Additionally, globalization and increased demand for English fluency in international business have further complicated the English education landscape in Japan (Fujimoto-Adamson, 2006; Kubota, 2017). As a result, even with MEXT's extensive reforms, Japan continues to lag behind other East Asian nations in English proficiency (Honna & Takeshita, 2005).

In spite of these efforts, Japan's overall English proficiency has shown signs of decline during this period, which raises questions about the effectiveness of the reforms and their alignment with the challenges of English education in Japan. To better understand these trends, it is useful to examine data from Education First (EF), a global organization dedicated to promoting international education and language learning (Education First, 2024). EF provides language-related resources such as the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), which is based on data from millions of test takers who complete the EF Standard English Test (EF SET). The EF SET is a free online adaptive assessment that evaluates reading and listening skills, and aligns with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Education First, 2024a). Additionally, EF EPI scores have been shown to correlate strongly with TOEFL iBT and IELTS scores (Education First, 2024a), highlighting similar trends in English proficiency (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: CEFR-Weighted EF EPI Proficiency Bands

CEFR	EF EPI Score	EF EPI Band
C2	700 – 800	Very High
C1	600 – 699	Very High
B2	550 – 599	High
	500 – 549	Moderate
B1	450 – 499	Low
	400 – 449	Very Low
A2	300 – 399	Very Low
A1	200 – 299	Very Low
Pre-A1	1 – 199	Very Low

As measured by the EF EPI, Japan has experienced a significant decline in its global ranking of overall English proficiency (Education First, 2024b). In 2012, Japan ranked 22nd out of 54 countries, with a score of 516, indicating moderate proficiency. By 2024, this ranking had plummeted to 92nd out of 116 countries, with a score of 454, reflecting low proficiency (Education First, 2024b). This decline in proficiency suggests a need to revisit the effectiveness of MEXT's English education reforms, even though the introduction of English education at earlier stages and the emphasis on practical communication skills are commendable.

The decline in Japan's EF EPI ranking is particularly concerning given the emphasis placed on communicative language teaching (CLT) in the reform efforts. Some scholars argue that the implementation of these policies has been inconsistent across different school districts, leading to disparities in language outcomes (Butler & Iino, 2005). Additionally, the rigid entrance examination system, which continues to prioritize grammatical accuracy over practical communication, has remained a significant barrier to achieving MEXT's intended goals (Paxton et al., 2022). Given these factors, it is crucial to explore alternative methods, such as extensive reading, that may offer more effective ways to supplement English learning in Japan.

To combat declines in English proficiency at the secondary level, several strategies have been implemented within Japanese universities. These include the use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) within Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) curricula (Brown, 2016; Ikeda et al., 2021; Leis, 2018), increased internationalization efforts such as MEXT's 2014 Top Global University Project aimed at attracting more international students and enhancing global exposure for Japanese residents (Shimmi & Yonezawa, 2014), and making English a compulsory subject across a wide range of academic fields (Michaud & Gurney, 2023). In each of these cases, Japanese students entering these programs face increased demands, as they are often required to possess higher-level English skills, including the ability to read and write in line with global academic standards.

Background

This study was conducted at a public women's university in southwestern Japan. With approximately 1,000 students, the university operates under the direct influence of MEXT's policies, positioning it at the forefront of Japan's efforts to reform English education and promote globalization. Consequently, the university has implemented several initiatives across its three departments: International Liberal Arts, Environmental Sciences, and Food & Health Sciences.

The first of these initiatives is the development of the Academic Career English (ACE) program, which includes mandatory academic English courses for all first- and second-year students. Next is the decision to use English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI) within all ACE and "Advanced English" classes, in effect designing them as Content Language and Integrated Learning (CLIL) courses. Third, are ongoing internationalization efforts facilitated by the university's International Center, which promote and manage study abroad/exchange programs with universities in over 20 countries (Fukuoka Women's University, 2024). Finally, is the university's attempt to foster authentic cross-cultural interaction by requiring all first-year students to reside in its dormitory, where Japanese and international students share accommodations.

These internationalization efforts are seamlessly integrated into the university's academic structure, which operates on a quarter system. The first and second quarters run from April to July during the first semester, while the third and fourth quarters span September to January during the second semester. Each quarter consists of eight weeks of study, separated by a one-week break that is subject to variation based on the annual academic schedule.

The ACE Program and Guided Self Learning (GSL)

The Academic Career English (ACE) program spans all four quarters of the first two undergraduate years and is compulsory for students in every department. The curriculum includes four courses that increase in level throughout each semester of study (see Table 2). Individual classes within each course last 100 minutes, with approximately 1.5 hours of weekly homework assigned per class.

TABLE 2: ACE Program Courses

Year & Quarter	Course	Contact Hours
Y1Q1&2	English Communication 1	26.7
	Reading & Writing 1&2	26.7
	Guided Self Learning (GSL) 1	26.7
	Oral Presentation Skills (OPS)	26.7
Y1Q3&4	English Communication 2	26.7
	Reading & Writing 3	53.4
	Guided Self Learning (GSL) 2	26.7
Y2Q3&4	English Communication 3	26.7
	Reading & Writing 4	26.7
TOTAL HOURS:		**267**

To support the university's commitment to globalization and women's leadership, the ACE program emphasizes themes aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to gender equality, environmental sustainability, and well-being (United Nations, 2025). This focus complements the university's three departments: International Liberal Arts, Environmental Science, and Food and Health Sciences. As students progress through the curriculum and deepen their understanding of SDG-related themes, the program culminates in a 1,000-word research report in Reading & Writing 4 and a ten-minute academic presentation in English Communication 3, both based on independently conducted research.

During the first semester (quarters 1 and 2) of their second year, students experience a "gap term," during which no official ACE classes are held. Instead, they are required to complete portfolios documenting the initial stages of their independent research projects. To properly complete their portfolios, students must find research articles related to their research topics and take notes on their findings. These notes eventually serve as the basis for their final 1,000-word research report and presentation, to be completed by the end of quarter 4 in Reading & Writing 4 and English Communication 3, respectively.

Recognizing that undertaking a research project of this scale and level of autonomy is a new experience for most students, first-year Guided Self Learning (GSL) classes focus on developing essential skills for independent research. These include choosing credible sources, note-taking, referencing and citation, paraphrasing, summarizing, time management, and reading comprehension. While individual instructors have flexibility in their teaching methods, each GSL class integrates an extensive reading (ER) component in the second semester to foster effective reading habits in preparation for the final 1000-word research report in the second year.

Beyond reinforcing research skills, ER enhances long-term language retention and reading fluency, both of which support research writing. Studies show that students who engage in ER develop greater automaticity in word recognition, leading to improved comprehension and overall language proficiency (Day & Bamford, 1998). Furthermore, ER fosters intrinsic motivation by allowing students to choose materials that align with their interests, increasing engagement and reducing reading anxiety (Mason & Krashen, 2004).

In addition to linguistic benefits, it could be argued that ER also helps cultivate independent learning strategies. By maintaining a consistent reading habit, students can develop self-discipline and time management skills, which are essential for academic and professional success. Exposure to a variety of texts also broadens vocabulary and deepens understanding of different writing styles. Moreover, it may help students identify potential research topics of interest. Given these advantages, it is essential to explore the most effective ways to implement ER within structured learning environments like the ACE program.

Extensive Reading (ER), Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), and Xreading

Extensive reading (ER) involves engaging with large amounts of easily comprehensible text for enjoyment and ideally for developing lifelong reading habits essential for academic and research success (Day & Bamford, 1998). Due to its numerous cognitive and linguistic benefits, ER has long been considered a fundamental component of effective language learning programs (Nation, 2007). This is especially true in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)-based curricula, where ER has been shown to improve academic outcomes in English (Wanzek & Vaughn, 2007; Li et al., 2021; Horning, 2007). However, simply providing students with access to ER materials is often insufficient, as self-motivation alone is rarely enough to sustain engagement. Without structured guidance and accountability measures, students may struggle to incorporate ER into their learning routines (Robb & Ewert, 2024). As a result, most educators agree that ER should be implemented with built-in accountability mechanisms, ideally within the classroom setting (Fenton-Smith, 2008).
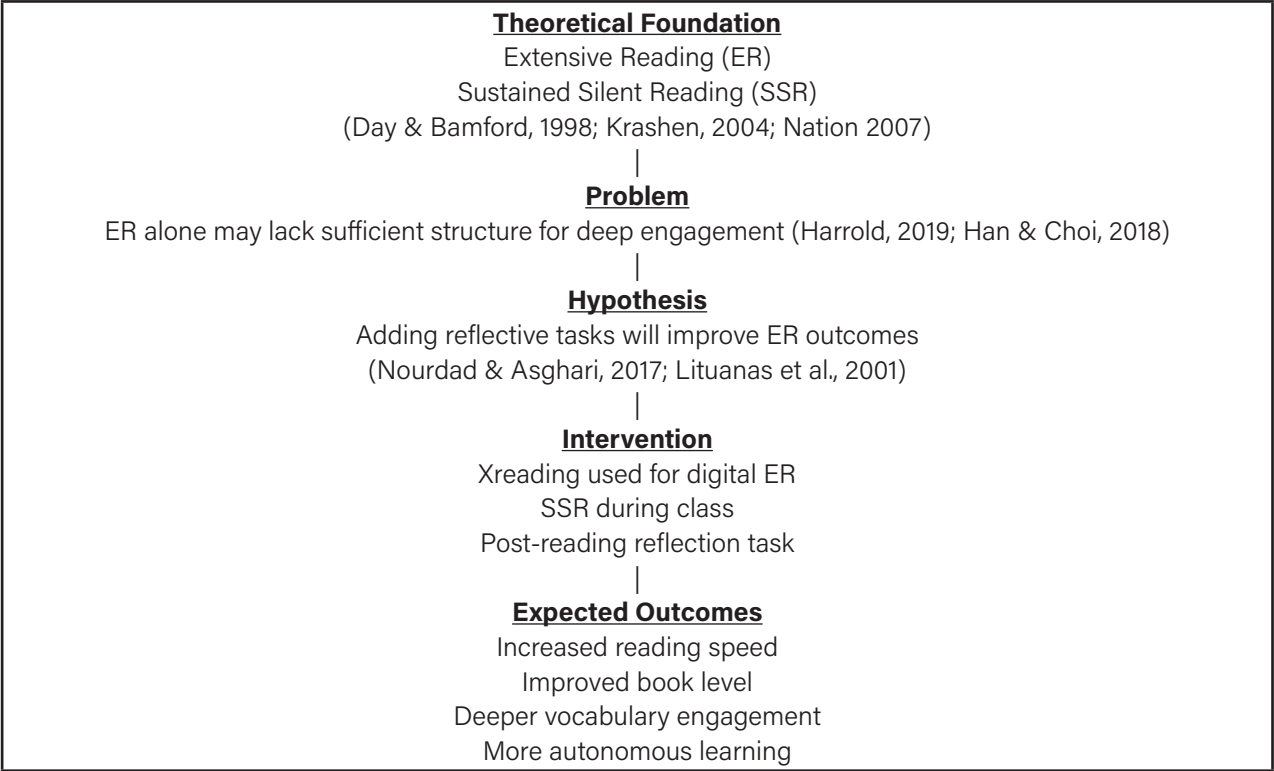
One widely recognized approach to implementing ER effectively is sustained silent reading (SSR), in which students independently read self-selected books for an extended period during class time. SSR has been linked to increased reading speed, improved fluency, and greater overall enjoyment of reading (Krashen, 2004). Unlike traditional intensive reading approaches—where students analyze short passages for grammar and vocabulary—SSR promotes reading for meaning and comprehension, thereby facilitating deeper language acquisition (Nation, 2007). However, despite its benefits, SSR has historically faced logistical challenges, such as ensuring that students have access to appropriate reading materials and that their engagement can be effectively tracked (Fraumeni-McBride, 2017; Anderson et al., 2023).

To address these challenges, digital platforms like Xreading provide a scalable solution by offering access to over 1,200 graded readers from multiple publishers (Xreading, 2025). Xreading allows students to select books that match their proficiency levels and interests, aligning with the principles of both ER and SSR. Furthermore, the platform features an integrated learner management system (LMS) that enables teachers to monitor and assess students' reading progress through key metrics such as words read, reading time, reading speed, and book level. Teachers can also curate the available book selection and establish reading goals to align with specific learning objectives. These features have contributed to Xreading's widespread adoption in EFL curricula across Japan (Brett & Travis, 2014; Milliner & Cote, 2014) and support its inclusion in the Academic and Career English (ACE) program as a core tool for fostering reading proficiency.

Despite its advantages, some studies suggest that relying solely on Xreading may not fully achieve the intended learning outcomes. Harrold (2019) observed that certain students exploited system loopholes to bypass assigned reading goals, thereby diminishing the platform's effectiveness. To counteract this, researchers such as Han and Choi (2018) and Lituanas et al. (2001) advocate for supplementing digital ER tools with structured post-reading activities, such as discussions, reflections, and written summaries. These activities reinforce comprehension, enhance engagement, and promote greater accountability in students' reading habits.

As extensive reading (ER) continues to gain traction in EFL education, there is a growing need to explore how digital tools like Xreading can be effectively integrated with structured classroom strategies. Combining sustained silent reading (SSR) with digital ER platforms and interactive post-reading tasks offers a promising approach to fostering long-term language development while maintaining student motivation and accountability. To better illustrate the theoretical underpinnings and design of this study, Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework that maps the connection between ER theory, the identified challenges, the intervention used, and the anticipated outcomes.

FIGURE 1: Theoretical Framework Flowchart

Theoretical Foundation

Extensive Reading (ER)

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)

(Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 2004; Nation 2007)

|

Problem

ER alone may lack sufficient structure for deep engagement (Harrold, 2019; Han & Choi, 2018)

|

Hypothesis

Adding reflective tasks will improve ER outcomes

(Nourdad & Asghari, 2017; Lituanas et al., 2001)

|

Intervention

Xreading used for digital ER

SSR during class

Post-reading reflection task

|

Expected Outcomes

Increased reading speed

Improved book level

Deeper vocabulary engagement

More autonomous learning

Objective

Building upon the research of Harrold (2019), Han and Choi (2018) and Lituanas et al. (2001), this study implemented an action-based controlled experiment to evaluate whether incorporating a reflective task would lead to improved learner outcomes compared to utilizing simple discussions alone. Reflective tasks encourage students to analyze and internalize reading material more deeply, often enhancing comprehension and retention (Nourdad & Asghari, 2017). In contrast, simple discussions may not provide the same level of critical thinking and deep engagement that are demanded of reflective work. By comparing these approaches, the study aims to determine the relative effectiveness of reflective tasks versus discussions in promoting better learner outcomes in respect to extensive and sustained silent reading practices.

Method
Participants

The present study spanned quarters 3 & 4 of the 2022 academic year. Participants were 18-19-year-old female university students from the first-year undergraduate cohort (N=134) for all three departments. Students ranged from levels B1 - B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). From the initial 134 participants, two retracted their participation from the study, leaving 132 remaining. These participants were then divided into control (N=63) and intervention (N=69) groups based on which period they had their classes. Each teacher in the study had one of each the control and intervention groups as one of their regular GSL classes in the fall of 2022.

Materials

Xreading

The primary material for this study was the Xreading platform (as described above). Students accessed the platform via their smartphones or PCs, while teachers used its integrated LMS to track engagement through metrics such as reading speed and book level. Xreading's ability to continuously collect and store user data throughout the study facilitated a more efficient and comprehensive analysis in the later stages of the study.

Reflective Task

In addition to digital tracking, students completed post-SSR tasks based on their chosen reading. These tasks varied depending on the experimental condition, with the control group engaging in post-SSR discussions only, while the intervention group added the reflective task used both during and after SSR, before discussions took place. Reflective tasks were supported by Reflective Worksheets (Appendix 1) that were used throughout the duration of the study.

Reflective Worksheets required students in the intervention group to think critically about their reading, forcing them to go beyond surface-level comprehension by writing summaries about what they had read, what they felt were the most and least interesting parts, who they thought were the most and least interesting characters and/or objects in the story, and what they liked or didn't like about the book. In the final section of the Reflective Worksheet, students were asked to identify at least three new words from each reading, noting the Japanese meaning, synonym, collocation, and sample sentences. This task required students to actively read, revisit new words, and explore related words and sentences from texts, in hopes of expanding their vocabulary and promoting greater retention. The post-SSR reflective task was designed with the intention of having students identify, analyze, and use new words. As a result, SSR was more structured for the intervention group than for the control group, though both sessions lasted 40 minutes in each week's GSL class.

Procedure

This study used an action-based controlled experiment comparing control and intervention groups of students using Xreading. During the first week of quarter 3, all participants attended a 30-minute orientation to learn about the benefits of ER before registering and familiarizing themselves with the Xreading interface. This session included a demonstration of how to use the virtual library within Xreading, as well as time for students to read books at various levels to determine their initial reading level as indicated by the Xreading book level designation. Students were encouraged to read books of interest that were at or below their reading level (typically ranging from Xreading level 5-10). Over a four-month semester, students had autonomy in utilizing the platform while teachers tracked progress through the integrated LMS system.

Each instructor was assigned one class of students from both the control and intervention group. Both the control and intervention group participated in 30 minutes of SSR in class to ensure that students adhered to the key principles of ER. Instructors would begin SSR with the same instructions to students every week which included a brief outline of the benefits of ER and advice on selecting books that matched their level. Students were told to complete the Xreading quiz after reading each book.

The control group engaged in SSR for 30 minutes in class each week. Afterwards, they discussed what they had read in groups for 10 minutes. There was no requirement to take notes while reading. In contrast, the intervention group used a reflective worksheet (Appendix 1) while they engaged in SSR for 30 minutes. After SSR, they took 2 minutes to reflect on what they had read before discussing it in small groups for 8 minutes using their reflective worksheet notes.

Analysis

Pre-intervention (pre) scores were calculated by averaging reading speed and book level data from Weeks 2 and 3. These numbers were rounded to the nearest whole number for ease of calculation. Similarly, post-intervention (post) scores were derived from the averages of the final two weeks of the study, providing roughly four months between measurements. To control for any instructional differences, 10 students from each of three teachers' classes were randomly selected, resulting in 30 participants each for the control and intervention groups, totaling 60 samples from the overall number of participants (N=134). This random selection ensured that all participants had the same chance of being selected, thereby guaranteeing that the sample fairly represented the larger group, helping to prevent any potential biases. Subsequent statistical analyses utilized Bayesian paired samples t-tests in order to determine whether observed differences between pre and post scores were significant. The alternative hypothesis for these tests states that post scores will be significantly higher than pre scores, which

is in keeping with previous literature. This means the study anticipates improvements in both reading speed and book level for both the control and intervention groups, with the intervention group potentially showing greater degrees of improvement over the control group.

Bayesian Paired Samples T-Test

Bayesian paired samples t-tests compare the means of two related groups, such as measurements from the same subjects before and after an intervention (Cleophas & Zwinderman, 2018). Unlike traditional t-tests that rely on p-values, this method uses Bayes factors to evaluate evidence between hypotheses. A Bayes factor quantifies the likelihood of the data under the null hypothesis (no difference) relative to the alternative hypothesis (a difference exists). Values greater than 1 favor the alternative hypothesis, while values less than 1 favor the null hypothesis. The size of the Bayes factor reflects the degree to which either hypothesis is favored. Lee and Wagenmakers (2014) suggest the following interpretations of Bayes Factors:

Bayes Factor	Interpretation
> 100	Extreme evidence for alternative hypothesis
30 - 100	Very strong evidence for alternative hypothesis
10 - 30	Strong evidence for alternative hypothesis
3 - 10	Moderate evidence for alternative hypothesis
1 - 3	Anecdotal evidence for alternative hypothesis
1	No evidence
1/3 - 1	Anecdotal evidence for null hypothesis
1/3 - 1/10	Moderate evidence for null hypothesis
1/10 - 1/30	Strong evidence for null hypothesis
1/30 - 1/100	Very strong evidence for null hypothesis
< 1/100	Extreme evidence for null hypothesis

The Bayesian paired samples t-test was selected for this study due to its ability to incorporate prior knowledge into the analysis and provide a continuous measure of evidence, which enhances the interpretability of results (Cleophas & Zwinderman, 2018). This method is particularly suitable when analyzing multiple measurements from the same subjects and assessing alternative hypotheses against the null, thereby aligning well with the present objectives and making it an ideal choice for this study's analysis.

Result
Control Group

The Bayesian paired samples t-test conducted to measure significant differences in reading speed for the control group yielded the results in Table 3. The analysis revealed a Bayes Factor of 0.618, indicating anecdotal evidence for the null hypothesis. This suggests that the control group's reading speed did not significantly improve after using the X-Reading platform. The error percentage was low (~0.002%), reflecting stable estimation. Overall, the results do not provide strong support for a meaningful change in reading speed within the control group.

Table 3: Bayesian Paired Samples T-Test of Reading Speed for Control Group

Measure 1	Measure 2	BF—○	error %
C-SpeedPre	C-SpeedPost	0.618	~0.002

Note. For all tests, the alternative hypothesis specifies that C-SpeedPre is less than C-SpeedPost.

These results align with the descriptive statistics for the control group (see Table 4), which further illustrate the observed patterns in reading speed. While the mean reading speed increased from 84.93 (SD = 25.57) pre-test to 93.68 (SD = 40.80) post-test, the coefficient of variation also rose from .301 to .436, suggesting greater variability in post-test scores. Additionally, the 95% credible intervals overlapped (Pre: [75.39, 94.48]; Post: [78.45, 108.92]), reinforcing the conclusion that the increase in reading speed may not be statistically meaningful. These findings remain consistent with the Bayesian paired samples t-test (BF—○ = 0.618), which provided weak evidence for a significant improvement.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Reading Speed for Control Group

	N	Mean	SD	SE	Coefficient of variation	95% Credible Interval	
						Lower	Upper
C-SpeedPre	30	84.933	25.568	4.668	0.301	75.386	94.481
C-SpeedPost	30	93.683	40.801	7.449	0.436	78.448	108.919

Similarly, the Bayesian paired samples t-test for changes in the control group's book level (see Table 5) yielded a Bayes Factor of 1.627, indicating anecdotal evidence for the alternative hypothesis that book level increases over time. The minimal error percentage ($\sim$2.742 $\times$ 10^{-5}%) suggests a stable Bayes Factor estimate; however, the weak support for the alternative hypothesis renders the results inconclusive regarding meaningful improvement in book level.

Table 5: Bayesian Paired Samples T-Test of Book Level for Control Group

Measure 1	Measure 2	BF—o	error %
C-LevelPre	C-LevelPost	1.627	~2.742×10-5

Note. For all tests, the alternative hypothesis specifies that C-LevelPre is less than C-LevelPost.

These findings are further reflected in the descriptive statistics for the control group's book level (see Table 6), which reinforce the inconclusive nature of the results. Although the mean book level showed a slight increase from 4.58 (SD = 1.50) pre-test to 5.22 (SD = 2.05) post-test, the coefficient of variation also increased from 0.327 to 0.394, indicating greater variability in post-test scores. Additionally, the 95% credible intervals overlapped (Pre: [4.02, 5.14]; Post: [4.45, 5.98]), suggesting that the observed increase may not be statistically meaningful. These patterns are consistent with the Bayesian paired samples t-test (BF—o = 1.627), which provided only weak evidence for an improvement in book level.

Table 6: Descriptives Statistics of Book Level for Control Group

	N	Mean	SD	SE	Coefficient of variation	95% Credible Interval	
						Lower	Upper
C-LevelPre	30	4.583	1.498	0.273	0.327	4.024	5.143
C-LevelPost	30	5.217	2.054	0.375	0.394	4.450	5.984

Intervention Group

Table 7 shows the results of the Bayesian paired samples t-test for assessing changes in reading speed for the intervention group. The analysis yielded a Bayes Factor of 23.981, indicating strong evidence that reading speed improved for participants in the intervention group. The error percentage was extremely low ($\sim$8.612 $\times$ 10^{-4}%), suggesting a highly stable Bayes Factor estimate. These results provide robust support for the intervention's effectiveness in enhancing reading speed.

Table 7: Bayesian Paired Samples T-Test of Reading Speed for Intervention Group

Measure 1	Measure 2	BF—o	error %
I-SpeedPre	I-SpeedPost	23.981	~8.612×10-4

Note. For all tests, the alternative hypothesis specifies that I-SpeedPre is less than I-SpeedPost.

Descriptive statistics for the intervention group (see Table 8) provide further evidence of improvements in reading speed. The mean reading speed increased substantially from 76.13 (SD = 25.09) pre-test to 93.70 (SD = 28.44) post-test. Additionally, the coefficient of variation decreased from 0.330 to 0.304, indicating a more consistent distribution of scores post-test. The 95% credible intervals did not overlap (Pre: [66.76, 85.50]; Post: [83.08, 104.32]), suggesting a statistically meaningful improvement. These findings align with the Bayesian paired samples t-test (BF—o = 23.981), which provided strong evidence for increased reading speed due to the intervention.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of Reading Speed for Intervention Group

	N	Mean	SD	SE	Coefficient of variation	95% Credible Interval	
						Lower	Upper
I-SpeedPre	30	76.133	25.094	4.582	0.330	66.763	85.504
I-SpeedPost	30	93.700	28.443	5.193	0.304	83.079	104.321

In addition to reading speed, a Bayesian paired samples t-test was conducted to assess changes in book level for the intervention group (see Table 9). The analysis yielded a BF─₀ = 4.222, indicating moderate evidence that book level improved post-test. The error percentage was extremely low (~7.971 × 10⁻⁵%), suggesting a highly stable Bayes Factor estimate. These results provide reasonable support for the intervention's effectiveness in improving book level, though the evidence is not as strong as for reading speed.

Table 9: Bayesian Paired Samples T-Test of Book Level for Intervention Group

Measure 1	Measure 2	BF─₀	error %
I-LevelPre	I-LevelPost	4.222	~7.971×10-5

Note. For all tests, the alternative hypothesis specifies that I-LevelPre is less than I-LevelPost.

Furthermore, descriptive statistics for the intervention group showed an increase in mean book level from 5.27 (SD = 1.86) pre-test to 6.33 (SD = 2.07) post-test. The coefficient of variation decreased from 0.353 to 0.327, indicating a more consistent distribution of scores post-test. The 95% credible intervals did not overlap (Pre: [4.57, 5.96]; Post: [5.56, 7.11]), suggesting a statistically meaningful improvement. These findings align with the Bayesian paired samples t-test (BF─₀ = 4.222), which provided moderate evidence for an increase in book level due to the intervention.

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics of Book Level for Intervention Group

	N	Mean	SD	SE	Coefficient of variation	95% Credible Interval	
						Lower	Upper
I-LevelPre	30	5.267	1.860	0.340	0.353	4.572	5.961
I-LevelPost	30	6.333	2.069	0.378	0.327	5.561	7.106

Overall, the intervention group showed clear gains in reading speed and book level, with strong to moderate Bayesian evidence supporting improvement. The control group showed inconsistent or inconclusive results, with weak evidence for change. These findings suggest that the intervention was effective in enhancing both reading speed and book level.

Discussion

The intervention group showed significant gains in reading speed and book level, while controls did not. This suggests that the reflective task had a positive impact on learner performance, in terms of both reading speed and book level. This means that after reading and then reflecting on what was read, as a continued practice for four months, students were able to significantly improve their reading speed and the level at which they were reading. These findings are consistent with literature that argues for a need to supplement ER with in-class supplementary activities (Harrold, 2019; Han and Choi, 2018; Lituanas et al., 2001), and further suggest that the most effective activities are reflective in nature. However, additional studies are needed to substantiate this claim.

Fortunately, interventions like the one used in this study are straightforward to implement within any program that already uses Xreading. Therefore, there is both a strong need to verify this finding and a high likelihood of doing so. Moreover, future studies might benefit from investigating various types of reflective tasks to identify those that most effectively enhance learner outcomes. Examples worth exploring include journaling, summarizing, book reports, mind mapping, reviews, critiques, and alternate-ending story telling. In short, engaging students with content at a deeper level, beyond superficial reading, can significantly improve their learning experience when it comes to ER.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the reflective task described herein significantly improved both reading speed and book level for the intervention group, whereas the control group, which only engaged in post-reading discussions, showed inconclusive or weak evidence of improvement on the same measures. These findings align with previous research on ER, reinforcing the idea that ER alone is not enough (Harrold, 2019; Han & Choi, 2018; Lituanas et al., 2001). In other words, students need structured, reflective engagement to maximize the benefits of ER.

On a larger scale, this study provides empirical evidence in support of the need to structure ER programs within Japanese universities rather than simply provide access to tools like Xreading without observation, support, or supplementation. Furthermore, these findings also suggest the need to incorporate reflective tasks in ER programs in order to ensure maximum benefit for learners. This suggests that digital platforms like Xreading are useful tools for ER, but their effectiveness is dependent on how they are implemented.

In this study's context, the results provide a strong rationale for expanding the use of reflective tasks across the Academic Career English (ACE) program. This would ensure that the curriculum's ER practices align with the university and Japan's goals of globalization and academic skill building. Implementing reflective ER practice via Xreading could be an effective way to enhance reading fluency and academic English proficiency in other Japanese universities. This aligns with a growing body of global research showing that autonomous reading is most effective when supported by teacher-guided engagement in ESL/EFL contexts (Wang et al., 2022; Alemu et al., 2023).

Study Weaknesses and Limitations

This study was limited to one university and a relatively small sample size (N=134, with 60 samples randomly selected for statistical analysis) that was heavily gender biased (all female participants). To increase the generalizability of these findings, future studies should include larger, more diverse populations across multiple institutions. Additionally, lengthening the study duration beyond a single semester could provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of reflective ER practices. This study measured reading speed and book level as measures of learner outcomes, however they do not fully capture learner comprehension, critical thinking, or retention over time. For this reason, future studies should also incorporate qualitative measures such as open-ended assessments, student reflections and interviews to gain a deeper and more inclusive understanding of ER's impact.

Future Implications & Research Directions

This study shows that reflective post-reading tasks enhance learner outcomes, which suggests that more institutions should adopt this approach, perhaps even within different educational environments such as high school, university and adult learning contexts. Future research might also consider comparing other forms of reflective post-reading practice, such as written reflections, discussion-based tasks, and summaries, in order to help identify which strategies are most effective. Another important consideration is the experiment's duration. This study was only able to report upon short-term gains as a limit of its design. Future studies conducted over longer periods might provide insights into sustained improvement and the long-term effectiveness of reflective ER practices. Other potential areas of research include:

- Investigating ER's impact on other language skills, such as vocabulary acquisition, speaking, writing, and listening.
- Exploring how AI-enhanced reading analytics could provide personalized feedback and improve learner outcomes beyond what current platforms like Xreading offer.
- Examining how AI-driven adaptations might further support ER engagement through tailored reading recommendations and comprehension tracking.

By investigating these areas, future research can further refine and expand the continued potential for reflective ER practices in ESL/EFL education. Hopefully, making them more accessible, scalable, and effective in developing long-term English proficiency.

Acknowledgements

The Authors

Andrew Gallacher is a full-time lecturer at Fukuoka Women's University, Japan. He holds a B.Sc. in psychology and computer science, and an M.A. in applied linguistics and English language teaching. His research spans computer-assisted language learning, curriculum design, vocabulary acquisition, and educational psychology. **Email: gallacher@fwu.ac.jp**

Andrew Thompson is a university lecturer based in Kyushu, Japan. He is currently a lecturer at Fukuoka Women's University. He has an MA in Applied Linguistics from Monash University and a BA in Communications and Sociology from Griffith University. His research interests include education policy, student interest, and curriculum design. **Email: thompson@fwu.ac.jp**

Amy Toms is a full-time lecturer at Fukuoka Women's University, Japan. She has a B.Sc. in Human Psychology and a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. Her research interests include psychological factors that influence language learning, gender awareness in language education, global education and reflective practice.

Dragana Lazic is a full-time lecturer at Kansai University, Japan. She holds a B.A. in Journalism and an M.A. in International Area Studies. Her current research focuses on the CALL field, specifically on integrating automated feedback and AI ethics in L2 classrooms. She is particularly interested in exploring how technology can enhance language learning by fostering greater motivation, engagement, and learner autonomy. **Email: dlazic@kansai-u.ac.jp**

Yuko Tanoue is a lecturer at Fukuoka Women's University and serves as the vice director of the Language Education Center. Her research interests focus on English education, with a particular emphasis on student motivation, learning strategies, and language learning beliefs.

Authors' Contributions

AG – Conceptualization, Research Design, Data Collection, Data Analysis & Evaluation, Manuscript Writing, Editing

ATh – Conceptualization, Proposal Writing, Research Design, Data Collection, Editing

ATo - Data Collection, Data Evaluation, Manuscript Writing, Editing

DL - Conceptualization, Proposal Writing, Research Design, Data Collection

YT - Data Collection, Language Consulting, Administrative Support

References

Anderson, L. L., Meline, M., & Harn, B. (2023). Student engagement within adolescent reading comprehension interventions: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Education, 203*(2), 258-268.

Alemu, Y. Y., Defa, T. O., & Bedada, M. Z. (2023). Empowering Learners With Autonomous Learning Strategies in EFL Classroom Through Extensive Reading Strategy Training. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,* 14(4), 1138-1147.

Brett, M., & Travis, C. (2014). Comparing two approaches to extensive reading (ER) management in the Tamagawa ELF program: M-Reader and Xreading. *Annual report of the Center for Teacher Education Research, Tamagawa University* (5), 115-123.

Brown, H. (2016). Current Trends in English-medium Instruction at Universities in Japan. *OnCue Journal,* 10(1), 3–20.

Butler, Y. G., & Iino, M. (2005). Current Japanese reforms in English language education: The 2003 "action plan." *Language policy,* 4, 25-45.

Cleophas, T. J., & Zwinderman, A. H. (2018). *Modern Bayesian statistics in clinical research* (No. 144477). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Day, R. R., Bamford, J., Renandya, W. A., Jacobs, G. M., & Yu, V. W. S. (1998). Extensive reading in the second language classroom. Relc Journal, 29(2), 187-191.

Education First (2024). EF. *Education First.* https://www.ef.com/wwen/

Education First (2024a). EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI). *Education First.* https://www.ef.com/wwen/epi/

Education First (2024b). Japan EF EPI Results. *Education First.* https://www.ef.com/wwen/epi/regions/asia/japan/

Fenton-Smith, B. (2008). Accountability and variety in extensive reading. In JALT 2007 *Conference Proceedings.* Tokyo: JALT.

Fraumeni-McBride, J. P. (2017). The Effects of Choice on Reading Engagement and Comprehension for Second-and Third-Grade Students: An Action Research Report. *Journal of Montessori Research,* 3(2), 19-38.

Fukuoka Women's University (2024). *Fukuoka Women's University.* http://www.fwu.ac.jp/

Fujimoto-Adamson, N. (2006). Globalization and history of English education in Japan. *Asian EFL journal*, 8(3).

Gorsuch, G. (2001). Japanese EFL teachers' perceptions of communicative, audiolingual and yakudoku activities. *Education policy analysis archives*, 9, 10-10.

Han, S. Y., & Choi, Y. H. (2018). Post-Reading Question-Generation Activities and Cooperative Learning in EFL Reading. *English Teaching*, 73(2), 37-58.

Harrold, P. (2019). Integrating Xreading into class time using post-reading tasks. *CALL and complexity–Short papers from EUROCALL*, 174-179.

Honna, N., & Takeshita, Y. (2005). English language teaching in Japan: Policy plans and their implementations. *RELC journal*, 36(3), 363-383.

Horning, A. S. (2007). Reading across the curriculum as the key to student success*. Across the disciplines,* 4(1), 1-17.

Ikeda, M., Izumi, S., Watanabe, Y., Pinner, R., & Davis, M. (2021). Soft CLIL and English Language Teaching: *Understanding Japanese Policy, Practice and Implications*. London, Routledge.

Kubota, R. (2017). Globalization and language education in Japan. Second and foreign language education. *Encyclopedia of language and education,* 4, 287-299.

Krashen, S. D. (2004). The power of reading: Insights from the research. *Libraries Unlimited* (2nd ed.).

Lee, M. D., & Wagenmakers, E. J. (2014). *Bayesian cognitive modeling: A practical course. Cambridge* university press.

Leis, A. (2018). Content-based language teaching and the flipped classroom: A case study in the Japanese EFL environment. *Innovations in Flipping the Language Classroom: Theories and Practices*, 221-230.

Li, H., Majumdar, R., Chen, M. R. A., & Ogata, H. (2021). Goal-oriented active learning (GOAL) system to promote reading engagement, self-directed learning behavior, and motivation in extensive reading. *Computers & Education*, 171, 104239.

Lituanas, P. M., Jacobs, G. M., & Renandya, W. A. (2001). An investigation of extensive reading with remedial students in a Philippines secondary school. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 35(2), 217-225.

Mason, B., & Krashen, S. (2004). Is form-focused vocabulary instruction worthwhile?. *RELC journal,* 35(2), 179-185.

MEXT (2014). *International education. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.* https://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/elsec/title02/detail02/1373861.htm

Michaud, M., & Gurney, P. (2023). A Policy Analysis of Compulsory English Classes in Japanese Universities. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies,* 7(1), n1.

Milliner, B., & Cote, T. (2014). Effective extensive reading management with Xreading. *The Language Teacher,* 38(6), 32-34.

Nation, P. (2007) The four Strands. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching,* 1(1), 2-13. http://doi.org/10.2167/illt039.0

Nourdad, N., & Asghari, R. (2017). The effect of reflective reading on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners*. International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature,* 6 (6), 267-273.

Paxton, S., Yamazaki, T., & Kunert, H. (2022). Japanese University English Language Entrance Exams and the Washback Effect: A Systematic Review of the Research. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 26(2), 1-20.

Robb T., & Ewert D. (2024). Classroom-based extensive reading: a review of recent research. *Language Teaching*, 57(3), 295-324. doi:10.1017/S0261444823000319

Shimmi, Y., & Yonezawa, A. (2015). Japan's "top global university" project. *International Higher Education,* (81), 27-28.

United Nations (2025). The 17 Goals: *Sustainable Development. United Nations.* https://sdgs.un.org/goals

Wang, J., Zhang, X., & Zhang, L. J. (2022). Effects of teacher engagement on students' achievement in an online English as a foreign language classroom: The mediating role of autonomous motivation and positive emotions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 950652.

Wanzek, J., & Vaughn, S. (2007). Researched-based implications from extensive early reading interventions. *School Psychology Review,* 36(4), 541-561.

Xreading (2025). https://www.xreading.com/theme/xreading/sitepages.php?tm=aboutxreading

APPENDIX 1

Reflective Worksheet

XREADING PROJECT 2022   **Q3/Q4 REFLECTIVE WORKSHEET**

BOOK TITLE:	PAGE NUMBER: /	STUDENT NAME:	WEEK:

Write a brief summary about what you read:

The most/least interesting part was:	The most/least interesting person/object was:	I liked/didn't like because:

Write new vocabulary from this book:

#	ENGLISH	日本語	SYNONYM	COLLOCATION	SAMPLE SENTENCE
1					
2					
3					

BOOK TITLE:	PAGE NUMBER: /	STUDENT NAME:	WEEK:

Write a brief summary about what you read:

The most/least interesting part was:	The most/least interesting person/object was:	I liked/didn't like because:

Write new vocabulary from this book:

#	ENGLISH	日本語	SYNONYM	COLLOCATION	SAMPLE SENTENCE
1					
2					
3					

XREADING PROJECT 2022 Q3/Q4 REFLECTIVE WORKSHEET_V1

APPENDIX 2

Raw Data - Control Group
Pre = average scores from quarter 3 weeks 2 & 3
Post = average scores from quarter 4 weeks 7 & 8

	RSpeedPre	RSpeedPost	BLevelPre	BLevelPost
1	61	101	6	5.5
2	93	86	2.5	5
3	98	82	5	9
4	83	161	3	3.5
5	66	174	5.5	5.5
6	110	99	5	7.5
7	113	143	5	5
8	113	113	5	4
9	92	119	5.5	5
10	99	129	5.5	7.5
11	118	204	6.5	8
12	91	53	4.5	4.5
13	54	71	5	5
14	82	60	5.5	5
15	98	55	6	5
16	98	101	3	9
17	76	75	5.5	5
18	57	101	2.5	5
19	55	89	5	7.5
20	88	54	5	5
21	82	101	5	4
22	53	97.5	3	3.5
23	136	81	5	2.5
24	121	63	2.5	2
25	73	37	4	2
26	59	114	5.5	4
27	54	32	1.5	4.5
28	55	45	8.5	10
29	127	118	3	5
30	43	52	3	2.5

APPENDIX 3

Raw Data - Intervention Group
Pre = average scores from quarter 3 weeks 2 & 3
Post = average scores from quarter 4 weeks 7 & 8

	RSpeedPre	RSpeedPost	BLevelPre	BLevelPost
1	104	157	6.5	6.5
2	104	78	6	8.5
3	41	87	5	9
4	60	59	5.5	5
5	112	68	5	11.5
6	110	92	6.5	4
7	68	88	4	7.5
8	104	89	7.5	9
9	77	100	3.5	4.5
10	66	106	5	5
11	109	117	5	4
12	62	105	7	7
13	90	118	5.5	6.5
14	108	157	6	4.5
15	86	53	5	7.5
16	83	90	8	6
17	71	53	8.5	5.5
18	111	138	3.5	7.5
19	80	125	5.5	4.5
20	66	100	4.5	6
21	60	114	3	3.5
22	73	83	3	4
23	38	76	2.5	5
24	101	101	4.5	9
25	40	52	3.5	5
26	77	65	7.5	6.5
27	48	53	5	5
28	56	84	4	4
29	52	93	2	9
30	27	110	10	9.5

International Business Negotiation: Strategies for Success

Ugilkhon Kakilova
Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages, Andijan, Uzbekistan
Dilnozaxon Boymirzayeva
The OXUS University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Abstract

International business negotiation is a vital skill in today's interconnected global economy, where businesses must navigate diverse cultural, economic, and communication environments to achieve successful outcomes. This paper examines key strategies—competitive, cooperative, and hybrid—and underscores the importance of cultural adaptation, thorough preparation, and emotional intelligence in international negotiations. Through case studies from countries like Uzbekistan, Japan, Germany, and the United States, the study delves into the distinct negotiation practices in each region, focusing on relationship-building, direct versus indirect communication, and balancing long-term versus short-term objectives. By tailoring these strategies to local customs and cultural nuances, businesses can foster sustainable partnerships and secure favorable deals in global markets.

Key words: *international business; negotiation; strategies; cultural adaptation; competitive; cooperative; hybrid; emotional intelligence; global markets; communication.*

Introduction

In today's globalized world, international business negotiation is a crucial skill that businesses across different countries must master to achieve mutual goals. Negotiation in the international context involves understanding diverse cultural backgrounds, economic priorities, and communication styles. The success of international negotiations often depends on the ability to navigate these differences and reach agreements that benefit all parties involved. For businesses operating in countries like Uzbekistan, Japan, Germany, or the United States, each culture brings unique negotiation practices that need to be carefully managed to ensure fruitful and long-lasting business relationships. In Uzbekistan, for instance, relationships and trust-building play a significant role, while in Japan, the focus is on indirect communication and harmony. In contrast, German and U.S. negotiators may prioritize efficiency, results, and competitive advantage.

Business negotiations are shaped by the cultural, social, and economic contexts of the participants. These factors influence how people communicate, make decisions, and form agreements. A deep understanding of these contexts is essential for successful negotiations, especially in today's interconnected world.

Cultural Context in Negotiations

Culture significantly influences how people interact and perceive the world around them. In negotiations, cultural differences can impact communication styles, decision-making processes, and expectations. For instance, some cultures value direct communication, where clarity and straightforwardness are prioritized. Others prefer indirect communication, where maintaining harmony and avoiding conflict are more important.

Additionally, cultural norms dictate attitudes toward hierarchy, authority, and decision-making. In some contexts, decisions are made collectively, with input from all members of a group. In others, a single leader or authority figure may hold the final say. Understanding these differences helps negotiators adapt their strategies to fit the expectations of the other party.

Non-verbal communication is another key aspect of culture. Gestures, eye contact, personal space, and body language vary widely across cultures. What is considered polite or respectful in one culture may be seen as rude or inappropriate in another. Being aware of these nuances can prevent misunderstandings and foster a positive negotiation environment.

Social Context in Negotiations

The social environment in which negotiations occur plays a crucial role in shaping their outcomes. Social norms, values, and traditions influence how people approach discussions and resolve conflicts. For instance, some societies emphasize building strong relationships before discussing business. Trust and mutual respect are seen as the foundation for successful agreements. In contrast, other societies may prioritize efficiency and view personal relationships as secondary to achieving results.

Social roles and expectations also influence negotiation dynamics. Factors such as age, gender, and professional status can determine how participants interact with one another. In some settings, seniority or experience may carry significant weight, while in others, innovative ideas and merit are more valued. Adapting to these expectations can enhance credibility and create a more collaborative atmosphere.

Community and social networks often play an essential role in negotiations. In many contexts, connections and recommendations from trusted individuals can influence the negotiation process. Understanding the importance of these networks helps negotiators establish credibility and build rapport with the other party.

Economic Context in Negotiations

Economic factors shape the priorities and strategies of negotiators. The level of economic development, market conditions, and resource availability influence how parties approach deals. For instance, in resource-rich environments, negotiations may focus on managing supply chains or distribution networks. In contrast, in resource-scarce settings, discussions may center on cost efficiency and maximizing value.

The financial stability of the participants also affects their approach. Businesses with strong financial backing may be more willing to invest in long-term partnerships, while those with limited resources may focus on short-term gains. Understanding these economic realities allows negotiators to tailor their proposals to align with the other party's priorities.

Globalization has further complicated the economic context of negotiations. With businesses operating across borders, participants must navigate issues such as exchange rates, trade regulations, and varying levels of economic inequality. Being informed about these factors helps negotiators address potential challenges and identify mutually beneficial solutions.

Bridging the Gaps

Navigating cultural, social, and economic differences requires preparation, adaptability, and empathy. Successful negotiators invest time in researching the other party's background, understanding their values, and identifying shared goals. Active listening, patience, and open-mindedness are critical skills for building trust and finding common ground.

Preparation is key to overcoming challenges in negotiations. This includes understanding the cultural norms, social dynamics, and economic realities of the other party. By doing so, negotiators can craft strategies that respect these differences while achieving their objectives.

Flexibility is also essential. Negotiators must be willing to adapt their approaches based on the context. For example, in cultures that value relationships, taking the time to build rapport before discussing business can lead to better outcomes. In more results-oriented settings, focusing on clear and concise proposals may be more effective.

Empathy plays a significant role in bridging gaps. By putting themselves in the other party's shoes, negotiators can better understand their needs, concerns, and motivations. This fosters a collaborative atmosphere and increases the likelihood of reaching agreements that benefit all parties involved.

Business negotiations are deeply influenced by the cultural, social, and economic contexts of the participants. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective strategies and achieving successful outcomes. By adapting to different contexts, negotiators can build trust, foster collaboration, and create agreements that are mutually beneficial. Whether negotiating in cultures that value relationships, efficiency, or a mix of both, being aware of these dynamics helps ensure a smoother process. In today's globalized world, mastering the art of navigating diverse contexts is not just an advantage but a necessity for long-term success.

In countries like Uzbekistan and Japan, negotiation practices are deeply rooted in traditional values such as long-term relationship building and maintaining harmony. For example, Uzbek negotiators often emphasize patience, face-to-face interactions, and indirect communication, which is in stark contrast to Western negotiation styles that often focus on direct communication, quick decision-making, and individual gains. In Germany and the United States, negotiations tend to be more structured, data-driven, and result-oriented. German negotiators, for example, value precision, thorough analysis, and clear agreements, while U.S. negotiators may prioritize efficiency and swift contract execution. Understanding these cultural differences is essential for adopting effective strategies that align with the cultural expectations of the negotiating parties.

Key Strategies in International Business Negotiation

Successful international business negotiations require a nuanced understanding of various strategies that cater to different cultural, economic, and social environments. Below, we explore these strategies in a global context.

1. Competitive Strategies. Competitive strategies in business negotiations are designed to maximize individual gains, focusing on achieving short-term success. These strategies are particularly effective in scenarios where the primary goal is to secure the best possible outcome for one party, often at the expense of mutual benefits. While these approaches can yield favorable results in certain contexts, they require careful implementation to avoid potential downsides, especially in settings where long-term relationships and trust are highly valued.

The Core Elements of Competitive Strategies

Competitive strategies typically involve several key components, each of which plays a critical role in determining the outcome of the negotiation:

1. High Opening Offers

A high opening offer is one of the most common competitive tactics in negotiations. This approach sets the initial anchor point significantly higher than the negotiator's actual target, creating room for adjustments during the negotiation process. The rationale behind this tactic is to influence the other party's perception of value, prompting them to make concessions that bring the final agreement closer to the initiator's ideal outcome. However, for this tactic to work effectively, the offer must remain within a range that the opposing party perceives as credible. Excessively high offers risk alienating the other party, potentially leading to a breakdown in negotiations.

2. Slow Concessions

Slow concessions involve making incremental compromises over time, strategically designed to test the flexibility and priorities of the opposing party. By gradually revealing flexibility, negotiators can gauge how much the other side is willing to compromise and identify areas of potential agreement. This tactic also helps in maintaining control over the pace of negotiations, ensuring that critical aspects are not rushed or overlooked. Moreover, slow concessions allow negotiators to communicate the value of each concession, reinforcing the perception that any compromise made is significant and requires reciprocal concessions from the other party.

3. Firm Stances

Maintaining a firm stance on critical points is another hallmark of competitive strategies. This approach involves steadfastly defending core interests and refusing to yield on issues deemed essential to achieving the desired outcome. By projecting confidence and determination, negotiators can reinforce their credibility and deter the other party from pushing for further concessions. However, the success of this tactic depends on the negotiator's ability to differentiate between non-negotiable priorities and areas where flexibility is possible. Overly rigid stances can lead to an impasse, undermining the potential for a mutually beneficial agreement.

The Advantages of Competitive Strategies

Competitive strategies offer several benefits when applied in the appropriate context:

- **Maximized Gains:** By prioritizing individual objectives, competitive strategies can help negotiators achieve the most advantageous terms possible.
- **Clear Prioritization:** These strategies emphasize the importance of clearly defining goals and focusing on securing the most critical outcomes.
- **Tactical Advantage:** Competitive approaches enable negotiators to control the pace and direction of discussions, ensuring that their interests remain central to the negotiation process.

Challenges and Limitations of Competitive Strategies

Despite their potential benefits, competitive strategies also come with inherent challenges and limitations:

- **Risk of Conflict:** Competitive approaches can create a confrontational dynamic, increasing the likelihood of disputes or breakdowns in communication.
- **Strained Relationships:** The focus on maximizing individual gains can harm long-term relationships, especially in contexts where trust and collaboration are highly valued.
- **Perception of Aggression:** Excessive use of competitive tactics may lead the opposing party to perceive the negotiator as aggressive or unreasonable, reducing the likelihood of reaching a satisfactory agreement.

Balancing Competitive Strategies with Contextual Considerations

While competitive strategies can be effective in achieving short-term objectives, their success often depends on the context in which they are applied. Factors such as cultural norms, the nature of the relationship between parties, and the specific goals of the negotiation must be carefully considered. For example:

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** In collectivist cultures, where group harmony and mutual respect are emphasized, competitive strategies may be perceived as overly aggressive or self-serving. In such settings, negotiators may need to adapt their approach, incorporating elements of cooperation to maintain trust and foster collaboration.
- **Relationship Dynamics:** In negotiations involving ongoing relationships or partnerships, the use of competitive strategies must be balanced with a focus on building trust and ensuring long-term mutual benefits. Overly competitive tactics can jeopardize future interactions, limiting opportunities for collaboration.
- **Negotiation Objectives:** The appropriateness of competitive strategies also depends on the specific goals of the negotiation. For transactions involving a one-time interaction or where the stakes are high, competitive tactics may be more suitable. Conversely, for negotiations aimed at establishing long-term partnerships, a more cooperative approach may yield better results.

Implementing Competitive Strategies Effectively

To maximize the benefits of competitive strategies while mitigating their risks, negotiators should consider the following best practices:

1. Preparation and Research

Thorough preparation is critical to the success of competitive strategies. This includes researching the opposing party's priorities, understanding the broader context of the negotiation, and identifying potential leverage points. By gathering relevant information in advance, negotiators can craft a compelling case for their position and anticipate potential counterarguments.

2. Flexibility and Adaptability

While competitive strategies emphasize firmness on key issues, negotiators must remain flexible and open to alternative solutions. Recognizing when to compromise and when to stand firm is essential for maintaining a constructive dynamic and avoiding unnecessary conflict.

3. Clear Communication

Effective communication is central to the successful implementation of competitive strategies. Negotiators should clearly articulate their priorities and rationale, ensuring that their counterparts understand the value of their proposals. Additionally, maintaining a respectful and professional tone can help mitigate the perception of aggression and foster a more productive negotiation environment.

4. Strategic Use of Concessions

Concessions should be used strategically to build goodwill and signal flexibility without undermining key objectives. By carefully timing and framing concessions, negotiators can create opportunities for reciprocal compromises and move closer to achieving their desired outcomes.

5. Building Credibility

Credibility is a critical factor in the success of competitive strategies. Negotiators must demonstrate confidence, expertise, and consistency in their approach to establish trust and deter the opposing party from questioning their position.

Competitive strategies are a powerful tool in the arsenal of business negotiators, offering the potential to maximize individual gains and achieve short-term success. However, their effectiveness depends on the ability to balance firmness with flexibility, adapt to the specific context of the negotiation, and maintain a focus on building constructive relationships. By carefully implementing competitive strategies and considering the broader dynamics at play, negotiators can achieve favorable outcomes while preserving opportunities for future collaboration.

2. Cooperative Strategies Cooperative strategies focus on building long-term relationships through mutual gains, information sharing, and reciprocal concessions:

▪ Information Sharing: In countries like Japan and China, where long-term partnerships and trust-building are prioritized, sharing relevant business information can foster strong relationships.

▪ Seeking Mutual Gains: Cooperative strategies are highly effective in markets like Uzbekistan, where collective success and shared outcomes lead to sustainable partnerships.

▪ Reciprocal Concessions: This approach works well in cultures like Japan, where decisions are made after careful deliberation and trust is built gradually through repeated interactions. Cooperative strategies are especially effective in countries where the business environment is relationship-driven, such as Japan and Uzbekistan, where long-term success is valued over short-term gains.

Cooperative Strategies in Business Negotiations

Cooperative strategies in business negotiations emphasize the importance of building long-term relationships through mutual gains, open communication, and trust. These strategies are particularly valuable in contexts where maintaining strong partnerships is prioritized over achieving short-term victories. Unlike competitive approaches, cooperative strategies focus on collaboration and shared success, fostering an environment of trust and mutual respect.

Core Principles of Cooperative Strategies

1. Information Sharing

One of the central elements of cooperative strategies is the willingness to share relevant business information. By being transparent and open, parties can establish a foundation of trust and demonstrate their commitment to a mutually beneficial outcome. Sharing information also helps both sides understand each other's goals, constraints, and expectations, reducing misunderstandings and fostering a collaborative atmosphere.

This approach requires careful consideration of the type and timing of information shared. While transparency is essential, negotiators must balance openness with discretion, ensuring that sensitive or competitive information is protected. Properly managed, information sharing creates a sense of partnership and encourages both parties to work together towards shared objectives.

2. Seeking Mutual Gains

Cooperative strategies aim to identify opportunities for mutual benefit. This involves looking beyond immediate interests to consider how both parties can achieve their goals while supporting each other. By focusing on shared outcomes, negotiators can create value that benefits everyone involved, making the agreement more sustainable and satisfactory.

To seek mutual gains, it is essential to engage in active listening and demonstrate empathy. Understanding the other party's needs and concerns allows negotiators to propose solutions that address both sides' priorities. This collaborative problem-solving approach not only strengthens the relationship but also enhances the likelihood of long-term success.

3. Reciprocal Concessions

Reciprocal concessions are another key aspect of cooperative strategies. By offering a concession, one party signals goodwill and a willingness to compromise, encouraging the other party to reciprocate. This back-and-forth process creates a positive dynamic, helping both sides feel valued and respected.

However, for reciprocal concessions to be effective, they must be genuine and proportionate. Making significant concessions without receiving anything in return can create an imbalance that undermines the relationship. On the other hand, carefully timed and meaningful concessions can build trust and foster a spirit of cooperation.

Advantages of Cooperative Strategies

Cooperative strategies offer several benefits that contribute to their effectiveness in fostering strong business relationships:

▪ Stronger Relationships: By prioritizing collaboration and mutual respect, cooperative strategies build trust and strengthen partnerships over time.

▪ Sustainable Agreements: Agreements reached through cooperation are more likely to be sustainable, as both parties feel invested in the outcome.

▪ Reduced Conflict: Cooperative approaches focus on shared interests rather than differences, reducing the likelihood of disputes or conflicts.

▪ Enhanced Communication: Open and honest communication is a hallmark of cooperative strategies, leading to better understanding and alignment between parties.

Challenges of Cooperative Strategies

While cooperative strategies offer numerous advantages, they are not without challenges. These include:

▪ Time-Intensive: Building trust and seeking mutual gains often require more time and effort compared to competitive approaches.

▪ Risk of Exploitation: If one party is not equally committed to cooperation, they may exploit the other's openness and willingness to compromise.

▪ Dependence on Trust: The success of cooperative strategies depends heavily on the level of trust between parties. Without trust, cooperation can falter.

▪ Cultural Differences: In some contexts, cooperative strategies may be perceived as a sign of weakness or a lack of confidence, potentially reducing their effectiveness.

Implementing Cooperative Strategies Effectively

To successfully implement cooperative strategies, negotiators should consider the following best practices:

1. Build Trust Early

Establishing trust at the beginning of the negotiation process is critical. This can be achieved through consistent and honest communication, demonstrating reliability, and respecting the other party's needs and concerns. Trust-building sets a positive tone for the negotiation and creates a foundation for long-term collaboration.

2. Focus on Shared Interests

Identifying shared interests and common goals helps to align the efforts of both parties. By emphasizing what unites rather than divides them, negotiators can create a sense of partnership and work towards mutually beneficial solutions.

3. Encourage Open Dialogue

Creating an environment where both parties feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and concerns fosters a spirit of cooperation. Active listening, asking clarifying questions, and acknowledging the other party's contributions are essential elements of effective dialogue.

4. Be Flexible

Flexibility is a crucial component of cooperative strategies. Negotiators should be willing to adapt their approach, explore creative solutions, and make reasonable concessions to accommodate the other party's needs.

5. Maintain a Long-Term Perspective

Focusing on the long-term benefits of the relationship rather than short-term gains helps ensure that the negotiation process is guided by shared objectives. This perspective encourages both parties to prioritize collaboration and mutual success.

The Role of Cultural Context in Cooperative Strategies

Cooperative strategies are particularly effective in relationship-driven business environments, where long-term success is valued over immediate outcomes. In cultures that emphasize trust-building, collaboration, and collective success, such strategies align with the broader values of the society and business practices. These contexts provide fertile ground for cooperative approaches, as they foster a willingness to engage in open communication, mutual support, and shared growth.

In conclusion, cooperative strategies in business negotiations offer a powerful approach to building enduring partnerships. By focusing on mutual gains, fostering open communication, and prioritizing long-term success, these strategies create a foundation for sustainable and productive relationships. While they require effort, patience, and commitment, the rewards of cooperation far outweigh the challenges, making them a valuable tool for negotiators in any context.

3. Hybrid Strategies Hybrid strategies combine elements of competitive and cooperative tactics, providing flexibility to navigate complex negotiations: -

- Flexibility: Adapting to different situations by yielding on less important matters while standing firm on critical issues helps in achieving balanced outcomes.

- Balancing Interests: In markets like Germany or the U.S., where negotiations are often structured, blending both competitive and cooperative tactics helps reach practical agreements that benefit both sides. In countries like Germany and the U.S., hybrid strategies work well because they allow negotiators to focus on data-driven agreements while also considering the long-term impact of their decisions. In Japan and Uzbekistan, the hybrid approach is useful because it blends the importance of relationship-building with practical deal-making.

Hybrid Strategies in Business Negotiations

Hybrid strategies combine elements of both competitive and cooperative approaches, offering flexibility to navigate the complexities of business negotiations. These strategies allow negotiators to adapt to varying circumstances by balancing assertiveness with collaboration, yielding on less critical issues while standing firm on vital ones. This balanced approach makes hybrid strategies particularly effective in achieving practical and sustainable agreements, as they cater to both immediate and long-term goals.

The Core Features of Hybrid Strategies

1. Flexibility

One of the defining traits of hybrid strategies is flexibility. This involves adjusting negotiation tactics to fit the situation, whether by taking a firm stance on key priorities or compromising on less significant matters. Flexibility ensures that negotiators can respond effectively to changing dynamics, address challenges, and capitalize on opportunities as they arise.

Being flexible requires a clear understanding of priorities. Before entering negotiations, it is essential to identify which aspects of the agreement are critical and which can be adjusted. This clarity enables negotiators to make informed decisions about when to push for their goals and when to yield for the sake of progress.

2. Balancing Interests

A key component of hybrid strategies is the ability to balance the interests of both parties. This involves finding a middle ground between competitive tactics, which aim to maximize individual gains, and cooperative tactics, which prioritize relationship-building and mutual benefits. By blending these approaches, negotiators can craft solutions that address the needs of both sides while maintaining a positive rapport.

Balancing interests also requires a deep understanding of the other party's objectives and concerns. Active listening, open communication, and empathy are crucial for identifying areas of alignment and potential compromise. This balanced approach fosters trust and encourages collaboration, even in challenging negotiations.

3. Contextual Adaptation

Hybrid strategies are highly adaptable to different cultural, social, and economic contexts. They allow negotiators to tailor their approach based on the specific environment and the preferences of the parties

involved. For example, in structured markets, such as those where data-driven decisions are prioritized, hybrid strategies can effectively blend logical reasoning with relationship considerations.

In more relationship-driven settings, hybrid strategies allow negotiators to build trust and maintain harmony while also achieving practical outcomes. This adaptability makes hybrid strategies a versatile tool for navigating diverse negotiation scenarios.

Advantages of Hybrid Strategies

Hybrid strategies offer several benefits that enhance their effectiveness in negotiations:
- Versatility: By combining competitive and cooperative elements, hybrid strategies provide the flexibility to address a wide range of negotiation challenges.
- Practical Solutions: These strategies focus on achieving balanced outcomes that satisfy the needs of both parties, ensuring the agreement is both fair and effective.
- Enhanced Relationships: By incorporating cooperative elements, hybrid strategies help maintain positive relationships, even in high-stakes or contentious negotiations.
- Long-Term Benefits: The balanced approach of hybrid strategies supports sustainable agreements that consider both immediate goals and future implications.

Challenges of Hybrid Strategies

While hybrid strategies are highly effective, they also come with certain challenges:
- Complexity: Balancing competitive and cooperative tactics requires skill and careful planning, making these strategies more complex to implement than single-focus approaches.
- Risk of Mixed Signals: Switching between competitive and cooperative tactics can sometimes confuse the other party, potentially leading to misunderstandings or mistrust.
- Time-Intensive: Hybrid strategies often require more time to navigate, as they involve assessing priorities, adapting tactics, and finding the right balance between competing objectives.

Best Practices for Implementing Hybrid Strategies

To use hybrid strategies effectively, negotiators should consider the following practices:

1. Prioritize and Plan
Before entering negotiations, clearly identify critical issues and areas where flexibility is possible. This prioritization helps in deciding when to adopt a competitive stance and when to take a cooperative approach. A well-thought-out plan ensures that negotiators remain focused and consistent throughout the process.

2. Communicate Clearly
Transparency and open communication are essential for hybrid strategies. Clearly articulating intentions, priorities, and areas of compromise helps build trust and prevents misunderstandings. At the same time, it is important to listen actively and acknowledge the other party's contributions to maintain a collaborative atmosphere.

3. Be Mindful of Timing
Timing plays a crucial role in hybrid strategies. Knowing when to assertively push for key priorities and when to show flexibility requires careful observation and judgment. Reading the situation and responding appropriately ensures that negotiators can maintain control and make progress toward their goals.

4. Build Trust and Rapport
Even when adopting competitive tactics, it is important to maintain a foundation of trust and mutual respect. Building rapport through active listening, empathy, and respectful interactions ensures that the relationship remains positive, even when negotiations become challenging.

5. Evaluate Outcomes Holistically
Hybrid strategies emphasize the importance of considering both immediate and long-term implications. After reaching an agreement, take time to evaluate its overall impact on both parties. This holistic perspective ensures that the agreement is not only practical but also sustainable.

Hybrid strategies offer a balanced approach to business negotiations, blending the strengths of competitive and cooperative tactics to achieve practical and sustainable outcomes. By prioritizing flexibility, balancing interests, and adapting to the context, negotiators can navigate complex scenarios effectively. While these strategies require skill, planning, and adaptability, their versatility makes them a valuable tool for achieving success in diverse negotiation settings.

4. Cultural Adaptation.

Cultural adaptation is crucial in international negotiations, as each country has its unique business customs and communication styles:

▪ Direct vs. Indirect Communication: While Western negotiators (U.S. and Germany) prefer directness and clarity, countries like Japan and Uzbekistan value indirect communication and patience in building relationships.

▪ Hierarchy and Respect: In countries like Germany and Japan, hierarchy and protocol are key factors. Understanding and respecting these organizational structures can help in successfully navigating negotiations.

▪ Patience and Long-Term Vision: In markets like Uzbekistan and Japan, patience and a long-term perspective are critical for building sustainable business relationships. Cultural adaptation helps negotiators avoid misunderstandings and fosters mutual respect, which is essential for building successful business relationships in diverse markets.

5. Preparation and Goal Setting.

Effective negotiation begins with thorough preparation, which is essential for achieving successful outcomes:

▪ Researching the Counterparty: Conducting detailed research on the other party's business practices, cultural background, and previous dealings helps in understanding their priorities and objectives.

▪ Defining Objectives: Setting clear and achievable goals ensures that negotiations are focused and well-aligned with the overall business strategy.

▪ Developing Tactics: In Germany, U.S., and other market-driven economies, having a flexible approach and being ready to adapt to real-time situations is critical. Preparation in markets like Germany and the U.S. often involves a detailed analysis of business data, while in countries like Japan and Uzbekistan, it emphasizes understanding cultural nuances and relationship-building.

Cultural Adaptation in International Negotiations

Cultural adaptation plays a pivotal role in international negotiations, as it helps bridge differences and fosters mutual understanding. Each country has unique business customs and communication styles that shape the way negotiations are conducted. Adapting to these cultural nuances ensures smoother interactions and enhances the likelihood of achieving successful outcomes.

Key Aspects of Cultural Adaptation
1. Direct vs. Indirect Communication

Communication styles vary significantly across cultures. Western negotiators, such as those in the United States and Germany, often prioritize directness and clarity. They value straightforward discussions and explicit agreements, as this approach minimizes ambiguity and ensures mutual understanding.

In contrast, countries like Japan and Uzbekistan emphasize indirect communication. In these cultures, it is common to convey messages subtly or through non-verbal cues. Negotiators often rely on context and implied meanings rather than explicitly stating their intentions. Patience and attentiveness are essential in these settings, as rushing or misinterpreting indirect communication can lead to misunderstandings.

2. Hierarchy and Respect

Understanding the role of hierarchy and respect is critical in navigating negotiations in countries like Germany and Japan. These cultures place a high value on organizational structures and formal protocols. For instance, German businesses often follow a structured decision-making process where authority is clearly defined, and decisions are made at the appropriate level of leadership.

Similarly, Japan emphasizes respect for seniority and hierarchy. Addressing senior representatives with appropriate titles and adhering to formal greetings demonstrate cultural awareness and respect. Failure to recognize and respect these hierarchical norms can negatively impact the negotiation process.

3. Patience and Long-Term Vision

In markets like Uzbekistan and Japan, patience and a long-term perspective are crucial. Business relationships in these cultures are built gradually, emphasizing trust and mutual understanding. Negotiators are expected to invest time in establishing rapport and demonstrating commitment to the partnership.

For example, Japanese negotiators often engage in extensive discussions and deliberations before reaching an agreement. This process reflects their preference for thorough planning and ensuring that all parties are aligned. Similarly, in Uzbekistan, establishing a strong foundation of trust and showing respect for cultural traditions can significantly enhance the success of negotiations.

Cultural adaptation helps negotiators avoid potential pitfalls, such as offending the other party or overlooking critical cultural norms. By demonstrating respect and understanding, negotiators can foster an atmosphere of collaboration and mutual respect, leading to more effective and sustainable business relationships.

5. Preparation and Goal Setting in Negotiations

Effective preparation is the cornerstone of successful negotiations. Thorough planning allows negotiators to anticipate challenges, understand the counterparty's priorities, and define clear objectives. This preparation ensures that negotiations are well-structured and aligned with the overall business strategy.

Key Components of Preparation
1. Researching the Counterparty

Conducting detailed research on the other party is a critical first step. This research includes understanding their business practices, cultural background, and previous dealings. For instance, in Germany and the U.S., businesses often value transparency and data-driven decision-making. Knowing this, negotiators can prepare detailed presentations and provide evidence to support their proposals.

In Japan and Uzbekistan, however, relationship-building and trust are paramount. Research should focus on understanding cultural norms and identifying ways to establish rapport. Familiarity with local customs, traditions, and communication styles helps negotiators build stronger connections with their counterparts.

2. Defining Objectives

Clear and achievable goals are essential for keeping negotiations focused and productive. Setting objectives involves identifying both short-term and long-term priorities and aligning them with the overall business strategy.

In markets like the U.S. and Germany, negotiators often prioritize measurable outcomes, such as cost savings or increased market share. They approach negotiations with specific targets and timelines in mind. In contrast, Japan and Uzbekistan place greater emphasis on building relationships and achieving collective success. Objectives in these markets may include fostering mutual trust and ensuring long-term sustainability.

3. Developing Tactics

Preparation also involves developing flexible negotiation tactics. In Germany and the U.S., where negotiations are often structured and data-driven, having a clear strategy and supporting evidence is crucial. For example, negotiators may prepare financial models, market analyses, or performance metrics to support their proposals.

In Japan and Uzbekistan, however, negotiation tactics should emphasize cultural sensitivity and relationship-building. Showing respect for traditions, engaging in polite discussions, and demonstrating a willingness to collaborate are critical for success. Adapting to real-time situations and responding to cultural cues can also help negotiators build trust and foster positive outcomes.

Both cultural adaptation and thorough preparation are essential for successful negotiations in diverse markets. By understanding and respecting cultural norms, negotiators can build stronger relationships and avoid misunderstandings. Similarly, effective preparation ensures that negotiations are well-structured, focused, and aligned with business goals.

In countries like the U.S. and Germany, where direct communication and data-driven approaches dominate, preparation should focus on clarity, evidence, and structured decision-making. In Japan and Uzbekistan, where relationship-building and long-term perspectives are prioritized, cultural adaptation and trust-building take center stage.

Ultimately, combining cultural awareness with strategic preparation enables negotiators to navigate complex international markets and achieve successful, sustainable outcomes.

6. Emotional Intelligence.

Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in international negotiations, as it helps in building positive relationships and fostering productive discussions: -
- Empathy: In markets like Japan, Germany, and Uzbekistan, empathy is crucial for understanding the needs and perspectives of the other party. –
- Active Listening: In the U.S. and Germany, listening carefully and asking the right questions help uncover valuable insights during discussions. –
- Managing Emotions: In cultures like Uzbekistan and Japan, emotional regulation helps in maintaining composure and avoiding confrontational situations. Building emotional intelligence is especially beneficial in countries where negotiations are relationship-driven, as it helps in managing interpersonal dynamics effectively.

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in International Negotiations

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a vital skill in international negotiations, enabling negotiators to navigate interpersonal dynamics, build trust, and foster collaborative discussions. In diverse cultural and business environments, EI helps bridge differences and promotes mutual understanding.

Core Components of Emotional Intelligence
1. Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings and perspectives of others. In negotiations, empathy helps identify the priorities and concerns of the other party, paving the way for effective communication and cooperation.

For example, in relationship-driven markets like Japan, Germany, and Uzbekistan, empathizing with the counterpart's challenges and aspirations is crucial. By demonstrating genuine concern and a willingness to accommodate their interests, negotiators can create a positive atmosphere and strengthen relationships. Empathy also helps in addressing potential conflicts and finding mutually beneficial solutions.

2. Active Listening

Active listening involves fully focusing on the speaker, understanding their message, and responding thoughtfully. It is a critical skill for uncovering valuable insights and gaining a deeper understanding of the other party's needs.

In cultures like the U.S. and Germany, where clarity and precision are valued, active listening ensures that no important details are overlooked. By asking relevant questions and summarizing key points, negotiators can confirm their understanding and demonstrate attentiveness. This practice not only builds trust but also facilitates productive discussions.

3. Managing Emotions

Emotional regulation is the ability to manage one's emotions and respond appropriately in challenging situations. It helps negotiators maintain composure, avoid reactive behaviors, and navigate tense moments effectively.

In cultures like Uzbekistan and Japan, where maintaining harmony and mutual respect is essential, managing emotions is particularly important. Showing patience, refraining from displays of frustration, and responding calmly to unexpected challenges are valued traits. Emotional regulation also helps in resolving disagreements and fostering a collaborative environment.

The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Negotiations
1. Building Trust

Emotional intelligence plays a key role in establishing trust, which is the foundation of successful negotiations. Demonstrating empathy, actively listening, and responding thoughtfully signal respect and consideration for the other party's interests. This approach helps in building credibility and fostering long-term partnerships.

2. Strengthening Relationships

In relationship-driven cultures, such as those in Uzbekistan and Japan, emotional intelligence helps in nurturing positive interactions. Negotiators who display emotional sensitivity are more likely to build rapport and maintain strong connections over time. These relationships often lead to better collaboration and mutually beneficial agreements.

3. Enhancing Communication

Effective communication is at the heart of successful negotiations, and emotional intelligence facilitates clear and constructive dialogue. By understanding non-verbal cues, managing tone, and adapting communication styles to suit the cultural context, negotiators can enhance their ability to convey messages and reach agreements.

4. Resolving Conflicts

Negotiations often involve disagreements or conflicting interests. Emotional intelligence helps negotiators approach conflicts constructively by staying calm, understanding the underlying concerns, and working toward win-win solutions. Empathy and emotional regulation are particularly valuable in de-escalating tensions and finding common ground.

Cultivating Emotional Intelligence for Negotiations

Developing emotional intelligence requires self-awareness, practice, and adaptability. Key steps include:

- Enhancing Self-Awareness: Understanding one's emotions, strengths, and areas for improvement is the first step in building emotional intelligence.
- Practicing Empathy: Actively seeking to understand the other party's perspective helps in fostering mutual respect and trust.
- Improving Communication Skills: Learning to listen actively, ask open-ended questions, and respond thoughtfully enhances interpersonal interactions.
- Managing Stress and Emotions: Developing techniques to stay calm under pressure and handle challenging situations with composure is essential for effective negotiations.

Emotional intelligence is an indispensable asset in international negotiations, enabling negotiators to navigate cultural differences, build strong relationships, and achieve successful outcomes. In countries like Japan and Uzbekistan, where trust and harmony are highly valued, EI plays a pivotal role in creating lasting partnerships. Similarly, in structured markets like the U.S. and Germany, empathy and active listening contribute to precise and effective communication.

By cultivating emotional intelligence, negotiators can enhance their ability to connect with others, address challenges constructively, and achieve mutually beneficial agreements in diverse cultural and business contexts.

International business negotiation is an essential skill for businesses aiming to thrive in today's interconnected global economy. Success in negotiations hinges on a deep understanding of the cultural, economic, and social contexts that shape interactions in diverse countries. Whether operating in Uzbekistan, Japan, Germany, or the U.S., businesses must adapt their strategies—be they competitive, cooperative, or hybrid—to align with the specific norms and expectations of each market.

In an increasingly globalized world, mastering negotiation techniques tailored to varied cultural contexts is not merely an option but a fundamental necessity. Businesses that invest in understanding the nuances of international negotiations will gain a competitive advantage and position themselves for enduring success across different markets.

The authors

Ugilkhon Kakilova teaches at General and Comparative Linguistics Program, Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages (Uzbekistan) Boburshokh Street 5, Andijan, 170100, Uzbekistan
E-mail address: kakilovaugilkhon@gmail.com

Dilnozaxon Boymirzayeva teaches at the Department of Foreign Languages, The OXUS University in Tashkent. 13/36 Normuhammedov Street, Yashnobod District, Tashkent
E-mail address: boymirzayevadilnoza71@gmail.com

References

Bartlett, C., & Ghoshal, S. (2002). Managing across Borders: *The Transnational Solution.* Harvard Business Review Press.

Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture's Consequences: *International Differences in Work-Related Values.* Sage Publications.

Adler, N. J. (2002). *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*. South-Western.

Trompenaars, F. (1993). *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business.* Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Lewicki, R. J., Barry, B., & Saunders, D. M. (2016). *Negotiation: Readings, Exercises,* and Cases. McGraw-Hill Education.

Gelfand, M. J., & Brett, J. M. (2011). *The Handbook of Negotiation and Culture.* Stanford University Press.

Zakaria, N. (2003). The Dynamics of Cultural Dimensions in International Business Negotiations. Cross Cultural Management: *An International Journal*, 10(4), 40–52.

Kluckhohn, C., & Strodtbeck, F. L. (1961). *Variations in Value Orientations.* Greenwood Publishing Group.

Reiche, S. (2011). *Global Business Negotiations: A Practical Guide.* Wiley.

Barry, B. (2020). *International Business Negotiations, Second Edition.* Palgrave Macmillan

Learner Beliefs About Language Learning: A Metaphor Analysis of Multilingual Learners in Thailand

Phakhawadee Chaisiri
Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

Abstract

Learner beliefs play a crucial role in either facilitating or hindering language learning. Understanding the beliefs learners bring to the learning process is an initial step in improving conditions for meaningful language acquisition. While there has been extensive research on learner beliefs, contemporary beliefs about language learning in the post-COVID-19 era, particularly among multilingual learners, remain limited. This study explored learner beliefs about language learning and their attitudes towards the learning process through the elicited metaphor method. Data were collected from 555 multilingual participants in Thai higher education using a written prompt: "Learning a language is like ...because ...". An analysis of 439 valid metaphors revealed that learners conceptualised language learning through nine conceptual themes: 1) cognitive and skill development, 2) physical activity, 3) growth, 4) exploration, 5) challenge, 6) daily routine, 7) leisure activity, 8) using a tool, and 9) accumulation. These findings reflect various aspects of the learning process, including progressive, dynamic, ongoing, unpredictable, challenging, indispensable, enjoyable, rewarding, and accumulative. Additionally, four themes emerged regarding learners' attitudes towards the process: 1) positive, 2) neutral, 3) negative, and 4) complex, with most perceiving it positively and neutrally. The findings emphasise the importance of sustaining language learning motivation, creating engaging learning environments to enhance participation, and offering opportunities for reflection on past experiences, especially during the early stages of educational transitions, as crucial steps towards ensuring sustainable language education for multilingual individuals.

Keywords: *elicited metaphor; conceptual metaphor; metaphorical representation; language learning attitude; undergraduate*

Introduction

In the post-COVID-19 era, learner beliefs about language learning have been significantly impacted by widespread disruptions to education. The general shift to online platforms has altered not only the mode of learning but also how learners conceptualise their own educational journeys. Given the fact that learner beliefs about language learning play a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes, behaviours, and approaches to acquiring new languages, these beliefs can significantly influence motivation, persistence, and the strategies learners employ, often impacting their overall success and engagement in the learning process (e.g., Ellis, 2008; White, 2008). Thus, understanding how today's learners conceptualise contemporary language learning is essential for language educators aiming to create more effective, sustainable language learning and teaching environments.

As language learning is a complex, multifaceted process shaped by a variety of cognitive, emotional, and social factors, using methods that capture this complexity is critical (Barcelos, 2003; Kalaja et al., 2017). With

regard to language learning beliefs, metaphors are powerful tools for understanding abstract concepts, as they allow individuals to frame complex ideas in more familiar or concrete terms (Cameron & Low, 1999b; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In the context of language learning, metaphors offer valuable insights into learners' perceptions of the process, their struggles, and their motivations (Huang & Feng, 2019; Kramsch, 2003). Metaphors act as cognitive frameworks, shaping how learners interpret and engage with their language learning experiences (Wan & Low, 2015). Through metaphors, learners' self-reflection provides valuable insights into their beliefs and emotional connections to the learning process and experience (e.g., Farjami, 2012; Krüsemann & Graham, 2024). Existing literature underlines that understanding learners' conceptualisations of language learning can help educators better provide a supportive and effective learning environment that fosters lifelong language learning (e.g., Tabata-Sandom et al., 2020; Zambon Ferronato, 2022).

Although considerable research has been conducted on learner beliefs, limited knowledge exists on contemporary beliefs about language learning in the post-COVID-19 era, especially among multilingual learners. As a result, the purposes of this study are 1) to uncover multilingual learners' implicit beliefs about language learning through metaphors and 2) to explore their attitudes towards language learning as reflected in these metaphors. Based on these objectives, the research questions are:

1. What metaphors do learners use to describe their beliefs about language learning?
2. What attitudes towards the language learning process are reflected in the metaphors used by the learners?

Literature Review
Metaphors as a Tool for Examining Learner Beliefs

According to Kalaja (1995), studies on learner beliefs can be categorised into two approaches: mainstream and discursive. The mainstream approach views beliefs as stable, cognitive entities that can be measured through pre-established questionnaires or interviews (Horwitz, 1987; Wenden, 1987). In contrast, the discursive approach treats beliefs as dynamic and socially constructed, varying across individuals and contexts. This approach emphasises analysing the language produced by informants in context, in contrast to the predetermined assumptions made by researchers in mainstream studies. By examining participants' own discourse, implicit assumptions can be revealed, offering a more authentic representation of their beliefs and leading to a deeper understanding of their perspectives (Kalaja, 2003).

Within the discursive framework, metaphors have increasingly been recognised as a valuable tool for exploring beliefs about language learning and teaching (e.g., Ellis, 2008; Kramsch, 2003). Many studies use Conceptual Metaphor Theory to conceptualise and analyse these metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Based on this theory, metaphors are not merely linguistic expressions but cognitive devices that map abstract concepts onto more concrete experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors are integral to thought processes and highlight their role in shaping understanding. Metaphors, therefore, serve as tools for enhancing meaning, fostering emotional connections, and representing life experiences (Cameron & Low, 1999b; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). To simplify the metaphor concept, Saban et al. (2007) describe it as "a lens, a screen, or a filter through which a subject is (re)viewed and becomes a mental model for thinking about something in light of another" (p. 124).

In terms of their structure, metaphors are assumed to consist of two key components: the Topic (or target), which is the subject being discussed, and the Vehicle (or source), which is the domain used to describe the Topic (Cameron & Low, 1999a). For instance, in the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY, "love" is the Topic and "journey" is the Vehicle, where the qualities of a journey, such as progress, challenges, and growth, are applied to the experience of love. This comparison helps convey the dynamic and evolving nature of love over time. In metaphor studies, metaphor data can be gathered either through metaphoric processing, where metaphors emerge naturally from sources like diaries or conversations, or processing metaphor, where individuals are prompted to create metaphors (e.g., via structured tasks) (Kramsch, 2003). While the former provides deeper insights into cognition, the latter offers a more systematic way to collect data. This study focused on processing metaphor, using a written prompt in the "A is (like) B" format to elicit and analyse metaphors (Wan & Low, 2015).

In elicited metaphor research, using "like" in written prompts may raise questions about whether the metaphor is a simile. However, "like" serves as a device that makes the comparison task more explicit and easier for participants to understand. As long as the Vehicle in the metaphor differs from the Topic, the use of "like" only

helps in clarifying the task, making it more direct and effective (Cameron & Low, 1999a). Additionally, Seung et al. (2015) note that written prompts in a sentence completion format are commonly used in metaphor studies with large participant samples. This approach allows researchers to elicit participants' immediate metaphors, facilitating the generalisation of findings across a broader group. Studies related to elicited metaphors in language learning will be reviewed in the following section.

Elicited Metaphor Studies Related to Language Learning

Since this study focuses on processing metaphor generated by language learners, this section reviews empirical studies using the written prompt "Learning language X is like... (because) ..." to explore learners' comparisons of language learning in general, English learning, and non-English languages.

Regarding language learning in general, Kramsch (2003) analysed 1,496 metaphors from 953 undergraduate students studying 14 different languages in the United States. The metaphors were elicited through three writing prompts: 1) "Learning a language is like...", 2) "Speaking this language is like...", and 3) "Writing in this language is like...". The findings showed 18 categories of metaphorical beliefs, such as engaging in an artistic process, learning a physical skill, and getting to know another culture. One-quarter of the data reflected ambivalent beliefs, highlighting paradoxes in language learning. The study concluded that metaphor analysis sheds light on the complexity of learners' perceptions and challenges. Another study was conducted by Farjami (2012) who analysed 229 metaphors from 200 adult English learners in Iran using the prompt "Learning a foreign language (for example English) is like...". The analysis revealed 23 metaphorical themes, such as exploration, sports, and physical activity. Similar to Kramsch (2003), the metaphors reflected both cognitive and emotional dimensions of language learning and revealed distinctions between process- and product-based approaches to learning. The study found that participants held a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language, English in particular.

Concerning English language learning, Fang (2015) investigated Chinese EFL learners' perceptions using the prompt "Learning English is (like) ...because...". Data from 120 English and non-English major college students revealed that learners expressed either positive (e.g., happy, excited) or negative (e.g., confused, bored) attitudes towards English learning, with no neutral attitudes. Their perceptions encompassed the benefits and demands of learning English, as well as the learning process. The study concluded that learners' perceptions varied by proficiency level, with many students acknowledging the hard work required and emphasising their roles as active learners. Similarly, Zambon Ferronato (2022) explored beliefs about English learning among 18 participants (three teachers and 15 students) in Uruguay, using sentence completion tasks "For me, learning English as a foreign language is (like) ... because ..." and focus group interviews. The findings revealed that learners viewed English as a challenging process requiring significant effort to achieve proficiency. This study underscores the importance of understanding learners' goals and expectations. It suggests that such insights can help teachers design curricula and strategies that better align with their learners' needs.

In terms of languages other than English, Fisher (2013) conducted a longitudinal intervention study with 59 young learners in England, using three metaphor elicitation tasks to explore their beliefs about learning German: 1)"Learning German is like ...", 2) "If German were food, it would be ...", and 3) "If German were an animal, it would be ...". One class received explicit instruction focused on discussing metaphors as part of their pedagogy. After nine months, the same methods were used to collect data again. A pedagogical intervention shifted students' views from seeing German as difficult to recognising it as challenging but manageable. The study showed the impact of explicit instruction on learners' metaphorical representations. Recently, Krüsemann and Graham (2024) examined metaphorical representations of German language learning and German people among 391 adolescent learners in England. Metaphors were elicited using the written prompts: 1) "For me, learning German is like ... because ..." and 2) "If German was an animal, it would be a ... because ...". The results revealed six broad themes related to German learning (e.g., difficulty, pleasure, drudgery) and six themes regarding perceptions of German people, with most students describing them as unpleasant. These metaphors reflected learners' emotional attachments and attitudes towards the language and indicated the importance of addressing learners' emotional attitudes to motivate them effectively.

Regarding non-Western languages, Huang and Feng (2019) investigated Japanese language learning motivations among 55 undergraduates in China, using the prompt "Learning Japanese is ... because ..." and follow-up interviews. The findings showed that motivations varied by academic year: first-year students were enthusiastic, second-year students found the language challenging, and third-year students were concerned about outcomes and benefits. The study emphasised the dynamic nature of language learning motivations and the value of metaphor analysis in exploring them. Another study on Japanese language learning was conducted

by Tabata-Sandom et al. (2020), who examined beliefs about Japanese learning among 169 post-tertiary learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds and the factors influencing these beliefs. Using the prompt "Learning Japanese to me is (or was) like..." followed by an explanation and corpus analysis, the authors categorised 168 valid metaphors into nine themes, such as endless journey and opening a door. The findings highlighted that learners' beliefs evolved based on their learning objectives. This suggests that teachers can benefit from understanding these beliefs to support sustainable language learning.

To conclude, previous studies on learner beliefs about language learning through metaphor analysis have evolved significantly, with prompts now encouraging learners to not only describe their metaphors (Farjami, 2012; Kramsch, 2003) but also provide reasons for them (e.g., Fang, 2015; Krüsemann & Graham, 2024). This development has enhanced the depth of learners' mental conceptions regarding the process and nature of language learning as well as their attitudes towards it. However, language learning has undergone significant transformations in recent years. Learners are increasingly multilingual with diverse linguistic and cultural influences shaping their experiences. It is therefore essential to explore how these shifts impact learners' beliefs and attitudes towards language acquisition. This study aims to shed light on these evolving dynamics, contributing to a deeper understanding of how multilingual learners perceive and approach language learning, and offering implications for more effective teaching strategies in increasingly diverse educational settings.

Methodology
Research Design

This study was part of a doctoral mixed-methods research project that aimed to explore language learning beliefs and views on multilingualism held by multilingual students from indigenous backgrounds in Thailand. The focus of this present study was specifically on the first aspect, learner beliefs about language learning, using a metaphor-based approach. Its purposes were to explore learners' beliefs about language learning through metaphors and their attitudes towards language learning as reflected in these metaphors. Data was collected through an open-ended question in an online questionnaire, resulting in a cross-sectional qualitative research design. Ethical approval was granted by Massey University Human Ethics, and participants provided informed consent at the beginning of the survey.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at a public university in Nong Khai, a linguistically diverse area on the Thailand-Laos border impacted by the China-Laos railway expansion to Thailand through Nong Khai territory. The questionnaire was distributed to undergraduate students enrolled in compulsory English language courses during the first semester of the Academic Year 2024. After data cleaning, 555 responses from a total of 598 were valid. The respondents varied in sex, year of study, field of study, original region, languages used, and languages learned. As presented in Table 1, the majority were female (62%) and were first-year students (67.9%). The participants represented various disciplines, with nearly half majoring in Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education (41.8%) while the rest studied Business Administration and Economics (30.5%) and Science and Technology (27.7%). Most were from the Northeast or Isan region (87.8%), used Standard Thai (96.2%) and Isan (72.1%) in daily life, and studied English (100%) and Chinese (61.1%) as foreign languages.

TABLE 1. Demographic Information (n = 555)

Category	Group	N	%
Sex	Female	344	62.0
	Male	202	36.4
	Prefer not to say	9	1.6
Year of study	Year 1	377	67.9
	Year 2	175	31.5
	Above Year 2	3	0.6

Category	Group	N	%
Field of study	Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education	232	41.8
	Business Administration and Economics	169	30.5
	Science and Technology	154	27.7
Region with the highest time spent	Northeast (Isan)	485	87.8
	Central	55	9.9
	North	11	2.0
	South	4	0.7
Language(s) used in daily life	Standard Thai	534	96.2
	Northeastern Thai (Isan)	400	72.1
	English	87	15.7
	Northern Thai	12	2.2
	Southern Thai	8	1.4
	Other	13	2.3
Language(s) learned	English	555	100.0
	Chinese	339	61.1
	Japanese	170	30.6
	Korean	98	17.7
	French	46	8.3
	German	23	4.1
	Other	28	5.0

Data Collection

Data were collected through an online questionnaire divided into three parts: 1) Participant background information, 2) Personal beliefs about language learning (open-ended questions), and 3) Common beliefs about language learning (Likert-scale items). This study utilised data from the second part, which included the written prompt "If you were to compare, learning a language is like …because…" This task served as an indirect means to uncover learner beliefs about language learning and aimed to identify patterns in learners' conceptualisations of language learning and their attitudes towards it.

During a pilot test of the questionnaire with 30 non-targeted participants, three think-aloud protocols were conducted. It was found that respondents had difficulty completing the elicited metaphor sentence, leading to the suggestion of providing examples. Consequently, two examples were included: one likened language learning to growing a tree because it requires constant watering and nurturing, and another compared it to entering a cave because it is dark and difficult to navigate.

To collect data, permission was obtained from all lecturers of the compulsory English courses to visit their orientation classes. A 20–30-minute session was arranged either before, during the break, or after the orientation, depending on the lecturers' preference, to meet with the targeted participants. Before completing the questionnaire, participants were informed about the research objectives, its significance, their role in the study, and ethical considerations. Instructions on how to respond to the open-ended questions were also provided. Participants were encouraged to take their time to think about their answers and were reassured that any questions could be left unanswered if they felt uncertain. Additionally, they were invited to raise their hands for assistance or clarification during the process. The researcher remained present throughout the entire data collection session to offer support as needed.

Data Analysis

The analysis process involved three steps: 1) data preparation, 2) data analysis, and 3) assessing validity and reliability.

First, the data were reviewed in their original Thai form multiple times during the preparation stage to ensure familiarity. This process involved initial screening and cleaning of the metaphor responses. Of the 555 participants, 116 responses to the metaphor prompt were excluded due to being unanswered, non-metaphoric, or

illogical. Non-metaphoric responses included stances of metonymy (e.g., "Learning a language is like learning to speak") and analogy (e.g., "Learning a language is like finding a needle in a haystack"). Illogical responses were nonsensical or irrelevant (e.g., "Learning a language is like monkeys because they like to eat bananas"). Incomplete responses, those lacking necessary entailments, or those identical to the provided examples were also excluded. As a result, 439 responses remained valid. These metaphors were translated from Thai to English using the Translate Document function in Microsoft Word and cross-verified with OpenAI Translation during a subsequent round of data familiarisation.

Secondly, the data analysis followed the four-step procedure outlined by Cameron and Low (1999b): 1) naming/labelling, 2) sorting, 3) categorisation, and 4) data analysis. To address the first purpose of the study regarding learners' implicit beliefs about language learning through metaphors, open coding was applied to label each metaphor after a close reading. These initial codes aimed to capture what learners compared language learning to, such as learning a cognitive skill, engaging in a daily living skill/activity, and exploring a new place. The codes were then sorted, resulting in 24 categories. These initial codes were further categorised into broader categories, resulting in nine conceptual themes, including 1) cognitive and skill development, 2) physical activity, 3) growth, 4) exploration, 5) challenges, 6) daily routine, 7) leisure activity, 8) using a tool, and 9) accumulation.

To address the second purpose of the study concerning learners' attitudes towards language learning as reflected in these metaphors, open coding was also applied to analyse the data. The initial codes were derived from the learners' metaphorical interpretations of their language learning experiences and attitudes. These codes reflected a range of perspectives, including feelings of confusion, satisfaction, indifference, and a mixture of two feelings, such as anxiety and interest. The initial codes were then organised and categorised into four main themes that captured learners' language learning trajectory: 1) positive, 2) neutral, 3) negative, and 4) complex.

Lastly, an assessment of validity and reliability was performed. During the analysis, certain words and synonyms frequently emerged within each theme. Corpus analysis was then employed to validate the results and highlight the distinct features of each theme. To enhance the reliability of the analysis, a doctoral student in English Language Studies was invited to code 66 randomly selected metaphors, representing 15% of the data. The second coder conducted the coding independently using the established coding system. The agreement rate across all instances was 98%. Any discrepancies were addressed in the follow-up discussion.

Findings

To address the two purposes of the study and answer the corresponding research questions, the findings are presented in two subsections. The first subsection focuses on the first research question, which explores learners' beliefs about language learning through metaphors, whereas the second subsection addresses the second research question, which examines learners' attitudes towards the language learning process.

Research Question 1: *What Metaphors Do Learners Use to Describe Their Beliefs About Language Learning?*

To answer the first research question, the analysis identified nine conceptual themes of metaphors that learners use to represent the language learning process. As shown in Figure 1, the most common responses categorised language learning in terms of 1) Cognitive and skill development (21%) and 2) Physical activity (18%). Similar proportions were noted for themes of 3) Growth (15%), 4) Exploration (12%), and 5) Challenge (12%). Furthermore, one-fourth of the respondents viewed language learning as 6) Daily routine (8%), 7) Leisure activity (6%), 8) Using a tool (5%), and Accumulation (3%).

FIGURE 1. Conceptual Themes of Metaphors Related to Beliefs About Language Learning
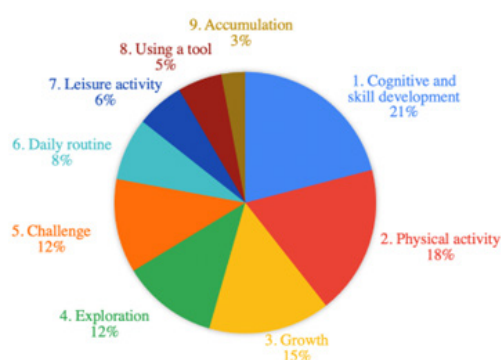
Table 2 summarises the conceptual themes related to beliefs about language learning, along with examples and keywords from the corpus. Detailed explanations for each theme are provided below.

TABLE 2. Summary of Conceptual Themes Related to Beliefs About Language Learning (n = 439)

Conceptual themes (n)	Examples – entailments (because)	Word frequency (n)
1. Cognitive and skill development (92)	Playing games – you have to learn in order to start something. If you are a beginner, you have to gain experience for the next level.	learn* (37), play* (28), practice* (19), understand* (19), time (10)
2. Physical activity (81)	Exercise – the more we practice with discipline, the more we can reach the goal we want.	practic* (25), exercis* (21), regularly (12), time (10), effort (7)
3. Growth (66)	Growing flowers – we have to take care of them and water them, so they will grow beautifully.	grow* (26), plant* (22), learn* (17), care (10), regular* (10)
4. Exploration (52)	Going out to see a new world – we will encounter something we never knew.	new (17), learn* (14), journey (16), world (8), open (4)
5. Challenge (51)	Love – no matter how hard you try, you still do not understand.	not (20), understand (13), but (10), hard (7), difficult (7)
6. Daily routine (34)	Eating rice – we eat every day, we will grow up and get stronger.	eat* (17), day (9), life (7), necessary (4), regularly (4)
7. Leisure activity (26)	Watching movies – we have to watch movies attentively to understand what the movie is about and what the ending is like.	watch* (9), raising (6), practice (6), understand (6), care (4)
8. Using a tool (24)	Having the key in your hand – you can unlock new doors for a good experience.	more (8), can (7), light (4), door (3), advantage (2)
9. Accumulation (13)	Filling the glass with water – if we learn little by little every day, we will become better.	glass (11), water (9), fill* (7), money (4), gradually (3)

1. Language learning as a cognitive and skill development

Most learners compared language learning to a progressive process of cognition and skills (e.g., playing games, driving, cooking). They emphasised that learners must engage in systematic learning and continuous practice to gradually deepen their understanding and enhance their skills. Learning by doing is another key characteristic highlighted in this theme (e.g., "Cooking because you have to learn how to do it and keep practising").

2. Language learning as a physical activity

The second-largest group of learners viewed language learning as a dynamic process that requires regular practice (e.g., exercising, playing sports, climbing). This group highlighted the significance of repetition and discipline. A step-by-step approach also emerged within this metaphor group (e.g., "Building a building because if you skip a step, it will collapse and you will have to start over").

3. Language learning as growth

Respondents in this group likened language learning to language learning as an ongoing process that requires care and time (e.g., planting, raising a child). The key characteristic is the idea of returning to the starting point, where growth requires nurturing and patience, making it a time-consuming journey. Success is seen as dependent on consistent attention. Language learning is viewed as a process of transformation (e.g., "Caterpillars because they have to wait for self-development to fly") or regeneration (e.g., "A pencil because it has to be sharpened").

4. Language learning as an exploration

This metaphor group regards language learning as an unknown and unpredictable process (e.g., journey, adventure, travel) which emphasises its endless and multifaceted nature. It likens learning to navigating new terrains, capturing the excitement and unpredictability of the experience. In addition, it highlights the cultural aspect of language learning, comparing it to getting to know another person or culture (e.g., "Exchanging cultures because we learn languages other than the language used in our own country").

5. Language learning as a challenge

Learners in this group considered language learning as a challenging and complex process (e.g., being in love, getting lost) which requires continuous effort and determination to overcome obstacles. Perceptions vary widely, with some feeling confused, discouraged, and disappointed (e.g., "Love because no matter how hard you try, you still do not understand"), while others saw it as a contradictory experience—difficult but rewarding (e.g., "The winding path to the exit door that is difficult but fruitful"). For some, the challenge was motivating (e.g., "Mudstone, because if it is trained and polished, it can become a diamond").

6. Language learning as a daily routine

This group of respondents perceived language learning as an indispensable resource (e.g., eating, living, air). For them, language is deeply integrated into their daily lives, with continuous and repetitive learning being a natural part of their routine. They emphasised that language is not just a skill but a necessity for navigating the world, and its constant use is crucial for survival (e.g., "Working because we have to try hard so that we survive"). This perspective highlights the idea that language learning is not a separate task but an ongoing, vital practice in everyday life.

7. Language learning as a leisure activity

Learners in this group viewed language learning as an enjoyable and relaxing pursuit (e.g., watching movies, raising pets, drawing). While language learning is seen as a process that brings pleasure, respondents recognised that it requires attentiveness. This group also underlines the journey of becoming skilful rather than focusing solely on the outcomes. They noted that understanding and consistent practice are key to success (e.g., "Knitting because at first it will be slow and sometimes there will be mistakes, but if you become skilled, you will be able to knit more smoothly and quickly").

8. Language learning as using a tool

This group of metaphors compares language learning to a means to an end and as a rewarding process that can lead to a better future (e.g., a weapon, a key, a light, a treasure). Languages are depicted as something essential and beneficial, motivating learners to acquire because they perceive the process as worthwhile. It equips them with the necessary skills and advantages to succeed, providing opportunities and a distinct edge over those who lack these linguistic abilities (e.g., "Treasure because it can make money").

9. Language learning as accumulation

This metaphor group portrays language learning as an accumulative process (e.g., filling glass, saving money), emphasising the gradual and continuous accumulation of linguistic knowledge. It suggests that learning fills an initially empty mind or accumulates as a collection of small pieces of valuable knowledge (e.g., "Saving money because we have to save a little every day, gradually"). This view underscores that language acquisition builds over time through steady input and persistent effort.

Research Question 2: *What Attitudes Towards the Language Learning Process are Reflected in the Metaphors Used by the Learners?*

To address the second research question, the findings revealed four main themes related to learners' attitudes towards language learning: 1) positive, 2) neutral, 3) negative, and 4) complex. As shown in Figure 2, the majority expressed a positive view (37%) and a neutral view (37%) regarding their language learning journeys. While a minority characterised their language learning experiences as negative (6%), nearly a quarter described language learning as complex (20%).

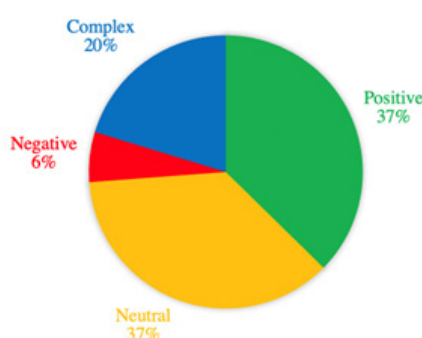**FIGURE 2. Themes of Learners' Attitudes Towards Language Learning Process**

Table 3 outlines the themes associated with attitudes towards language learning, including examples and keywords from the corpus. Detailed explanations of each theme are presented below.

TABLE 3. Summary of Themes Related to Attitudes Towards Language Learning Process (n = 439)

Themes (n)	Examples – entailments (because)	Word frequency (n)
1. Positive (164)	- Birds that are learning to fly – it takes a lot of effort. The better you fly, the higher you can fly. - A competition – you have to beat yourself and make it better than the previous round.	learn* (38), more (35), practic* (30), new (18), good (16)
2. Neutral (160)	- Falling in love – it takes time to learn. - Maths – you need to find a formula to solve the problems according to the context.	learn* (35), understand* (21), need (25), time (18), regular* (16)
3. Negative (26)	- Love – it is hard to understand. - A bird that will fly to the moon – no matter how hard it tries, it cannot reach the destination.	understand (8), not (7), hard (5), no (5), difficult (3)
4. Complex (89)	- Working – if you do less, you get less money, if you do more, you get more money. - Climbing the mountain – it is difficult but the destination is very beautiful.	not (70), if (63), but (20), learn* (16), practic* (15),

1. Positive attitudes

Positive views were associated with metaphors that evoked uplifting feelings such as joy, excitement, and optimism (e.g., playing games, planting, exercising, travelling). The key characteristic of these metaphors was the motivation and enthusiasm to improve, with learners viewing their learning experiences as a continuous effort towards growth, as presented in the examples in Table 3. The sense of hopefulness and the belief in eventual success made learners in this group perceive language learning as a worthwhile pursuit (e.g., "Investment because if you are good at languages, you can get a profit that is worth the investment").

2. Neutral attitudes

Neutral views were assigned to metaphors that did not elicit strong feelings or were perceived with indifference. Learners in this group tended to describe language learning in terms of its nature as a systematic, time-consuming, and seemingly endless process (e.g., learning to do or understand something). In other words, they did not express strong opinions about their language learning experiences. For example, the metaphor "Exercise because if you do it consistently, you will have a strong body" was categorised as a positive view, conveying a sense of improvement and progress. In contrast, the metaphor "Exercise because you have to do it regularly" elicited a more neutral response, without a strong emotional connection.

3. Negative attitudes

Negative attitudes were expressed when the metaphors triggered feelings such as anxiety, disappointment, and discouragement. Commonly mentioned negative experiences included difficulty and frustration in navigating complex situations (e.g., understanding love, getting lost). These negative attitudes varied in intensity, ranging from mild emotions like boredom (e.g., "Writing A-Z because we keep doing the same things") to stronger feelings like unpleasantness (e.g., "Eating food you do not like because you have to be patient and are forced to"). These attitudes contributed to an unwillingness to learn and stagnation.

4. Complex attitudes

Complex views were applied to metaphors that depicted language learning as ambivalent, involving mixed feelings, such as joy intertwined with struggle, as illustrated by the "climbing a mountain" metaphor in Table 3. Metaphors in this group often highlighted the paradoxical nature of language learning, capturing internal conflict and tension. For example, "Waking up early because I do not want to, but I have to" reflects this struggle. Another key point was the situated nature of learners' sense of free will in the process, which was expressed through conditional statements, as shown in Table 3. This group of respondents demonstrated complex and dynamic beliefs and attitudes towards language learning, marked by both conflicting emotions and personal agency.

Discussion

The findings of this study identified nine conceptual themes of learner beliefs about language learning through elicited metaphors and four themes regarding their attitudes towards the learning process. These results prompt several key discussion points: 1) learners' conceptualisations of language learning, 2) learners' attitudes towards the language learning process, 3) the nature of learner beliefs, and 4) the use of metaphor analysis as a tool for exploring learner beliefs.

Firstly, the nine conceptual themes related to learners' beliefs about language learning reflect a broad range of comparisons. These themes, including viewing learning as cognitive and skill development, physical activity, growth, exploration, challenge, daily routine, leisure activity, using a tool, and accumulation, align with previous research on language learning metaphors (e.g., Fang, 2015; Kramsch, 2003; Krüsemann & Graham, 2024). These findings indicate that the majority of multilingual learners conceptualised language learning as a process-based endeavour (i.e., progressive, dynamic, ongoing, unpredictable, challenging, enjoyable, and accumulative), while a minority viewed it as product-based (i.e., indispensable and rewarding), consistent with prior studies (e.g., Farjami, 2012; Tabata-Sandom et al., 2020). In line with earlier research, the findings show that learners acknowledged that language learning requires effort and time, and they saw themselves as central agents in driving their own success (e.g., Farjami, 2012; Tabata-Sandom et al., 2020; Zambon Ferronato, 2022). This suggests that language educators should prioritise fostering self-motivation and learner agency to sustain students' willingness to learn and empower them to achieve their language learning goals. To accomplish this, teachers should encourage students to set goals and promote a sense of ownership throughout the learning process.

Secondly, the findings categorised learners' attitudes towards language learning into four themes: positive, neutral, negative, and complex. The positive group was the most prominent, consistent with the findings of Farjami (2012) and Fang (2015). The positive attitudes may stem from participants' early years of higher education, where they tend to be open, excited, eager, and highly motivated as they navigate a new educational environment. This mirrors the findings of Fang (2015) and Huang and Feng (2019), who observed that students in different academic years held varying attitudes towards language learning. Specifically, freshmen and lower-proficiency learners were more optimistic about language learning than sophomores and higher-proficiency learners. The findings of this study also highlight emotional experiences beyond positive feelings, such as indifference, hardship, and suffering among learners, echoing the research of Krüsemann and Graham (2024). Moreover, the high number of respondents in the neutral attitude group likely results from asking them to compare language learning in general rather than focusing on specific languages, as in previous studies, such as English (Fang, 2015) and German (Krüsemann & Graham, 2024). However, the neutral group suggests that learners did not completely reject language learning, as the negative group did. Their beliefs leave room for language teachers to foster positivity and offer alternative ways of making meaning in their language learning journey. Explicit discussion of learners' beliefs and attitudes towards language learning is an effective way to help them reflect on their experiences, leading to greater awareness and potential shifts in their beliefs (Fisher, 2013).

Thirdly, the complex attitudes towards language learning identified in this study reinforce the dynamic, situated, and paradoxical nature of learner beliefs, as highlighted by previous research (e.g., Huang & Feng, 2019; Kramsch, 2003; Tabata-Sandom et al., 2020). As presented in Table 3, these complex attitudes include situational conditions (if-clauses) and mixed feelings, such as viewing the language learning process as both a challenging and beautiful journey. This suggests that learners' experiences are not linear but fluctuate over time. This underscores the importance of acknowledging the situated nature of learner experiences and beliefs, which can evolve based on both internal factors (e.g., motivation, self-confidence) and external factors (e.g., teaching methods, social interactions). Furthermore, this dynamic perspective challenges simplistic models of language learning, calling for more nuanced approaches in both research and pedagogy that account for these shifting attitudes and experiences learners encounter throughout their language learning journey.

Lastly, the emotional discomfort observed in the negative attitude group also underscores the potential of metaphor analysis as an effective, indirect tool for capturing the affective dimension of learner beliefs, an aspect that more direct methods may overlook. These findings not only affirm the value of metaphors in conveying the intricate and often contradictory experiences of language learners but also highlight their ability to uncover both cognitive and emotional aspects of subconscious beliefs, as evidenced in existing literature (e.g., Ellis, 2008; Farjami, 2012; Kramsch, 2003). Despite its potential as a powerful tool for examining learner beliefs, it is important to address subjectivity and researcher bias in metaphor-use research (Kramsch, 2003; Wan & Low, 2015). To enhance trustworthiness, it is advisable to use methodologically sound approaches, such as employing

multiple elicitation methods, providing transparent analysis procedures, and applying various analytical techniques (Seung et al., 2015). It is also important to note that in some contexts, participants may struggle to complete the elicited metaphor prompt. In this study, for instance, despite the examples provided, many learners still found it challenging to generate metaphors relevant to the question posed. Offering a clearer explanation of metaphors or even conducting a brief workshop or training on how to elicit metaphors could help participants engage more effectively with the task (Low, 2015).

Conclusion

This study explored Thai multilingual learners' beliefs about language learning amidst sociolinguistic changes during their educational transition in the post-COVID-19 era, marked by educational disruption. The analysis revealed that learners view language learning as a progressive, dynamic, ongoing, unpredictable, challenging, indispensable, enjoyable, rewarding, and accumulative process. This emphasises that learners view themselves as key agents in shaping their own success. Findings also showed a range of attitudes, with positive and neutral responses being the most common. This highlights the optimism and openness of learners in the early stage of the new learning environment. Moreover, learners' emotional experiences were expressed through metaphors, which underscores the value of metaphor analysis in capturing the holistic understanding of learner beliefs despite its potential subjectivity bias. The study offers implications for language educators to better meet the needs of today's learners by emphasising the sustainability of language learning motivation, the creation of learner-centred environments, and the promotion of awareness-raising opportunities that foster meaningful, lifelong language learning.

Limitations of this study lie in the data source and analysis. First, by relying on a single elicitation method, it might be challenging for learners to fully express their beliefs through metaphors and for the researchers to capture the complexity of those beliefs. Future research could improve the validity of interpretations by using more than one written prompt to provide a more comprehensive view of learner beliefs. Second, despite efforts to enhance validity through corpus analysis and reliability through intercoder agreement, the analysis of this study relied solely on the metaphors' interpreters (researchers), not their creators (participants). To improve data accuracy, it is recommended that further research incorporate validation methods such as member checks or interviews with a small sample or techniques like explicit metaphor discussion and metaphor sorting activities in follow-up focus groups for larger populations. These approaches could strengthen the credibility of future metaphor-based studies.

Acknowledgements

The Author

Phakhawadee Chaisiri is a PhD candidate at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Massey University, New Zealand. Her research interests include applied linguistics, second language acquisition, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, multilingualism, and intercultural communication.
Email: phakhawadee.c@gmail.com

References

Barcelos, A. M. F. (2003). Researching beliefs about SLA: A critical review. In P. Kalaja & A. M. F. Barcelos (Eds.), *Beliefs about SLA: New research approaches* (pp. 7-33). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-4751-0-1

Cameron, L., & Low, G. (1999a). *Metaphor. Language Teaching*, 32(2), 77-96. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444

Cameron, L., & Low, G. (1999b). *Researching and applying metaphor.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524704

Ellis, R. (2008). Learner beliefs and language learning. *Asian EFL Journal,* 10(4), 7-25.

Fang, S. U. (2015). College EFL learners' metaphorical perceptions of English learning. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 12(3), 61-79. https://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2015.12.3.3.61

Farjami, H. (2012). EFL learners' metaphors and images about foreign language learning. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 2(1), 93-109. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2012.2.1.5

Fisher, L. (2013). Discerning change in young students' beliefs about their language learning through the use of metaphor elicitation in the classroom. *Research Papers in Education*, 28(3), 373-392. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2011.648654

Horwitz, E. K. (1987). Surveying student beliefs about language learning. In A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp. 119-129). Prentice-Hall International.

Huang, W., & Feng, D. (2019). Exploring the dynamics of motivation for learning Japanese among Chinese learners: an elicited metaphor analysis. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 40(7), 605-617. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2019.1571071

Kalaja, P. (1995). Student beliefs (or metacognitive knowledge) about SLA reconsidered. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 191-204. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.1995.tb00080.x

Kalaja, P. (2003). Research on students' beliefs about SLA within a discursive approach. In P. Kalaja & A. M. F. Barcelos (Eds.), *Beliefs about SLA: New research approaches* (pp. 87-108). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-4751-0-4

Kalaja, P., Barcelos, A. M. F., & Aro, M. (2017). Revisiting research on L2 learner beliefs: Looking back and looking forward. In P. Garrett & J. M. Cots (Eds.), *Routledge Handbooks in Linguistics* (pp. 222-237). Routledge.

Kramsch, C. (2003). Metaphor and the subjective construction of beliefs. In P. Kalaja & A. M. F. Barcelos (Eds.), *Beliefs about SLA: New research approaches* (pp. 109-128). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-4751-0-5

Krüsemann, H., & Graham, S. (2024). 'Learning German is like…': how learner representations, motivational beliefs, and perceptions of public views relate to motivation for continuing German study. *The Language Learning Journal,* 1-28. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2024.2388116

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by.* University of Chicago Press.

Low, G. (2015). A practical validation model for researching elicited metaphor. In W. Wan & G. Low (Eds.), *Elicited metaphor analysis in educational discourse* (pp. 15–37). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/milcc.3.01low

Saban, A., Kocbeker, B. N., & Saban, A. (2007). Prospective teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning revealed through metaphor analysis. *Learning and Instruction,* 17(2), 123-139. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2007.01.003

Seung, E., Park, S., & Jung, J. (2015). Methodological approaches and strategies for elicited metaphor-based research: A critical review. In W. Wan & G. Low (Eds.), *Elicited metaphor analysis in educational discourse* (pp. 39-64). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/milcc.3.02seu

Tabata-Sandom, M., Nishikawa, Y., & Ishii, D. (2020). Metaphorical conceptualizations of language learning by post-tertiary learners of Japanese. *System*, 94, 102335. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102335

Wan, W., & Low, G. (2015). *Elicited metaphor analysis in educational discourse.* John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/milcc.3

Wenden, A. (1987). Metacognition: An expanded view on the cognitive abilities of L2 learners. *Language Learning*, 37(4), 573-597. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1987.tb00585.x

White, C. (2008). Beliefs and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Ed.), *Lessons from Good Language Learners* (pp. 121-130). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511

Zambon Ferronato, N. (2022). Conceptual metaphors: An insight into teachers' and students' EFL learning beliefs. *Cuadernos de Investigación Educativa,* 13(2), 103-119. https://doi.org/10.18861/cied.2022.13.2.3176

Linguistic Choices in Academic Writing: Lexicogrammatical Realization of Text for Academic Purposes

Noeris Meiristiani
Meyga Agustia Nindya
Universitas Pancasakti Tegal, Tegal Municipality, Indonesia
Setyo Prasiyanto Cahyono
Universitas Dian Nuswantoro, Semarang, Indonesia

Abstract

In language learning, academic writing challenges students to use precise lexicogrammatical choices to convey complex ideas and meet disciplinary norms. This study focuses on the lexicogrammatical realization in an academic paper discussing language learning, aiming to uncover the specific linguistic features that characterize high-quality academic writing in this niche. The objectives are to identify the lexicogrammatical features prevalent in the academic paper, to understand the functional roles these features play in articulating research findings and theoretical discussions, and to develop pedagogical strategies to enhance the students' writing skills. This study adopted a qualitative approach, utilizing detailed textual analysis and interpretive methods. The methodology involves the selection of academic papers from journals, textual analysis to conduct close readings of selected texts to identify and categorize recurrent lexicogrammatical patterns, and thematic coding to link these patterns to specific communicative functions. The research yielded a detailed inventory of lexicogrammatical features commonly used in academic writing, which are material, relational, mental, and verbal processes that facilitate clear and effective communication of research findings and theoretical arguments. By elucidating the lexico-grammatical features that underpin effective academic writing, the research findings informed the development of targeted pedagogical tools and resources such as annotated model texts writing templates, targeted writing exercises, and workshops on verb choice and clause structure. These tools will aid language learners in refining their writing skills, thereby enhancing the quality and impact of their academic contributions.

Keywords: *academic writing; lexicogrammatical realization; language learning; textual analysis; writing pedagogy*

Introduction

Academic writing in English poses distinct challenges for students due to unique features, particularly in the precise and effective communication of complex ideas (Alharbi, 2019; Batubara & Fithriani, 2023; Lysanets et al., 2021; Mahfudurido, 2021). The ability to navigate these challenges is often rooted in the writer's command of lexicogrammatical choices—those intricate combinations of vocabulary and grammar that shape how ideas are conveyed. In the highly specialized context of academic writing, these choices are not merely a matter of style but are critical to adhering to disciplinary conventions and ensuring the clarity and persuasiveness of scholarly discourse (Ayadi, 2023; Nindya & Widiati, 2020). When a text fails to present appropriate linguistic choices, it can affect the meanings conveyed, potentially misrepresenting the intended message (Meiristiani, 2011).

Previous studies have primarily focused on language features on academic writing, leaving a gap in understanding how lexicogrammar works to realize meanings to encode the writer's experiential reality. Zhang & Zhang (2022) analyzed complex sentences and word choice in a scientific article which evidenced that using

complex phrases and sophisticated terminology is not merely a stylistic decision; it is essential for demonstrating the author's authority and competence. Akbulut's (2020) study highlights lexicogrammatical differences in lexical bundle usage between native and non-native writers. In addition, Choemue & Bram (2021) discussed how lexical features in academic writing contribute to complexity, accuracy, and fluency, emphasizing their role in high-stakes tests. Therefore, considering the importance of lexicogrammatical realization in academic writing, the present study addresses the meanings being made by clauses in an academic text.

This study delves into the lexicogrammatical realization of academic text within the realm of language learning. It seeks to uncover the specific linguistic features that distinguish high-quality academic writing in this field, providing a detailed exploration of the lexicogrammatical patterns prevalent in academic papers. By focusing on how these patterns function in articulating research findings and theoretical discussions, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the linguistic underpinnings that facilitate effective academic communication.

Through a qualitative approach that includes detailed textual analysis and thematic coding, this research examined a carefully selected academic paper from an internationally reputable journal. By employing Halliday's transitivity system, the objective is to analyze recurrent lexicogrammatical features and link them to their communicative functions, thereby creating a comprehensive inventory of the linguistic choices that characterize effective academic writing (Halliday, 2014).

Ultimately, this study aspires to bridge the gap between linguistic theory and pedagogical practice by offering practical recommendations for improving academic writing instruction. By elucidating the lexicogrammatical features that underpin successful academic writing, the findings will inform the development of targeted pedagogical tools and resources. These tools will support students in refining their writing skills, enhancing the clarity, impact, and overall quality of their academic contributions.

Review of Related Literature

Academic writing in the field of language learning demands precise lexicogrammatical choices to effectively communicate complex ideas and adhere to disciplinary conventions. This literature review explores the intricacies of these linguistic choices, drawing on recent studies that highlight key aspects of academic writing and pedagogy.

EFL Writing Challenges

Writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts has long been recognized as one of the most challenging skills to teach and learn (Nguyen, 2023). Unlike other language skills, writing involves not only the mastery of grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to organize ideas coherently and present them persuasively (Mali, 2023). As noted in the background of this study, many EFL students experience difficulties in essay writing, often due to insufficient ideas about the topic, lack of relevant knowledge, and low self-confidence (Batubara & Fithriani, 2023; Singh, 2019). Furthermore, students' weak writing production can be attributed to limited practice and the inability to transfer theoretical knowledge into practical writing skills (Alharbi, 2019).

The notion of writing as a learned skill has been emphasized by Shahsavar & Asil (2019), who argue that every student has the potential to write if given the appropriate encouragement and support. Additionally, Jo (2021) highlights the role of writing in EFL classrooms not only as an assessment tool but also as a means of enhancing critical thinking and communication skills. These skills are essential for students to successfully engage in academic discourse and professional environments. Teachers, therefore, must create a learning environment that encourages continuous writing practice, beginning with simple tasks and progressively advancing to more complex writing activities.

Writing Strategies in EFL

Writing strategies have been identified as crucial tools for enhancing EFL learners' writing performance (Abbas & Fathira, 2022; Chen, 2022; Namsaeng & Sukying, 2021). Writing strategies refer to the techniques that students use to plan, organize, and revise their written work. These strategies can be cognitive, metacognitive, affective, or regulatory, and they play a significant role in improving fluency and accuracy (Anggraini et al., 2020). Cognitive strategies, such as brainstorming, outlining, and drafting, are particularly important in the pre-writing and writing stages. Metacognitive strategies, which involve self-monitoring and self-regulation, have been found

to be particularly effective in enhancing writing performance, especially among higher-proficiency learners (Yang et al., 2023).

However, despite the recognition of their importance, there remains a significant gap in the validation and assessment of writing strategies in EFL contexts. Many studies have focused on the general use of writing strategies or specific individual skills, such as grammar or vocabulary, but few have examined the complete range of cognitive strategies employed during the pre-writing, writing, and post-writing stages (Azizah & Soraya, 2023; Feng, 2023). The current study aims to address this gap by focusing specifically on the cognitive strategies that span all three stages of the essay writing process, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how learners navigate the writing process and how these strategies can be enhanced.

Linguistic Features of Academic Writing for Publication

The journey to mastering academic writing and navigating the publication process is intricate and requires an understanding of both the craft of writing and the expectations of the academic community. Church and Govender (2024) emphasize the challenges faced by emerging scholars in getting their work published, especially during their editorial internships. Their study provides valuable insights into the editorial process, highlighting the importance of lexicogrammatical precision in meeting the high standards of academic journals. The authors stress that mastering these linguistic choices is crucial for scholars aiming to make impactful contributions to their fields. In line with this, Crossley (2020) identified that the linguistic features like lexical sophistication, syntactic complexity, and text cohesion predict writing quality and development. Lexical sophistication refers to the use of less frequent, more complex vocabulary. This includes using longer words, less common words, or words with greater specificity, all of which indicate a higher level of writing proficiency. For example, advanced writers tend to use more abstract terms and fewer basic or imageable words. Syntactic complexity describes the structure of sentences, particularly the use of more intricate sentence forms such as complex or compound sentences.

Writers who use varied syntactic structures, such as multiple clauses or subordinate clauses, tend to produce higher-quality writing. However, Akkaya and Aydın (2018) suggest that the structure and syntax are expected to be accessible, balancing complexity with readability to enhance comprehension among an educated audience. Text cohesion involves how well different parts of a text connect and flow logically. This includes the use of cohesive devices like conjunctions, reference words, and lexical repetition, which help the reader follow the argument or narrative smoothly. A cohesive text is marked by the use of these devices to link ideas within and between sentences. These features not only contribute to the immediate quality of a text but also evolve as a writer develops over time, with more sophisticated language choices often indicating higher proficiency.

Akkaya and Aydın (2018) revealed that academics perceived the importance of a structured organization of academic writing, encompassing clearly defined sections such as the introduction, methodology, results, and discussion. Each serves a distinct role in conveying information effectively. Derntl (2014) also advocates for a "formal" style with precise and technical language that reflects the discipline's standards. Additionally, he encourages a clear, structured format that guides readers through complex ideas logically, favoring straightforward sentence constructions and avoiding colloquial or overly complex phrasing that might obscure meaning. These stylistic guidelines help ensure that academic papers are both professional and accessible, improving their chances of publication and broader academic impact.

Pedagogical Approaches in Academic Writing

The need for tailored pedagogical strategies in teaching academic writing is underscored by Fan et al. (2021) in their work. They argue that understanding the expectations of different audiences is essential for scholars, particularly in English for Research and Publication Purposes (ERPP). Their study shows that successful academic writing hinges not only on content but also on the strategic use of lexicogrammatical features that cater to the specific needs of various academic audiences.

Applying process-genre approach, Xu and Li (2018) give academic writing instruction to students of English-for-academic-purposes (EAP) program which involves providing knowledge about language, knowledge of the context (in particular the purpose of writing), and skills in using language.

1. Knowledge about Language

This component focuses on teaching the linguistic features essential for academic writing, such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and cohesive devices. Students learn how language functions in academic contexts, focusing on aspects like formality, precision, and clarity. The aim is to equip students with a strong command of language elements that are crucial for crafting well-structured and clear academic texts.

2. Knowledge of the Context and Purpose of Writing

Students are guided to understand the purpose of their academic writing tasks, often specific to their field or discipline. They learn about the conventions, expectations, and audience of academic writing within their areas of study. This component involves teaching students to align their work with the standards of academic discourse and to communicate ideas with an awareness of the context, purpose, and target audience, which is key for producing meaningful and relevant academic work.

3. Skills in Using Language

The focus here is on practical writing skills, which include drafting, revising, and editing, along with using feedback to improve the text. Students learn how to implement writing as a process, refining their work through multiple drafts and responding to peer or instructor feedback. This practice allows students to apply language knowledge in a structured way, honing their ability to convey ideas clearly and persuasively.

In essence, these components work together to provide a comprehensive framework for academic writing instruction. Students not only learn the necessary language features and genre conventions but also develop a process-oriented mindset to craft high-quality academic texts.

Addressing the specific needs of graduate students, Song and Zhou (2022) conducted an extensive needs analysis in their study. In fact, they found that a critical gap in existing English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curricula is the insufficient focus on lexicogrammatical proficiency. Their research suggests that to meet the demands of academic writing, EAP courses must be revised to include targeted instruction on the lexicogrammatical features that are prevalent in high-quality academic texts. This approach is vital in preparing graduate students to engage with the academic community effectively.

Lexicogrammatical Realization in Academic Writing

Academic writing is characterized by specific vocabulary and grammar features that enhance clarity, precision, and formality (Ayadi, 2023; Brun-Mercer and Immerman, 2015). Key aspects include the use of nominalization, passive voice, and technical terminology, which collectively contribute to the writing's academic tone. Additionally, lexical richness and syntactic complexity are crucial indicators of writing quality.

Zheng (2021) explores structure of research articles through transitivity system suggested by Halliday (2014). Zheng examined the choices of process types in different sections of 10 research articles considering that each section of a research article serves unique rhetorical functions. Based on transitivity analysis, the results showed that the research articles applied material, relational, existential, mental, and verbal processes which reflect the stylistic features of research articles.

The transitivity system, as formulated in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), provides a framework for analyzing how language encodes our experiences of the world. It explains how actions, events, states, and relationships are constructed in language, enabling speakers and writers to organize meaning in contextually appropriate ways. In academic writing, transitivity offers a useful lens for understanding how different types of processes contribute to meaning-making across genres and disciplines.

According to Eggins (1994), transitivity patterns reflect experiential meanings—meanings that are concerned with our perception and representation of reality. Each clause in a text typically consists of three semantic components: the process (usually realized through a verb group), the participants (expressed through noun groups), and the circumstances (realized through adverbial or prepositional groups) (Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Wiratno, 2018).

SFL identifies six types of processes, each serving distinct communicative purposes in academic discourse:

1. Material processes represent actions or events—what happens in the physical or social world. These are frequently used to describe experimental procedures or empirical findings. For example, "The study measured students' engagement using a five-point scale" shows how the Actor (the study) performs an action (measured) on a Goal (students' engagement).

2. Relational processes express states of being, identification, or classification, and are commonly found in definitions or conceptual explanations. For instance, "Language is a social semiotic system" uses the verb is to link the concept of language (Carrier) with its defining attribute (Attribute).

3. Mental processes involve perception, cognition, and emotion, and they often reflect writer stance or participant perspectives. For example, "The participants believed the tasks were too difficult" illustrates a mental process (believed), where the participants are the Senser and the tasks were too difficult is the Phenomenon.

4. Verbal processes report speech or communication and are typical in literature reviews or discussions. For example, "The authors argue that motivation is key to language acquisition" uses the verbal process argue to introduce reported viewpoints.

5. Behavioral processes reflect physiological or psychological actions that lie between material and mental processes. For instance, "The subjects watched the interaction attentively" captures a behavioral action (watched) by the subjects.

6. Existential processes express the existence or occurrence of something. A common structure is "There is evidence to support the claim," where there is signals an existential process introducing the entity evidence.

In addition, Circumstances provide further detail, answering questions such as how, when, where, why, or with whom. These elements enrich academic discourse by situating processes within specific contexts, such as time frames, spatial settings, or causal relations.

Overall, the transitivity system not only reflects the structure of human experience but also aligns with pedagogical aims by helping students identify and use process types purposefully across academic writing genres.

Methodology

This research was conducted to explore the lexicogrammatical realization of a research article on language learning utilizing qualitative research methodology. The data were taken from a research article entitled "Examining the role of the learner and the teacher in language learning motivation" written by Hennebry-Leung & Xiao (2023). In selecting the data, the researchers employed purposive or criteria-based sampling technique and took one article as the source of data in this study. In so doing, there were some criteria in choosing the article of this study such as this article was selected from data corpus of scientific journals in the category of Social Sciences and Arts Humanities in 2019 – 2024. Using keywords "language learning" of open access journals, it was found 28 articles in Scopus database. Then, the articles were further selected based on the theme that was related to English education students. Finally, one article was used as the data source considering the implication to teaching of academic writing. Selecting a single, representative article enabled a focused and detailed lexicogrammatical analysis, following the idea that it is more effective to study one case in detail than many cases superficially. This approach allowed for a careful examination of transitivity features across sections of the text, ensuring a clear and accurate analysis while maximizing the pedagogical insights derived from the study.

Text analysis was done in terms of ideational metafunction. Employing Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, the analysis was focused on the experiential meaning realized by transitivity structure. First, the text was segmented into clauses and coded. The data were rated by two researchers to obtain the reliability of the results. Second, the clauses were analyzed by focusing on the transitivity structure which included Process, Participant, and Circumstance. For the practicality of the data presentation, only the sample excerpts were presented by adding the clause code (e.g. Cl 2 Mat. means clause number 2 which shows material process). Third, the results were interpreted. Finally, the conclusion was drawn.

Result

The article written by Hennebry-Leung & Xiao (2023) which is analyzed in this study is organized by Introduction, Methodology, Findings, and Discussion. The Introduction consists of 17 paragraphs; the first is an introductory paragraph while the rest falls into 4 different sub-headings. The Methodology section comprises 19 paragraphs under 4 sub-headings. Findings section has the least number of paragraphs that is 12 with no sub-headings. The Discussion section consists of 12 paragraphs in which the research conclusion included. So, there is no separated section for conclusion. Each paragraph is constructed by a number of clauses as can be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Number of Clauses in the Article

Article Structure	Number of Paragraphs	Number of Clauses
Introduction	17	Introductory paragraph: 7 clauses
		Heading 1: 36 clauses
		Heading 2: 18 clauses
		Heading 3: 34 clauses
		Heading 4: 13 clauses
		108 clauses
Methodology	19	Heading 1: 11 clauses
		Heading 2: 59 clauses
		Heading 3: 9 clauses
		Heading 4: 32 clauses
		111 clauses
Findings	7	36 clauses
Discussion	12	81 clauses
Total	**55**	**336 clauses**

The experiential meaning realization of each clause can be broken down into 3 functional constituents; Participant, Process and Circumstance. The way a particular verb is functioning in a particular clause may result to the differences among the different process types. In addition, the differences among process types have consequences in the wording of clauses. The occurrences of each process type in each section can be seen in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Number of Clauses in the Article

Process Types*	Sections								Total Clauses	
	Introduction		Methodology		Findings		Discussion			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Relational (Rel.)	37	34,26	34	30,63	12	33,33	26	32,10	109	32,44
Material (Mat.)	42	38,89	61	54,95	18	50	41	50,62	162	48,21
Mental (Men.)	14	12,96	10	9,01	6	16,67	10	12,35	40	11,90
Verbal (Ver.)	15	13,89	5	4,50	0	0	4	4,94	24	7,14
Existential (Ex.)	0	0	1	0,90	0	0	0	0	1	0,30
Total Processes	**108**	**100**	**111**	**100**	**36**	**100**	**81**	**100**	**336**	**100**

The transitivity analysis allows us to refine the description of patterns that represent the encoding of experiential meanings: meanings about the world, about experience, about how we perceive and experience what is going on. The results of the article analysis explain the development and shifts of a number of experiential phases according to the predominant process type being selected by the participants.

The analysis of introductory paragraph shows a balance between relational and material processes, reflecting the text's focus on describing relationships between abstract concepts (motivation, self-efficacy) and actions (how attention is attracted, what the study focuses on). There is also a single mental process, indicating cognitive engagement by teachers. The mental process of "asking" shows teachers' cognitive engagement, while the material processes ("begun to attract" and "focuses on") depict actions associated with the research inquiry. The relational processes serve to define relationships between concepts (e.g., understanding as a crucial step, contributions towards theorization).

> *"Motivation and self-efficacy in language learning are widely recognized as powerful predictors of language learning success …. " (Cl 1 Rel.)*
> *"…only recently has this question begun to attract the attention of researchers." (Cl 4 Mat.)*
> *"Nevertheless, while teachers have long been asking the question of how instruction can generate a socio-affective disposition conducive to second language acquisition…" (Cl 3 Men.)*

The first heading is about "Conceptual framework: Language learning motivation and self-efficacy". In this part, the text combines material and relational processes to explain the actions (e.g., identifying models,

proposing ideas) and relationships between the components of L2 motivation models. Mental processes are used to express cognitive aspects, such as "evidence suggests." This part continues to show a heavy use of material processes, especially related to research activities and relationships between variables. Relational processes are used for attributing qualities to various concepts, and verbal processes are used for communicating theoretical ideas.

> *"Gardner's Socio-educational Model (1985, 2010) identifies two primary orientations for understanding learners' language learning motivation…." (Cl 8 Mat.)*
> *"Building on the work of Gardner, Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) proposes a three-component model…." (Cl 13 Mat.)*
> *"…evidence suggests also the pedagogical potential of the possible L2 selves for promoting motivated learning." (Cl 12 Men.)*
> *"…comprising: the ideal L2 self, …; the ought-to L2 self, …; and the L2 learning experience, …. (Cl 14 Rel.)*

Heading 2 on "Teachers' instructional practice" heavily relies on material and relational processes to describe frameworks, actions of teachers, and the effects of these motivational strategies. Some mental and verbal processes also reflect cognitive actions and communication in research contexts.

> *"Dörnyei (2001) proposes a systematic practice-oriented framework for understanding teacher motivational practice in language teaching; to date this remains one of, if not the only such framework." (Cl 44 Mat.)*
> *"The first three dimensions refer to teacher discourse strategies that can be seen as relevant to learning across domains,…." (Cl 46 Rel.)*

Next, the first paragraph of heading 3 on "Personality" shows that most of the processes are material, focusing on actions like adopting, interacting, negotiating, and exerting. The relational processes are used to define and classify personality and its components. The second paragraph is marked by material processes detailing how personality traits predict types of motivation and mental processes that signify research findings on these relationships. The third paragraph prominently features verbal processes to describe academic propositions, critiques, and findings, reflecting scholarly discourse, with material processes emphasizing actions such as focusing and showing certain traits' effects on learning. In addition, the last paragraph primarily features material and mental processes, illustrating how emotional regulation plays a role in facilitating the language learning experience. The verbal process emphasizes findings and recommendations from studies that underscore the significance of emotional regulation, especially for younger learners.

> *"…, personality can be understood as the 'set of psychological mechanisms and traits within the individual…" (Cl 62 Rel.)*
> *"…negotiating between individuals' inner needs and resources and the outer demands of their social settings…" (Cl 65 Mat.)*
> *"Dewaele (2005) argues not only for the considerable potential of personality traits to yield insights into the neurological substrates of language learning processes, …." (Cl 78 Ver.)*

Heading 4 presents "Aims and research questions". This part is dominated by material processes, especially in describing the study's objectives and actions, with relational processes used to define relationships and focus. There are also some mental and verbal processes that reflect cognitive actions and evaluations.

> *"… the primary focus of educational research would be to adopt a sadly reductionist view that would both limit the scope of research to enrich and extend knowledge and would carry heavy ethical responsibilities…." (Cl 103 Mat.)*

The second section is Methodology which dominates the whole article with 4 headings and 19 paragraphs. The first heading discusses "Participants" of the research. In the first paragraph, material processes dominate, describing actions related to the study (recruitment, participation, data collection), while relational processes describe the characteristics and relationships between participants and data. There are also a couple of verbal processes involved in reporting data. In the second paragraph, material processes dominate as they describe actions related to participation in observations and the gathering of data. Relational processes describe attributes (the length of lessons) and the presentation of the data (shown in the table).

> *"Of the eleven schools, six participated in lesson observations." (Cl 110 Mat.)*
> *"Participants were recruited through purposive, stratified sampling and comprised Hong Kong secondary school students, …." (Cl 112 Mat.)*
> *"Each lesson was forty minutes long…" (Cl 118 Rel.)*
> *"The distribution of observations is shown in Table 1." (Cl 119 Rel.)*

The second heading on "Tools" comprises 9 paragraphs. In the first paragraph, material processes dominate the discourse, describing the actions of adopting approaches, developing scales, and students responding to the questionnaire. Relational processes appear to describe relationships between entities, like the structure of the survey.

> *"Rooted in this strong tradition and as the first study to apply language learning motivation specific frameworks to understanding secondary school learners' motivation for learning English in Hong Kong, the study adopted a quantitative approach, allowing for generating a broad picture understanding of the phenomenon and paving the way for further qualitative studies." (Cl 121 Mat.)*
> *"The survey consisted of multi-item scales examining a range of English learning motivation constructs…." (Cl 122 Rel.)*

In the third paragraph, the participants mainly consist of abstract concepts such as integrativeness, instrumentality, research evidence, and self-image, while the circumstances relate to causes and conditions relevant to the motivational framework. Next, the fourth paragraph, is rich in relational processes focusing on defining and classifying traits and their assessment.

The fifth paragraph emphasizes relational processes as it involves defining and classifying motivational strategies within the MOLT schedule and linking them to different aspects of language learning and feedback practices. Then, in the sixth paragraph, mental processes dominate the analysis, particularly focusing on research findings and the present study's cognitive focus on specific teaching strategies.

In the seventh paragraph, the clauses mostly employ material processes to describe actions taken in the research methodology, particularly around how strategies are measured and counted, alongside some relational processes attributing effectiveness or relationships between variables. Finally, in the eighth paragraph, the processes illustrate actions involved in the research methodology (material), cognition in the analysis phase (mental), and communication of findings (verbal).

> *"Structured observations were conducted using the MOLT schedule." (Cl 176 Mat.)*
> *"The final analysis focused on teacher discourse and encouraging positive retrospective evaluation." (Cl 177 Men.)*
> *"Since piloting as well as the analysis of the main study data revealed that the use of other strategies was too infrequent to enable analysis." (Cl 178 Ver.)*

The heading 3 of Methodology explain "Procedure" of the research. The processes predominantly involve material actions focused on data collection and ethical procedures within the study.

> *"Following piloting, a bilingual version of the questionnaire was distributed, in paper mode, across schools participating in the study." (Cl 181 Mat.)*

Heading 4 is "Analysis" which consists of 5 paragraphs. The processes of the first paragraph primarily focus on the research methodology, specifically the actions taken by the panel of raters and researchers in developing a codebook, coding lesson observations, and generating statistical data. Next, the second paragraph's processes focus on the methodological and analytical procedures involved in managing and interpreting data.

> *"For the purposes of analysing the lesson observations, a panel of raters developed a codebook, …." (Cl 188 Mat.)*

In the third paragraph, the processes reflect the analytical steps, focusing on decisions made regarding statistical modelling and the relationships between variables in the dataset. Then, in the fourth paragraph, the analysis reflects a strong emphasis on data examination and interpretation, focusing on the relationships between variables and their presentation in statistical terms. In the last paragraph, the analysis reflects a focus on statistical procedures and methods used in the study.

> *"Survey data were coded and entered into the SPSS dataset." (Cl 195 Mat.)*
> *"Descriptive statistics for the variables examined, including mean scores, standard deviations and correlation coefficients, are presented in Table 3." (Cl 213 Mat.)*
> *"Finally, HMR analysis was conducted with language learning self-efficacy as the outcome variable, …" (Cl 219 Mat.)*

The third section is Findings which consists of 5 paragraphs. As the introductory paragraph, the first paragraph emphasizes the methodical, data-driven nature of the research, focusing on how statistical techniques are used to analyze and interpret relationships among variables. Then, the second paragraph reveals a mix of mental, material, and relational processes that interact to describe the sequence of the research process and the progression of analysis steps. Next, the third paragraph's analysis reveals how mental and material processes are used to describe both cognitive interpretation and actions of personality traits within the study, with relational processes explaining the specific roles and significance of those traits.

> *"The third research question examined the extent to which relationships observed varied according to motivational sub-constructs." (Cl 236 Men.)*
> *"A series of further regression analyses were conducted for each of the motivation sub-constructs." (Cl 237 Mat.)*
> *"These are presented in Table 5." (Cl 238 Rel.)*

The fourth paragraph's analysis reveals a mix of mental processes that relate to observation and judgment of the data, material processes that describe predictive actions, and relational processes that assign particular traits or effects to teacher practices. Finally, the last paragraph's analysis reveals that the majority of the processes are material as they describe actions performed (e.g., examining, explaining, recording), with some relational processes to describe states (e.g., statistical significance). Mental processes are also present to indicate observed relationships or effects (e.g., personality traits showing effects).

> *"Finally, multiple regression analysis examined the relationship between personality and English learning self-efficacy, …." (Cl 247 Mat.)*

"The introduction of teacher motivational practice explained an additional 11% of variance in English learning self-efficacy, after controlling for personality traits." (Cl 252 Mat.)
"In the final adjusted model four out of six predictor variables were statistically significant." (Cl 253 Rel.)
"Three personality traits showed a moderate significant effect: emotional regulation (β = .16, p < .05) and conscientiousness (β = .15, p < .05)." (Cl 254 Men.)

The last section is Discussion with 12 paragraphs. In first paragraph, the emphasis is on material processes, especially those that involve actions related to the study, interaction between factors, and lack of attention to certain variables. There are also relational processes used to define key components of the learning context, and mental processes to emphasize shifts in understanding (context's importance). In the second paragraph, material processes focus on actions performed by personality traits and teacher practices. Relational processes are used to attribute significance or lack thereof to certain factors. The analysis emphasizes the actions of predicting and identifying relationships among variables related to learning motivation and self-efficacy.

"Addressing this gap, the present study examined the ways in which learner personality and teacher motivational practices interact with English learning motivation and self-efficacy." (Cl 261 Mat.)

The third and fourth paragraphs show a variety of relational, verbal, mental, and material processes. Relational processes define relationships between entities like motivation and feedback. Verbal processes confirm findings and theories. Material processes highlight actions like contributing and extending, while mental processes focus on learners and teachers being aware and motivated.

"…language learners' motivation and self-efficacy are responsive to effective feedback practices, …." (Cl 274 Rel.)
"…thus confirming similar previous findings…" (Cl 274 Ver.)
"This finding contributes to a slowly but steadily increasing research interest in practices that can promote the development of learners' L2 selves and extends this possibility to adolescent learners…." (Cl 278 Mat.)
"Thus, teachers need to be aware of general principles of motivational practice." (Cl 285 Men.)

In the fifth paragraph, the material processes dominate the analysis, focusing on actions like adopting approaches, making decisions, and generating insights. Relational processes define relationships between areas of study and research extensions. In the sixth paragraph, the material processes also primarily describe actions, predictions, and interactions related to teacher practice and student outcomes. Mental and relational processes help elaborate on how these findings are interpreted and understood.

"…adopting a longitudinal approach to examine the sustained effects of a cohesive approach to motivational practice on students' L2 motivation." (Cl 291 Mat.)
"… they make decisions within the context of their classrooms and their institutions." (Cl 292 Mat.)

The seventh paragraph continues with the mental processes that reflect cognitive actions related to adopting a viewpoint or acknowledgment within the academic community. Relational processes highlight the identity and role of the study and personality differences, while material processes convey the action of neglect within the research context. Next, the eighth paragraph's analysis reveals a dominance of material processes, emphasizing the emergence and effects of predictors and sociocultural context. Verbal processes convey academic assertions, while relational processes serve to link ideas and describe relationships between constructs.

"The present study took the view that examination of the effects of teacher practice on language learning motivation should acknowledge the role of individual differences also…." (Cl 304 Men.)
"…, conscientiousness emerged as a moderate predictor of integrativeness…." (Cl 310 Mat.)

In the ninth paragraph, relational processes dominate, reflecting the evaluative nature of the discussion about how openness to experience relates to motivation and identity. Material processes describe actions or contributions of findings, while the mental process refers to cognitive inquiry into causality. Then, material processes dominate the tenth paragraph, particularly reflecting actions related to findings and their implications (such as supporting, enabling, and demonstrating).

"The potential of openness to experience, including traits such as curiosity, openness to other values, feelings and a preference for novelty, has been under-explored in the context of language learning." (Cl 313 Rel.)
"Once again the findings support the need to further explore the role of personality in language learning…." (Cl 323 Mat.)

In the eleventh paragraph, the analysis shows a predominant use of material processes, which focus on actions like promoting, changing, adopting, or fostering. These describe the dynamic interactions between personality development, motivation, and educational practices. The relational processes focus on identifying or attributing qualities, particularly aligning concepts or identifying potential outcomes.

"Approaches to language education rooted in notions of intercultural citizenship might on the one hand promote greater conscientiousness as language learning becomes a way through…." (Cl 330 Mat.)

Finally, in the last paragraph, the majority of processes are material, focusing on actions related to research, teacher practice, and the findings' influence on educational programs. The few mental and relational processes reflect the consideration of research gaps and the implications of the findings.

> *"Furthermore, they (the findings) strongly support calls for greater recognition of the need for teacher education courses to integrate a strong component of preparation for motivational teaching practice in their programmes." (Cl 335 Mat.)*

Discussion
Lexicogrammatical Features of the Text

Based on the results of the analysis, the Introduction section showcases a balanced interplay of material, relational, mental, and verbal processes, each serving a unique role in constructing the conceptual and methodological foundation of the study. Material processes predominantly (38.89%) frame the research activities, objectives, and actions, underscoring the study's focus on observable relationships and outcomes within the fields of motivation, self-efficacy, instructional practice, personality, and emotional regulation in L2 learning. These material processes play a critical role in signaling the research's empirical foundation, linking the study's objectives with tangible activities and outcomes. Relational processes (34.26%), meanwhile, establish clear definitional and attributive connections between key concepts, models, and components, providing the groundwork for understanding their roles within the study. These relational processes help to demystify the study's conceptual framework, offering clear definitions of terms and relationships between constructs such as motivation and self-efficacy. Mental processes (12.96%) lend depth to the cognitive underpinnings of motivation, self-efficacy, and personality traits by highlighting both the scholarly insights and hypotheses driving the research. The selective use of mental processes underscores the importance of cognitive engagement in formulating research questions and identifying gaps in the existing literature. Verbal processes (13.89%) serve to engage academic discourse, referencing established theories, critiques, and prior findings. These verbal processes position the current study within an ongoing academic conversation, showing how it extends or challenges existing theories. Altogether, the transitivity analysis reveals how each process type contributes to a nuanced and structured examination of the factors influencing language learning motivation and self-efficacy, setting the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the study's aims and research questions.

The Methodology section predominantly utilizes material processes (54.05%) to detail the actions undertaken throughout the research process, from participant recruitment and data gathering to the development and implementation of tools, procedures, and analytical methods. These material processes emphasize the systematic and structured nature of the methodology, underscoring the practical steps essential for data collection, measurement, and analysis. The prominence of material processes also reinforces the importance of methodological rigor in ensuring the reliability and validity of the study's results. Relational processes (30.63%) play a secondary but significant role, establishing connections between the components, describing the attributes of tools and participants, and defining the characteristics of constructs and motivational strategies. This use of relational processes allows the study to frame its operational definitions and classifications in a clear, structured manner. By articulating the relationships between various constructs, the study is able to demonstrate how the methodology supports the research framework and the investigation of specific variables.

The presence of mental processes (9.01%) in certain areas of the Tools and Analysis sections highlights the cognitive aspect of the study. Mental processes in this section suggest a reflective and analytical approach to the research process, signaling the researcher's engagement with the data. Verbal processes (4.50%), though limited, are used strategically to communicate research findings and data representation, reflecting the transparency and precision required in methodological reporting. Overall, the transitivity analysis of the Methodology section reveals a comprehensive and carefully articulated approach to research design and execution, combining systematic action with clear definitions, analytical rigor, and accurate communication of methodological details.

The Findings section predominantly features material processes (50%) that emphasize the research actions undertaken, thereby underscoring the study's empirical, data-driven approach. This systematic use of material processes highlights the research's focus on identifying concrete relationships and outcomes across variables, ensuring transparency in the step-by-step progression of findings. The clear articulation of actions through material processes reflects the study's commitment to providing detailed and replicable results. Relational processes (33.33%) serve to define and describe relationships among variables and the roles of specific traits, establishing connections that support the study's interpretive clarity and analytical depth. By using relational processes, the findings section constructs a coherent framework that links theory with empirical results.

Mental processes (16.67%) are strategically applied to illustrate interpretive and evaluative aspects. This nuanced use of mental processes indicates the cognitive engagement required in interpreting data and understanding the underlying patterns or implications within the research. Altogether, the transitivity analysis of the Findings section reflects a methodical approach, balancing objective analysis with interpretive insights that build a robust understanding of the relationships between personality, teaching practices, and motivational outcomes within the study's framework.

The Discussion section presents a more intricate balance of process types, revealing an intricate interplay that highlights the complex relationships and actionable insights gained from the study with domination of material processes (50.62%). Through these processes, the discussion emphasizes the predictive, contributive, and fostering roles of personality traits and educational strategies. The repeated use of material processes also signals a focus on the dynamic application of findings, ensuring that theoretical insights are translated into practical recommendations. Relational processes (32.10%) are frequently used to establish definitions and relationships among constructs. These relational processes aid in contextualizing findings, aligning them with broader educational goals and sociocultural frameworks, thus enhancing the theoretical relevance of the study. Mental processes (12.35%) appear selectively, capturing the reflective and interpretive aspects of understanding how motivation and personality traits interact to shape learning outcomes. This strategic application of mental processes allows for deeper cognitive engagement with the implications of the findings. Verbal processes (4.94%) are instrumental in conveying academic consensus, confirming findings, and suggesting avenues for future research, thus contributing to the study's engagement with existing literature and theoretical frameworks. The verbal processes also facilitate a critical reflection on the study's limitations and potential areas for further inquiry.

Overall, the Discussion section presents a thorough and reflective examination of the study's findings, offering insights that underscore the practical and theoretical relevance of integrating personality considerations with motivational teaching practices to enhance language learning outcomes.

As Zheng (2021) found in the previous study, material, relational, existential, mental, and verbal processes were used in research papers. The current study also shows similar lexicogrammatical features such as material, relational, mental, and verbal processes but with no existential process found. Therefore, understanding these lexicogrammatical realization is considered important to improve the quality of academic writing in terms of clarity, precision, and formality as suggested by Ayadi (2023) and Brun-Mercer and Zimmerman (2015).

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study offer practical applications for academic writing instruction in the field of language learning. Based on the identified lexicogrammatical features, several pedagogical tools and resources can be developed to support students in mastering effective academic expression. These include:

1. Annotated model texts that illustrate the functional roles of process types within each section of a research article, helping writers recognize how material processes describe procedures, relational processes define key concepts, and mental processes convey interpretations.

2. Writing templates that guide students through structuring their work using appropriate process types, ensuring consistency and clarity in methodology, findings, and discussions.

3. Targeted writing exercises, such as rewriting vague statements with more precise material processes or practicing the use of relational processes to articulate theoretical relationships.

4. Workshops on verb choice and clause structure to improve awareness of transitivity and its impact on tone, stance, and clarity.

These tools are intended to empower language learners to write with greater confidence, sophistication, and alignment with academic norms, ultimately improving the quality and effectiveness of their scholarly communication.

Conclusion

The transitivity analysis of this study reveals significant alignment with key lexicogrammatical features typical of academic writing on language learning, emphasizing precision, objectivity, and structured argumentation. In academic writing, material processes frequently describe methods and results, underscoring actions taken by researchers and outcomes derived from data. This study's use of material processes in the methodology and findings sections reflects that standard.

Relational processes, another core feature, help define and classify key concepts, crucial in the field of language learning where theories, constructs, and pedagogical models need clear delineation. This study leverages relational processes to establish relationships between variables and to attribute qualities to concepts, reinforcing logical coherence and conceptual clarity. Mental processes, though less frequent, are employed in this study to convey cognitive insights, which is essential for discussing interpretations, implications, and theoretical perspectives in language learning research. The study models the expression of subjective insights within an objective framework, fostering a balanced view of findings and limitations. Lastly, verbal processes facilitate engagement with prior research, enabling students to attribute ideas and position their contributions within the academic discourse. The use of verbal processes in discussing theories and prior findings in this study aligns with the conventions of scholarly writing, which values acknowledgment and critique of existing literature. Together, these lexicogrammatical features contribute to the precision, coherence, and critical rigor essential in high-quality academic writing on language learning.

Based on the lexicogrammatical analysis of the research article, practical recommendations for improving academic writing instruction and support for language learners can be given. To improve academic writing for language learners, instruction should emphasize the strategic use of process types—material, mental, relational, and verbal. Students need practice with material processes to describe methodology rigorously and relational processes to define and link core concepts clearly. Academic writing lessons can provide annotated models, exercises on reflective writing and the use of cognitive verbs can help students effectively express evaluative stances. In addition, verbal processes are crucial for engaging with prior research and supporting scholarly dialogue. Training on citation and source integration will aid students in situating their work within broader conversations. Finally, offering structured templates with annotations on where and how to use each process type can reinforce coherent argumentation and academic rigor across sections of a research paper.

Acknowledgements

The Authors

Noeris Meiristiani is a lecturer at Universitas Pancasakti Tegal. She teaches Academic Writing and Systemic Functional Grammar and is interested in conducting research in these scopes of study.
Email: noeris_meiristiani@upstegal.ac.id

Meyga Agustia Nindya is a lecturer at Universitas Pancasakti Tegal. She teaches English Grammar and is interested in conducting research in the fields of English language teaching, TESOL, and language assessment. She can be reached out through
Email: meyga@upstegal.ac.id

Setyo Prasiyanto Cahyono is an English lecturer at the Faculty of Humanities Universitas Dian Nuswantoro Semarang. He holds his Ph.D at Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta in 2023. He teaches Discourse Analysis, Applied Linguistics and Advanced Listening. His research interests are in the area of media discourse, appraisal, systemic functional linguistics, and critical discourse analysis.
Email: setyo.cahyono@dsn.dinus.ac.id

Authors' Contributions

References

Abbas, M. F. F., & Fathira, V. (2022). Utilizing collaborative writing strategy to create skills of 21st century: EFL learners' perceptions. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 14(2). https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i2.1346

Akbulut, F. (2020). A bibliometric analysis of lexical bundles usage in native and non-native academic writing. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 16 (3). www.jlls.org. https://doi.org/10.17263/jlls.803583

Akkaya, A., & Aydın, G. (2018). Views of academicians on traits of academic writing. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 13(2), 128–160. https://doi.org/10.29329/epasr.2018.143.7

Alharbi, M. A. (2019). EFL university students' voice on challenges and solution in learning academic writing. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistic*s, 8(3). https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v8i3.15276

Anggraini, R., Rozimela, Y., & Anwar, D. (2020). The effects of collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing skills and their perception of the strategy. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 11(2). https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1102.25

Ayadi, M. (2023). Lexical richness and syntactic complexity as predictors of academic writing performance. *Journal of English Studies in Arabia Felix*, 2(1), 23–33. https://doi.org/10.56540/jesaf.v2i1.43

Azizah, S., & Soraya, S. (2023). A closer look on Indonesian EFL students' writing process: the application of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. *REiLA : Journal of Research and Innovation in Language*, 5(2). https://doi.org/10.31849/reila.v5i2.10687

Batubara, S. F., & Fithriani, R. (2023). Exploring EFL students' challenges in academic writing: The case of Indonesian higher education. Jurnal Onoma: Pendidikan, *Bahasa, dan Sastra*, 9(1). https://doi.org/10.30605/onoma.v9i1.2605

Brun-Mercer, N., & Zimmerman, C. B. (2015). Fostering academic vocabulary use in writing. *The CATESOL Journal*, 27(1). https://doi.org/10.5070/B5.36088

Chen, A. (2022). The effects of writing strategy instruction on EFL learners' writing development. *English Language Teaching*, 15(3). https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v15n3p29

Church and Govender. (2024). The Inside Scoop: What We Learnt About Getting into Academic Publishing During Our Editorial Internship. *Medical Science Educator*, 34(2), 439–444. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-023-01961-2

Choemue, S., & Bram, B. (2021). Discourse markers in academic and non-academic writings of Thai EFL learners. *Studies in English Language and Education,* 8(3). https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v8i3.20122

Crossley, S. (2020). Linguistic features in writing quality and development: An overview. *Journal of Writing Research*, 11(3), 415–443. https://doi.org/10.17239/JOWR-2020.11.03.01

Derntl, M. (2014). Basics of research paper writing and publishing. *International Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning*, 6(2), 105-123. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTEL.2014.066856

Eggins, Suzanne. (1994). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics.* Gerd Stabler: Sydney

Fan, T., Song, J., & Guan, Z. (2021). Integrating diagnostic assessment into curriculum: a theoretical framework and teaching practices. *Language Testing in Asia*, 11(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-020-00117-y

Feng, Z. (2023). Meta-cognitive Strategies, Automated Writing Evaluation Feedback and English Writing Performance of Chinese EFL College Students. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, 11(3). https://doi.org/10.54097/ijeh.v11i3.15154

Halliday, M. (2014). *Introduction to Functional Grammar.* Routledge: United Kingdom

Hennebry-Leung, M., & Xiao, H. A. (2023). Examining the role of the learner and the teacher in language learning motivation. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(1), 30–56. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820938810

Jo, C. W. (2021). Short vs. extended adolescent academic writing: A cross-genre analysis of writing skills in written definitions and persuasive essays. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2021.101014

Gerot, Linda and Wignell, Peter. (1994). *Making Sense of Functional Grammar.* Gerd Stabler: Sydney

Lysanets, Yu. V., Bieliaieva, O. M., Slipchenko, L. B., Havrylieva, K. H., & Morokhovets, H. Yu. (2021). Essential features of effective academic writing in English. *The Medical and Ecological Problems*, 25(1–2), 41–43. https://doi.org/10.31718/mep.2021.25.1-2.10

Mahfudurido, I. (2021). Exploring nominalization use in graduate thesis abstracts: an SFL approach to academic writing. *Leksema: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 6(2), 125–139. https://doi.org/10.22515/ljbs.v6i2.3888

Mali, Y. C. G. (2023). EFL students' challenges in writing research proposals. *LLT Journal: Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 26(1). https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v26i1.5296

Meiristiani, N. (2011). Understanding tenor in spoken texts in year XII English textbook to improve the appropriacy of the texts. *In Conaplin Journal. Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics,1(1)*

Namsaeng, P., & Sukying, A. (2021). The effect of group reading strategy on critical thinking skills in thai efl university learners. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 3(2). https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2021.3.2.4

Nguyen, C. T. (2023). EFL Students' challenges in the integration of reading and writing in their writing classes. *European Journal of English Language Studies, volume-3-2023* (volume-3-issue-1-june-2023). https://doi.org/10.12973/ejels.3.1.13

Nindya, M. A., & Widiati, U. (2020). Cohesive devices in argumentative essays by Indonesian EFL learners. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language,* 10(2). https://doi.org/10.23971/jefl.v10i2.1949

Shahsavar, Z., & Asil, M. (2019). Diagnosing English learners' writing skills: A cognitive diagnostic modeling study. *Cogent Education*, 6(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2019.1608007

Singh, M. K. M. (2019). Academic reading and writing challenges among international EFL master's students in a Malaysian university: The voice of lecturers. *Journal of International Students*, 9(4). https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v9i3.934

Song, Y., & Zhou, J. (2022). Revising English language course curriculum among graduate students: *An EAP needs analysis study. Sage Open,* 12(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221093040

Wiratno, Tri. (2018). *Pengantar Ringkas Linguistik Sistemik Fungsional.* Pustaka Pelajar: Yogyakarta

Xu, X., & Li, X. (2018). *Teaching Academic Writing through a Process-Genre Approach: A Pedagogical Exploration of an EAP Program in China* (Vol. 2, Issue 2).

Yang, L. (Francoise), Zhang, L. J., & Dixon, H. R. (2023). Understanding the impact of teacher feedback on EFL students' use of self-regulated writing strategies. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2023.101015

Zhang, X. S., & Zhang, L. J. (2022). Sustaining learners' writing development: effects of using self-assessment on their foreign language writing performance and rating accuracy. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 14(22). https://doi.org/10.3390/su142214686

Zheng, X. (2021). Transitivity structure of research articles: variations across sections. *English Language Teaching*, 14(8), 8. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v14n8p8

Mediating Agency Amid Device-Restricted Teaching: A Narrative Inquiry with Islamic Senior High School EFL Teachers

Yogi Saputra Mahmud
President University, Bekasi, Indonesia
Jennifer Shand
Mark Pegrum
The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

Abstract

Recent studies have highlighted that teachers continue to exercise agency amid challenging instructional changes, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although studies on teacher agency – or teachers' purposeful judgement to act – have gained significant attention recently, Islamic English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings remain underexplored. This study explores the enablers and constraints influencing the agency of two Indonesian EFL teachers from private Islamic boarding senior high schools, which imposed restrictions on mobile device use for learning. Data were collected through three episodic interviews, capturing the teachers' experiences before, during, and after the pandemic. Braun and Clarke's (2022) thematic analysis was employed with the support of NVivo 14. The findings revealed that teacher agency was initially constrained by restrictive institutional regulations, technological barriers, and relational challenges in sustaining engagement with students and colleagues during remote teaching. However, over time, institutional regulations evolved, offering greater support for digital teaching, and collaborative relationships with EFL colleagues and students strengthened, enabling teachers to navigate challenges in digital teaching. Additionally, teachers drew on past experiences with technology to exercise agency in digital teaching. Their positive views on present and future technology use further enabled them to adapt their digital teaching and manage contradictions between school policies and instructional needs. This study underscores the need for a participatory policy-making process and ongoing professional support to assist teachers in managing the complexities of technology use in unique educational settings like Islamic boarding schools, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era.

Keywords: *teacher agency, EFL, pandemic-induced teaching, narrative inquiry*

Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak at the beginning of 2020, the educational landscape underwent substantial changes as face-to-face teaching and learning suddenly transitioned to remote teaching. Amid the unanticipated changes, teachers were confronted with opportunities and challenges as they adapted to using digital tools to facilitate remote teaching (Chaaban et al., 2021). During this period, teachers played a pivotal role in developing curricula suited for remote teaching, integrating technology into their instruction and assessing students' learning outcomes from a distance (Chen, 2022). In other words, teachers had to make strategic decisions to adapt their routines to the novel conditions of remote teaching. Consequently, the shift to remote teaching brought about by COVID-19 has underscored the importance of examining teacher agency – defined as the interplay of teachers' responses, available resources, and the contexts where teachers work (Biesta & Tedder, 2006; Priestley et al., 2015). Although teacher agency is not restricted to challenging situations, it often becomes more apparent when teachers demonstrate their adaptability, resilience, and resourcefulness in addressing problems (Toom et al., 2015).

Amidst these turbulent changes, teachers also encountered additional complexities due to the varied responses from school and government stakeholders, which could either facilitate or hinder their agency (Lee, 2022). The diverse ways in which schools responded to remote teaching often reflected differences in their structures, principles, and values (Lee, 2022). Recent studies have found that while some schools swiftly embraced digital platforms and provided clear regulations and extensive support to their teachers for remote teaching, others imposed strict regulations limiting the frequency of synchronous remote teaching, leaving teachers with few options for integrating technology (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Lie et al., 2020). Therefore, the pandemic-induced shift to remote teaching offers not only an opportunity to explore the dynamics of teacher agency but also a rich context for examining how varying school environments either support or limit teachers' responses and decision-making processes in digital teaching (Mansfield et al., 2023).

This study provides insights into the experiences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers navigating remote teaching in a unique school environment, that is, within Islamic boarding senior high schools. Despite a growing body of research on factors affecting teacher agency in general educational settings, there is a significant gap in understanding how agency manifests in more unique contexts, such as Islamic boarding schools. In these settings, teachers often navigate additional complexities, including specific values and traditions that underemphasise technology use, which may contradict the demands of remote teaching (Hanafi et al., 2021). Therefore, this study is guided by the following research question:

▪ What were the enablers and constraints experienced by English teachers in Islamic boarding senior high schools in their efforts to adapt to digital teaching?

Conceptualising Teacher Agency

Historically, agency was viewed as an expression of individual will, often as an autonomous action taken by individuals within their contexts (Reeves, 2022). More recent studies, however, have reconceptualised agency as being shaped by multiple factors and influences, rather than being purely self-directed (Kayi-Ardar, 2019; Priestley et al., 2015). In education, teacher agency is perceived as "the teachers' capacity to critically shape their responses to challenging situations" (Biesta & Tedder, 2006, p. 11). Rather than being merely an internal trait possessed by individuals, teacher agency is conceptualised as a dynamic and evolving phenomenon that emerges in response to particular contexts (Priestley et al., 2015). Teacher agency, as Kayi-Ardar (2019) explains, emerges from the interplay between individual factors – such as past experiences, motivations and future goals – and collective factors, including interactions with school stakeholders. In this sense, teachers exercise agency by responding to the dynamic conditions of their teaching and learning environments, which became particularly essential during the COVID-19 pandemic as teachers were challenged to adapt their practices (Mansfield et al., 2023).

Enabling and constraining factors in teacher agency

The concept of affordances, theorised by Gibson (1977), provides a useful lens for analysing enabling and constraining factors, as it highlights how individuals perceive and engage with available resources and obstacles in their environment. Historically, affordances referred to the various opportunities that individuals perceive within their surroundings for their behaviours or actions (Gibson, 1977). These opportunities, as Gibson (1977) argues, are realised differently depending on individual lenses. As such, the same contexts that provide opportunities for some individuals may also present constraints that shape their actions (Fones, 2019). In educational technology, more specifically, affordances relate to potential opportunities teachers perceive in technological tools to support their pedagogical activities (Haines, 2015). As noted, however, teachers perceive these affordances differently. For example, while some teachers saw the shift to remote teaching as an opportunity and adapted accordingly, others perceived it as a constraint due to their personal views or reluctance to engage with technology (Mairitsch et al., 2023). Therefore, teachers' perceptions are crucial to identifying and orchestrating potential opportunities in their teaching settings.

Several studies have highlighted enabling factors that shape the exercise of teacher agency, particularly in digital teaching. Teachers' pedagogical beliefs are crucial in shaping how teachers navigate and adopt technology in their classrooms. For instance, in a pre-pandemic study, Liu and Chao (2018) found that an English instructor in a Chinese university leveraged videoconferencing features to replicate offline teaching methods, aligning with her established teaching beliefs. During the pandemic, many teachers were prompted to explore alternative teaching methods, guided by their pedagogical beliefs (Chen, 2022). Research by Gao and Cui (2022) further underscores the importance of pedagogical beliefs, showing how some English teachers viewed remote

teaching as an unexpected opportunity to enhance student learning, while others avoided technology due to a perceived lack of emotional connection with students.

Teachers' prior experiences, present adaptations, and future pedagogical orientations also shape their decision-making processes regarding the use of digital tools in teaching. For example, Meihami (2023) revealed that experiences from teacher education programmes enabled teachers to recognise opportunities in implementing computer-assisted language learning. Examining South Korean English teachers' agency after remote teaching, Lee and Jeon (2024) highlighted teachers' continued intentions to embrace technological tools as they recognised their potential for future use, while others remained hesitant to implement them again. Similarly, van der Spoel et al. (2020) discovered that teachers who foresee the long-term benefits of technology, such as improving efficiency and student motivation, were more likely to continue using technology after the pandemic.

Collaboration with colleagues, school administrators, and parents can also foster teacher agency. Studies have revealed that frequent collaboration among teachers, school administrators, and other stakeholders provides an environment conducive to experimentation with evolving teaching methods (Fones, 2019; Rushton & Bird, 2023). Working alongside colleagues who are open to innovation encourages teachers to develop their pedagogical approaches amidst a changing educational landscape (Rushton & Bird, 2023). Similarly, parents' voices and involvement were found to influence teachers' decision making during remote teaching (Lee & Jeon, 2024). However, parental resistance to excessive technology use and different cultural expectations of teaching and learning can also limit these affordance (Ashton, 2022; Lee & Jeon, 2024).

Conversely, certain constraints may limit teacher agency in digital teaching, including insufficient guidelines and institutional support. During the shift to remote teaching, many teachers struggled to adapt to using technological tools without sufficient professional development (PD) and support from their schools (Yan et al., 2021). Even before the pandemic, Liu and Chao (2018) found that teachers were concerned about the extended time required to prepare for online classes, as they had to master specific features of digital tools. Furthermore, policies that restrain opportunities for teachers' innovation, such as in exam-oriented systems, can further constrain teachers' ability to exercise agency (Rushton & Bird, 2023).

Challenges related to student engagement, motivation and access to technology can also hinder teacher agency, and these aspects have been identified in several studies (Ashton, 2022; Chen, 2022; Ehren et al., 2021). Maintaining active student engagement and motivation through adaptive teaching methods was more challenging during remote teaching than in face-to-face settings (Ashton, 2022; Chen, 2022). Furthermore, diverse conditions in students' home environments during remote teaching hindered teachers' decisions to integrate technology. Ehren et al. (2021) revealed that teacher agency is mediated by students' access to technology and the suitability of learning conditions in their home environment. Thus, these studies illustrate the multidimensional opportunities and constraints – from institutional to personal factors – that can impact teachers' agency in adapting to digital teaching.

Research Method

This study employed narrative inquiry (NI) to explore how individuals make meaning from their experiences through stories (Barkhuizen, 2022). According to Clandinin and Huber (2010), experiences are understood across three dimensions that guided the framing of this study: temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Temporality involves experiences across the past, present, and future; therefore, this study explored the English teachers' past experiences with digital teaching, present adaptations, and future outlooks. The sociality dimension encompasses both personal and social contexts, which were explored in this study by examining teachers' personal views on digital teaching and their interpersonal relationships with other English teachers, students, and parents that might shape their decision-making. Finally, the dimension of place focuses on the specific settings where experiences occur. This study evaluated the specific contexts of Islamic boarding senior high schools, assessing how these contexts influenced the way teachers exercised agency in digital teaching.

Participants

TABLE 1. Participants' Demographic Profiles

Name (pseudonym)	Gender	School (pseudonym)	Age	Teaching experience prior to remote teaching
Arina	Female	Al-Amin Putri Senior High School	27	1 year
Jajang	Male	Ceria Senior High School	27	1 year

Given that NI often involves a small number of participants to allow for the in-depth exploration of experiences (Barkhuizen, 2022), this study involved two EFL teachers from Islamic boarding senior high schools in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. After obtaining ethics approval from the UWA Human Research Ethics Committee and approval letters from the Education Office of West Java and the National Unity and Politics Agency of West Java, recruitment was conducted by sharing a digital poster on social media, including a local English teachers' Facebook group. Two teachers, 'Arina' and 'Jajang' (pseudonyms), responded and provided consent to participate. The participants' demographic details are provided in Table 1.

Data Collection

Data were collected through three episodic interviews, each lasting 60-75 minutes, conducted face-to-face or via videoconferencing. As Barkhuizen (2022) argues, NI is characterised by how stories are involved in both the collection and analysis of data and how researchers utilise these stories to explore the meanings of experiences. Therefore, guided by the three dimensions of NI, the data collection process emphasised the temporal, social, and contextual dimensions of each teacher's experiences. The first interview explored the participants' teaching experiences before remote teaching. The second interview focused on their experiences during and after remote teaching when the students returned to school. To capture these experiences in more depth, teachers were invited to illustrate their pre-, mid- and post-remote teaching experiences in the form of manual or digital illustrations. The rationale for integrating visual data was to allow a richer representation of experiences and stimulate a more contextualised focus when they reflected on their experiences (Ahn, 2021). The third interview addressed the enablers and constraints teachers experienced in exercising their agency in digital teaching. All interviews were conducted in Indonesian, the participants' native language, to ensure a sense of comfort and openness.

Data Analysis

Polkinghorne (1995) outlines two primary approaches to data analysis in NI, including the analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. The former explores the content of the narratives through the process of coding, analysing and categorising themes, which is typically involved in thematic analysis (Barkhuizen, 2022). In contrast, the latter focuses on the process of reconfiguring the research data into a unified, coherent storyline (Barkhuizen, 2022). This study employed the analysis of narratives to focus on identifying themes that highlighted the enabling and constraining factors faced by teachers in exercising their agency. Braun and Clarke's (2022) thematic analysis was chosen as an analytical procedure to allow for a systematic identification of themes from the episodic interviews.

Findings

TABLE 2. Enablers of and constraints on EFL teacher agency in digital teaching

Constraints	Enablers
Institutional regulations restricted teachers' digital teaching flexibility	Institutional support facilitated digital teaching
Technological barriers impaired digital teaching efficiency	Teachers drew on prior experiences with technology to navigate digital teaching
Challenges arose in building and sustaining relationships in digital teaching	Relational support enhanced digital teaching
	Teachers perceived benefits from present and future technology use in English lessons

The data analysis began with a two-step transcription process, combining transcription software and manual transcription to ensure accuracy. The first author then manually translated the transcripts into English. Following this, the translated files were uploaded to NVivo 14 Plus, with semantic coding employed to capture meanings and ideas expressed explicitly by the English teachers. Each code was labelled to provide a more comprehensive idea about what it represented. Initial codes were organised into subthemes and themes, which were continually refined to ensure clear distinctions and accurate representations of the data. For example, the theme label 'teachers' perspectives' was renamed as 'teachers' perceived benefits from present and future technology use in English lessons' to capture more nuanced information. The themes identified as representing the enablers of and constraints on teacher agency in digital teaching can be seen in Table 2.

Constraints on Exercising Teacher Agency in Digital Teaching

This study identified three major themes highlighting the constraints the two EFL teachers faced in exercising their agency within digital teaching. These constraints arose from institutional regulations, technological limitations, and challenges related to interpersonal relationships. Together, they revealed the structural, technical, and relational challenges that hindered teachers' ability to fully adopt digital tools in their teaching.

Institutional regulations restricted teachers' digital teaching flexibility

The restrictive nature of institutional regulations limited the teachers' flexibility with digital teaching. In both Islamic boarding schools, strict policies limited device use for learning to prevent distractions among students. Despite the growing demand for digital teaching, these constraints left Arina "confused about how to make the learning technology-based when gadget use was restricted." While mobile devices were prohibited, both schools allowed the use of laptops, but only for limited periods and with prior approval. This limited access complicated the completion of tasks such as animated presentations. Arina emphasised the importance of preparing "a well-thought-out plan" that covered "what would be implemented [and] what applications, or what learning activities" would involve technology. With careful planning, she could align lesson plans with laptop permissions. In contrast, Jajang found the permission processes too complicated and opted to use the computer lab instead. He felt that relying solely on physical books and worksheets was inadequate, and the computer lab had allowed him to better incorporate digital tools into his teaching.

Policies that reduced remote teaching duration during the pandemic restricted teachers' flexibility to fully utilise digital tools. Following the Ministry of Education's mandate to consider students' limited access to technology, Arina was instructed by her school to reduce the synchronous teaching hours from two to one, prompting her to prioritise asynchronous assignments over interactive activities. Jajang echoed this experience, describing how reduced synchronous time limited his ability to engage with his students in real time. These limitations forced both teachers to reconstruct the balance between live content delivery and asynchronous assignments.

Technological barriers impaired digital teaching efficiency

When transitioning to remote teaching, both teachers experienced technological challenges that hindered effective digital teaching. The unprecedented shift towards digital teaching caused a rapid change in the perceived value and necessity of technology in education, yet Arina and Jajang had to adapt with minimal preparation and training. Arina described this transition as "very frustrating" due to inadequate "knowledge and information about the media used." Furthermore, she expressed her initial panic due to the challenge of transforming face-to-face activities into a remote teaching mode:

> I was initially panicking because I used to teach something that should be delivered in person, but now, it's not in person. One example was when teaching… conversation… Normally, in a physical setting, they would interact directly, meet with their peers, and so on. But online, it's challenging; what's the platform for that interaction? How to facilitate this practice? (Arina, Interview 1)

The sudden shift to remote teaching also presented other challenges, including the extended time required for lesson preparation. Jajang and Arina sought to replicate the interactivity of face-to-face lessons in a remote setting, often experimenting with new digital tools to keep students engaged. Jajang reflected that "preparation for this [remote teaching] was longer." This experience was echoed by Arina who had to "stay up late, working until night, just to prepare teaching materials for one meeting." During face-to-face teaching, both teachers often distributed printed handouts or worksheets directly to students. However, during remote teaching, they had to transform those assessments into digital formats and ensure they worked effectively across various devices. Despite the extra work, Arina offered a unique perspective that highlighted her sense of agency. She "did not feel burdened" as she considered "staying up late to prepare teaching materials… [as] a teacher's duty." In other words, she viewed the demanding workload as an integral part of her professional responsibility to adapt to a new teaching setting.

Challenges arose in building and sustaining relationships in digital teaching

During remote teaching, both teachers struggled to maintain meaningful connections with students and colleagues, and teacher collaboration was often hindered by a lack of shared planning time and communication. Students' limited digital preparedness and lack of engagement in learning activities further impeded interactive remote teaching. Moreover, both English teachers observed a decline in students' learning motivation. Arina noted that students "were less enthusiastic about learning" and "the spirit of learning was not visible" as interactions were limited to screens. Consequently, she felt compelled "to boost their spirit first" by starting lessons with motivating games. Engaging students in discussions proved challenging, as Jajang elaborated:

One of the most difficult things was when, for example, during the lesson, the teacher asked a question, and the student didn't respond. Because they're off-camera, we didn't know what they're doing (Jajang, Interview 1)

Without visual cues or direct responses, both teachers often remained uncertain about whether students were experiencing difficulties or had simply disengaged. This uncertainty impacted how the teachers envisioned their future use of technology after the pandemic. Arina recognised that remote teaching was far less engaging than her usual face-to-face teaching, which fuelled her desire to seek more interactive methods for integrating technology. Meanwhile, Jajang emphasised the importance of maintaining student interaction, even when using digital tools, expressing a strong desire to avoid the type of disengaged relationship he had experienced.

Teacher collaboration also suffered in the work-from-home environment, with reduced opportunities to seek feedback from colleagues. Arina noted that while communication still occurred through online messaging, the distance and added workloads delayed response times. This challenge was compounded by the teachers' intensive focus on adjusting their lessons to suit the new teaching mode, as reflected by Arina:

Well, during remote teaching, since I was overwhelmed with lesson planning, and my colleague was in a similar situation, we both ended up feeling lost. So, in the end, we went on our way... We had to manage on our own. (Arina, Interview 3)

Arina's excerpt highlights the fragmented nature of teacher collaboration during remote teaching. The teachers found themselves working more independently, which, in turn, impacted the consistency of their teaching approaches and materials delivery.

Enablers of Exercising Teacher Agency in Digital Teaching

This study identified four main enablers of EFL teachers' agency in digital teaching, including institutional support, prior experiences with technology, relational support, and teachers' positive views of current and future technology use in digital teaching. These themes highlighted how personal, relational, and contextual dimensions influenced teachers' decision-making processes in digital teaching, emphasising that agency was exercised within broader institutional and relational settings.

Institutional support facilitated digital teaching

Although strict institutional policies had restricted mobile device use before remote teaching, both teachers experienced an increase in institutional flexibility, which allowed for the greater utilisation of technology afterwards. For instance, Jajang noted that "getting permission to use laptops has become easier since the pandemic," enabling students to bring their own devices to class. Consequently, these policy changes not only allowed students to engage more in digital learning but also empowered Jajang as an English teacher to incorporate more dynamic learning activities into his English lessons.

Similarly, Arina observed a shift in her school's awareness of technology. The school implemented a "less waste programme" aimed at reducing paper use through online assessments. Her school began actively supporting teachers in adapting to digital teaching by offering professional development (PD) programmes focused on technology use:

Besides teaching, the school required that teachers attend training sessions. It was to upgrade ourselves, even with training sessions organised by the school... As teachers, we should be aware of what's happening in the education sector. We had about two upgrading sessions per month (Arina, Interview 3)

Additionally, the school covered the costs of internet access and teaching media subscriptions. Arina noted that "it was challenging to get approval from the school for subscribing to a premium account" before remote teaching. However, during remote teaching, there was "a rush for technological development" that led to more accommodating policies. Arina's experience contrasted with Jajang's, who, as a part-time EFL teacher, lacked support for internet costs, leaving him to navigate the challenges of digital teaching with fewer resources.

Teachers drew on prior experiences with technology to navigate digital teaching

Both teachers leveraged their prior experiences with digital tools in teaching and learning to navigate the demands of remote teaching. Specifically, the experiences gained during their teacher education programmes served as valuable reference points for transitioning into remote teaching. For Jajang, his familiarity with learning management systems (LMSs), particularly Google Classroom, from his university studies played a pivotal role in easing his transition to remote teaching. In particular, he recalled using Google Classroom as a pre-service teacher to manage assignments and obtain feedback from lecturers. This early exposure was directly relevant when his school mandated the use of an LMS for assignment submission and feedback during remote teaching. Similarly, Arina was able to transfer her pre-pandemic exposure to technology into her remote teaching activities. In particular, she leveraged her past experiences with platforms such as Google Forms and PowToon to guide her remote teaching adaptation. Citing these tools as "a benchmark," she managed to navigate the demands of remote teaching and continue integrating such tools into her instructional activities.

Relational support enhanced digital teaching

The dynamic interactions among EFL teachers, colleagues, students, and parents played a vital role in supporting the teachers' decisions regarding digital teaching. Although the initial phase of remote teaching presented communication barriers, Arina and Jajang reported improved collaboration as they gained more experience. This cooperation was essential for addressing the emerging challenges of digital teaching. For instance, Jajang highlighted the role of Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran or Subject Teacher Working Group online meetings, which facilitated discussions on effective digital tools. Despite being the youngest EFL teacher at the school, Jajang's extensive use and proactive exploration of digital tools, such as Padlet, made him a valued reference point for his colleagues.

Arina emphasised the critical role of relational support in overcoming the challenges she encountered during remote teaching. Initially, the heavy workload and sudden shift to remote teaching created hindrances to communication with her colleagues. However, over time, collaborating with another EFL teacher helped her break what she termed "mental blocks." The relational support from her colleague was pivotal in addressing problems and fostering her pedagogical development, especially as one of only two EFL teachers at her school.

Both teachers benefitted from collaboration with students and parents. Arina observed that her students "found it easy to adapt to remote teaching" because they "were ready" with their devices and "there were no hindrances regarding internet connectivity." At the same time, parents provided a supportive presence that ensured their participation in remote learning. Similarly, Jajang received positive input from parents who acknowledged the value of remote teaching and expressed satisfaction with their children' progress despite the challenges.

Teachers' positive views on present and future technology use in English lessons

The positive views that teachers held regarding the present and future use of digital tools enabled their agency in digital teaching in the sense that they recognised multiple advantages of incorporating digital tools into their lessons. These included broader access to learning resources, more engaging lesson formats, streamlined teaching and assessment processes, and alignment with students' technology-driven daily lives. During remote teaching, they found that technology facilitated access to diverse teaching resources. For instance, Arina noted that the variety of available online resources made lesson planning "less challenging and less rigid," allowing for more flexibility and creativity. Jajang also expressed his positive outlook, having assessed the suitability of various digital teaching tools, including online quizzes, in his teaching context.

Both teachers found digital tools compatible with students' technology-driven lifestyles. Arina capitalised on her students' familiarity with social media by incorporating "daily vlogs" into assignments for recount texts. Jajang used digital tools to make language learning more contextualised, suggesting that students grasped vocabulary better when presented in context. Their positive views on technology underscored a proactive approach to incorporating digital resources, bridging both affordances and constraints to enhance their instructional activities, now and in the future.

The innovative strategies they developed during remote teaching continued to shape their teaching even afterwards. Jajang emphasised that his students would likely "confront a digital world" when they transitioned into university or the workforce. As a result, he aimed to involve technology in learning activities to equip his students with relevant digital skills and experiences. Arina commented on the lasting influence of remote teaching on her use of technology in person in the classroom:

During remote teaching, I came up with many teaching ideas, especially in terms of using technology. And even after remote teaching, those ideas continued to be implemented (Arina, Interview 3)

Furthermore, Arina found that digital tools simplified the assessment process "because the grades are automatically generated," which reduced her workload. She observed that platforms such as Quizziz and Kahoot! were particularly appealing to students due to their interactive nature, leading her to continue their use after the pandemic. Similarly, Jajang reflected on his extensive use of digital tools as they offered "more alternatives in planning, execution, and assessment." While some of his colleagues reverted to more traditional methods, Jajang maintained his reliance on digital tools even after remote teaching.

Discussion
Dual roles of contextual policies and resources

In Islamic boarding senior high schools, contextual policies and resources played a dual role in mediating teacher agency, acting both as constraints and enablers. In this study, the prohibition of mobile devices initially posed a significant constraint for both Arina and Jajang, limiting their flexibility in digital teaching. Despite this challenge, the teachers made intentional choices to optimise available resources, such as using the ICT lab and aligning lesson plans to use the school's laptops. Their agency became more evident as they sought to find a middle ground "while confronting a variety of challenges within their teaching contexts" (Tao & Gao, 2021, p. 21). For example, Jajang's use of the school's ICT lab as an alternative to the prohibition on mobile devices served as a coping strategy to meet "unexpected institutional expectations" (Jeon et al., 2022, p. 3). Their actions and choices were driven by pedagogical considerations deemed important for students, such as the need to view digital books or complete tasks requiring digital tools. From the perspective of an ecological approach to teacher agency, both teachers' actions were mediated by practical and evaluative considerations, where the nature of present contexts shaped teachers' responses (Priestley et al., 2015). More specifically, both teachers assessed the possibilities provided by available resources and potential risks arising from their actions (Priestley et al., 2015). This underscores that teachers' responses reflected an evaluative process where they had to balance institutional constraints with their pedagogical goals.

The post-pandemic period saw an evolution of contextual policies and resources at the schools where Arina and Jajang worked. Both schools adapted their policies to better integrate technology into teaching practices, such as easing mobile device restrictions and enhancing access to digital resources, granting Arina more flexibility. This shift enabled her to utilise a variety of digital tools that had previously been difficult to implement due to strict policies. In contrast, Jajang, being a part-time teacher, encountered a disparity in support which limited his ability to leverage the opportunities. Nevertheless, he continued to use several digital tools from the pandemic period, such as online quizzes, demonstrating his intentions to adapt tools he found effective in his digital teaching activities. These situations illustrate the critical role of institutional policies and resources in facilitating or hindering teacher agency, as evidenced by the schools' post-pandemic policy changes that allowed more flexibility in mobile device use. As highlighted by Mansfield et al. (2023), school support can empower teachers to explore and implement innovative ideas in their settings. Therefore, school policies should be responsive to teachers' needs, offering practical affordances that enable teachers to make decisions while navigating constraints.

Temporal dimensions of teacher agency

When transitioning to the unprecedented period of remote teaching, both Arina and Jajang leveraged their previous experiences, particularly those gained during their pre-service teacher education programs. Their previous engagements with LMSs and online assessment tools were particularly influential, serving as vital references implemented in the remote teaching setting. This finding highlights the temporal dimensions of teacher agency, where teachers' actions and decision-making processes are mediated by the interplay of their past, present, and future dimensions (Priestley et al., 2015). In this case, teachers' professional histories and language learning experiences form a repertoire that informs their actions and decisions in current settings (Priestley et al., 2015). In other words, teachers should not be regarded as empty vessels when they commence teaching careers because they bring "a diversified portfolio of academic knowledge and experiential learning" (Chen, 2024, p. 10). For Arina and Jajang, this diversified portfolio meant drawing on their formal learning, particularly pre-service teacher education, to manage remote teaching more effectively. Their early exposure to digital teaching allowed them to critically evaluate which tools were relevant for their students in remote teaching. Studies by Ehren et al. (2021) and van der Spoel et al. (2020) further support this idea, indicating that these previous repertoires predispose teachers to adapt more easily to new teaching settings by critically evaluating the relevance of their past

experiences to the needs of remote teaching. Consequently, valuing teachers' past experiences in the dialogue about adaptations is important, as these inform the ways in which teachers respond to new teaching settings.

Teachers' previous experiences and future projections are equally important in shaping their decision-making processes and actions in implementing technology in their teaching. In this study, both Arina and Jajang demonstrated their future orientations by considering how digital tools could benefit their students in the future. Jajang, in particular, anticipated that his students would increasingly use technology in their university studies and workplaces. Jajang's long-term future orientation highlights how teachers' future aspirations shape their pedagogical choices. He saw technology use in digital teaching not only as an immediate need but also a way to prepare his students for future academic and professional needs. In line with the ecological approach to teacher agency, Priestley et al. (2015) argue that teachers' future aspirations, whether short or long-term, affect their responses within their teaching settings. Unlike Ashton's (2022) findings, which emphasised short-term adjustments in response to immediate teaching needs, the teachers in the current study exhibited long-term, often student-oriented, projections that shaped their agency. In other words, the findings demonstrate that future aspirations are key to sustaining teacher agency beyond the immediate setting of remote teaching.

Relational dimensions of teacher agency

During the initial transition to remote teaching, both Arina and Jajang encountered challenges in maintaining effective communication with students and colleagues. This transition disrupted traditional interaction patterns, leading to reduced engagement and communication during synchronous learning sessions. Unlike findings from previous studies, which indicated that teachers often compensated for this loss of communication by providing asynchronous or offline assignments (Chen, 2022; Lie et al., 2020; Mansfield et al., 2023), Arina and Jajang adopted alternative measures to maintain engagement. For example, Arina incorporated interactive activities, such as games, before starting the lesson. Despite these efforts, both teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the diminished intensity of communication with students, indicating a strong preference for more authentic connections during learning activities. In other words, Arina and Jajang's experiences underscore that their agency was not solely about technical adaptability but also maintaining relational connections that supported engagement in digital teaching.

As the remote teaching period progressed, collaboration among English teachers was initially hindered due to the increased workload as they attempted to navigate the new teaching mode. Over time, Arina and Jajang actively enhanced their communication with colleagues, fostering a collective agency that facilitated their adaptation. Despite being relatively new to the teaching profession, their initiatives were heard and valued by other colleagues, becoming an essential indicator of trust and collegiality among teachers (Rushton & Bird, 2023). Such trust and relational support, as emphasised by Mansfield et al. (2023), are vital for encouraging teachers to share innovative teaching strategies and address challenges associated with remote teaching. For Arina and Jajang, the sense of trust and relational support was crucial to help them overcome mental blocks encountered during remote teaching, thereby enhancing their sense of agency. Therefore, relational dimensions are important for shaping teacher agency because teacher agency is significantly mediated by the social relations and structures within which teachers operate (Priestley et al., 2015). The experiences of Arina and Jajang highlight how relational and structural changes within the school environment could either facilitate or hinder teacher agency, particularly in contexts of educational disruptions, such as remote teaching.

Teachers' perceptions of technology use in English lessons

When transitioning to remote teaching, Arina and Jajang quickly recognised various advantages of digital tools in enhancing their teaching activities. Their perceptions of technology, which they saw as vital for streamlining teaching and assessment processes, guided their decision-making. Chen (2022) describes these perceived advantages as "digital affordances," highlighting the opportunities technology creates in remote teaching settings (p. 5). When teachers notice these advantages or opportunities provided by technology in their teaching setting, they may feel encouraged to maximise the potential of available technology (Liu & Chao, 2018; van der Spoel et al., 2020). For instance, Arina leveraged online assessment tools and quizzes because they automatically generated grades, thereby easing her increasing workload during remote teaching. However, as Biesta et al. (2015) emphasise, the impact of beliefs on teacher agency extends beyond individual inclinations and is deeply embedded in the relational context with others. In other words, teachers' actions and decision-making processes in incorporating technology in teaching are dependent on not only teachers' preferences but also their alignment with others. For Arina and Jajang, this meant continuously assessing whether their actions, such as the use of Kahoot! and Quizziz, not only met their pedagogical beliefs but also aligned with students' preferences and teaching objectives.

Conclusion

This study examined the factors that influenced teacher agency in digital teaching within Islamic boarding senior high schools in Indonesia during and after the pandemic. The lived experiences of Arina and Jajang revealed several constraints, including restrictive institutional regulations, technological barriers, and challenges in maintaining relationships in remote teaching. However, their digital teaching practices were also enabled by institutional support on technology use, teachers' prior experiences with technology, relational support, and positive views on present and future technology use. Overall, the study highlighted the dual roles of contextual policies that can either constrain and enable teacher agency, the importance of temporal and relational dimensions of teacher agency, and the centrality of teachers' perceptions of technology use in English lessons.

The study offers insights into the importance of developing school-level policies that support, rather than constrain, teachers' innovations and opportunities in digital teaching. Specifically, school administrators should initiate targeted professional development (PD) programs that not only introduce the opportunities offered by digital tools for teaching activities but also incorporate teachers' lived experiences and aspirations, acknowledging that teacher agency is mediated by personal, relational, and contextual dimensions as evidenced in this study. Additionally, schools should develop adaptive educational policies that give teachers flexibility to experiment with digital tools to meet students' evolving needs. Participatory policy-making processes that incorporate the lived experiences of teachers can help ensure that these policies remain responsive to evolving educational needs and landscapes, especially in the post-pandemic era.

Acknowledgements

The Authors

Yogi Saputra Mahmud is a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia. He is also a faculty member at the Elementary Teacher Education study programme at President University, Bekasi, Indonesia.
Email: yogi.mahmud@research.uwa.edu.au. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9553-7860

Dr Jennifer Shand is a senior lecturer in the Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia. Her substantive role is a senior lecturer in English curriculum and has interests in secondary literacy and literature education. Dr Shand's industry and curriculum discipline expertise lies in English and Literature curriculum teaching.
Email: jennifer.shand@uwa.edu.au ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8273-1020

Prof Mark Pegrum is a professor in the Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia, where he is the Deputy Head of School (International), with responsibility for overseeing offshore programmes and international connections. His current research focuses on digital literacies and especially attentional literacy; mobile and emerging technologies, including extended reality (XR) and generative artificial intelligence (AI); and the forms digital learning takes in diverse contexts across the Global North and South.
Email: mark.pegrum@uwa.edu.au, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1577-4642

Authors' Contributions

YSM – Conceptualisation, Research Design, Data Collection, Data Analysis & Evaluation, Manuscript Writing

JS & MP – Editing and Finalising the Manuscript, Supervising the Research Project

Authors' Note

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

References

Ahn, S. Y. (2021). Visualizing the interplay of fear and desire in English learner's imagined identities and communities. *System*, 102, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102598

Ashton, K. (2022). Language teacher agency in emergency online teaching. *System*, 105, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102713

Atmojo, A. E. P., & Nugroho, A. (2020). EFL classes must go online! teaching activities and challenges during COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. *Register Journal,* 13(1), 49–76. https://doi.org/10.18326/rgt.v13i1.49-76

Barkhuizen, G. (2022). Ten tricky questions about narrative inquiry in language teaching and learning research: And what the answers mean for qualitative and quantitative research. LEARN *Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 15(2), 1–19. https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/index

Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015). The role of beliefs in teacher agency. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 21(6), 624–640. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044325

Biesta, G., & Tedder, M. (2006). *How is agency possible? Towards an ecological understanding of agency-as-achievement*.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide.* SAGE Publications.

Chaaban, Y., Al-Thani, H., & Du, X. (2021). A narrative inquiry of teacher educators' professional agency, identity renegotiations, and emotional responses amid educational disruption. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 108, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103522

Chen, M. (2022). Digital affordances and teacher agency in the context of teaching Chinese as a second language during COVID-19. *System*, 105, 1–13.

Chen, Z. (2024). An ecological approach to understanding the agency of novice EFL teachers without initial teacher education background. *The Language Learning Journal,* 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2024.2421505

Clandinin, D. J., & Huber, J. (2010). Narrative inquiry. In B. McGaw, E. Baker, & P. Peterson (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education* (3rd ed., pp. 436–441). Elsevier.

Ehren, M. C. M., Madrid, R., Romiti, S., Armstrong, P. W., Fisher, P., & McWhorter, D. L. (2021). Teaching in the COVID-19 era: Understanding the opportunities and barriers for teacher agency. *Perspectives in Education*, 39(1), 44–60. https://doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v39.i1.4

Fones, A. (2019). Examining high school English language learner teacher agency: Opportunities and constraints. In H. Kayi-Ardar, X. Gao, E. R. Miller, M. Varghese, & G. Vitanova (Eds.), *Theorizing and analysing language teacher agency* (pp. 24–43). Multilingual Matters.

Gao, Y., & Cui, Y. (2022). English as a foreign language teachers' pedagogical beliefs about teacher roles and their agentic actions amid and after COVID-19: A case study. *RELC Journal*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882221074110

Gibson, J. J. (1977). The theory of affordances. In R. Shaw & J. Bransford (Eds.), Perceiving, acting and knowing: *Toward an ecological psychology* (pp. 67–82). Erlbaum. https://doi.org/10.1075/lsse.2.03bli

Haines, K. J. (2015). Learning to identify and actualize affordances in a new tool. *Language Learning & Technology,* 19(1), 165–180. http://llt.msu.edu/issues/february2015/haines.pdf

Hanafi, Y., Taufiq, A., Saefi, M., Ikhsan, M. A., Diyana, T. N., Thoriquttyas, T., & Anam, F. K. (2021). The new identity of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools in the "new normal": *The education leadership response to COVID-19. Heliyon*, 7(3). https://doi.org/10.1016/J.HELIYON.2021.E06549

Jeon, J., Lee, S., & Choe, H. (2022). Teacher agency in perceiving affordances and constraints of videoconferencing technology: Teaching primary school students online. *System*, 108. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.SYSTEM.2022.102829

Kayi-Ardar, H. (2019). Language teacher agency: Major theoretical considerations, conceptualizations and methodological choices. In H. Kayi-Ardar, X. Gao, E. R. Miller, M. Varghese, & G. Vitanova (Eds.), *Theorizing and analysing language teacher agency* (pp. 10–23). Multilingual Matters.

Lee, K. (2022). Secondary English teachers' experiences of agency: *Connections to shifting educational contexts during COVID-19* [Virginia Commonwealth University]. https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd/7128

Lee, S., & Jeon, J. (2024). Teacher agency and ICT affordances in classroom-based language assessment: The return to face-to-face classes after online teaching. *System*, 121(103218), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103218

Lie, A., Tamah, S. M., Gozali, I., Triwidayati, K. R., Utami, T. S. D., & Jemadi, F. (2020). Secondary school language teachers' online learning engagement during the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 19, 803–832. https://doi.org/10.28945/4626

Liu, Q., & Chao, C. C. (2018). CALL from an ecological perspective: How a teacher perceives affordance and fosters learner agency in a technology-mediated language classroom. *ReCALL*, 30(1), 68–87. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344017000222

Mairitsch, A., Sulis, G., Mercer, S., & Bauer, D. (2023). Putting the social into learner agency: Understanding social relationships and affordances. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 120. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.IJER.2023.102214

Mansfield, J., Smith, K., Adams, M., & Wan, L. (2023). Valuing COVID-19 as an opportunity to understand teacher agency. *Journal of Educational Change*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-023-09488-4

Meihami, H. (2023). Situated learning in CALL teacher preparation programs: An ecological perspective to student-teachers' agency. *Computer Assisted Language Learning.* https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2023.2173614

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(1), 5–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839950080103

Priestley, M., Biesta, G., & Sarah, R. (2015). *Teacher agency: An ecological approach.* Bloomsbury.

Reeves, J. (2022). Understanding language teacher agency. In K. Sadeghi & F. Ghaderi (Eds.), *Theory and practice in second language teacher identity: Researching, theorising and enacting* (pp. 75–88). Springer.

Rushton, E. A. C., & Bird, A. (2023). Space as a lens for teacher agency: A case study of three beginning teachers in England, UK. *Curriculum Journal*, 35(2), 254–270. https://doi.org/10.1002/CURJ.224

Tao, J., & Gao, X. A. (2021). *Language teacher agency.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108916943

Toom, A., Pyhältö, K., & Rust, F. O. (2015). Teachers professional agency in contradictory times. Teachers and Teaching: *Theory and Practice*, 21(6), 615–623. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044334

van der Spoel, I., Noroozi, O., Schuurink, E., & van Ginkel, S. (2020). Teachers' online teaching expectations and experiences during the Covid19-pandemic in the Netherlands. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(4), 623–638. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1821185

Yan, Q., Zhang, L. J., & Cheng, X. (2021). Implementing classroom-based assessment for young EFL learners in the Chinese context: A case study. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 30(6), 541–552. https://doi.org/10.1007/S40299-021-00602-9/TABLES/1

Teaching English with the Help of Digital Technology by Various Interactive Methods and Psychological Approaches

Jamalova Ummihabiba Nurullaevna
University of Innovation Technologies, Karakalpakstan, Nukus

Abstract

Learning to speak English presents a complex challenge, particularly for learners who prioritize traditional skills such as reading and writing. In Uzbekistan, English proficiency significantly enhances access to employment and higher education. However, speaking and writing skills often lag due to limited opportunities for real-time communication practice.

This study explores the impact of integrating digital technology with interactive teaching methods and psychological strategies to improve English speaking skills. It focuses on a collaborative, group-based evaluation method—"All for One, One for All"—designed to increase participation, reduce performance anxiety, and foster peer support among both active and passive learners.

A mixed-methods approach was used, involving 45 first-year students from the Faculty of Foreign Languages over a four-week intervention. Data were collected through classroom observations, structured interviews, and pre- and post-intervention assessments.

The results indicate a significant improvement in student engagement and speaking performance, especially among passive learners. These findings highlight the effectiveness of combining digital tools with motivational group dynamics and psychological support in language instruction.

This study offers both theoretical and practical contributions for language educators, presenting evidence-based strategies to create more inclusive, interactive, and supportive ESL classroom environments.

Keywords: *ESL speaking skills,digital technology in language teaching,Padlet-based evaluation, "All for One, One for All" method,Peer-assisted learning,group-based assessment,psychological strategies in ELT,motivation and speaking fluency,mixed-methods approach,classroom collaboration*

Introduction

In the context of 21st-century globalization, English proficiency has become a key determinant of access to academic advancement and employment, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries such as Uzbekistan. Despite curricular reforms and increased emphasis on communicative competence, a persistent gap remains between receptive skills (reading and listening) and productive ones (speaking and writing). Among these, speaking is often the most underdeveloped due to limited exposure to authentic interaction, low student motivation, and predominantly teacher-centered pedagogical practices.

This issue has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted traditional classroom environments and underscored the need for digital integration and learner-centered approaches. The

crisis also highlighted the importance of addressing students' psychological well-being, as many—especially passive learners—experienced increased anxiety, reduced confidence, and a decline in motivation when engaging in speaking activities. These challenges demand innovative teaching strategies that support inclusion, emotional resilience, and active engagement.

In response, this study introduces the "All for One, One for All" strategy as its central pedagogical intervention. Rooted in collaborative learning and peer-supported evaluation, this method aims to transform speaking instruction into a socially interactive and psychologically safe experience. Its core principle—shared responsibility—helps mitigate common barriers for passive learners, such as fear of judgment and speaking anxiety, by fostering group accountability. This approach promotes a sense of belonging and encourages participation among all students, regardless of their initial confidence or proficiency.

Moreover, the strategy is well-suited for integration with digital platforms that support interactive, trackable learning. When combined with technology, the "All for One, One for All" method enhances collaboration, enables formative assessment, and facilitates real-time feedback. As such, it offers a scalable and context-sensitive solution for improving speaking outcomes in ESL classrooms, particularly in regions like Uzbekistan where learner diversity and technological disparities exist.

By addressing both the linguistic and psychological dimensions of speaking instruction through a digitally mediated, group-based approach, this study contributes to current discourse on communicative pedagogy. It offers both theoretical perspectives and practical guidance for educators aiming to implement more inclusive and effective speaking instruction in post-pandemic educational contexts.

Research Objectives

This study aims to examine the potential of digital technology and psychological strategies to enhance the speaking skills of ESL learners. Specifically, it investigates how group-based learning and self-assessment techniques can foster an inclusive and supportive classroom environment that encourages both active and passive students to participate in speaking activities. By applying the "All for One, One for All" method, the research evaluates the effectiveness of group-oriented evaluation in addressing key challenges faced by passive learners, particularly speaking anxiety and low self-confidence.

The study's methodology is grounded in the principles of interactive and collaborative learning, utilizing digital tools to create realistic and immersive speaking opportunities. These tools are combined with psychological strategies designed to reduce anxiety and enhance motivation, forming a comprehensive framework for developing speaking skills in ESL contexts. The emphasis on self-assessment and group-based learning aims to empower students to take ownership of their language development, cultivate a sense of achievement, and build self-efficacy.

By addressing both technological and psychological aspects of language learning, this research proposes a holistic approach to improving ESL education in the digital era. It seeks to provide practical, evidence-based recommendations for educators, enabling them to create more engaging, supportive, and effective learning environments that better prepare students for real-world communication.

Literature Review

1. Introduction to Digital Technology in ESL Education

Digital technology plays a transformative role in language education, especially in enhancing speaking skills in English as a Second Language (ESL). Tools such as Padlet, speech recognition software, mobile apps, and virtual/augmented reality (VR/AR) are reshaping traditional classrooms by creating interactive learning environments that engage students and provide real-time feedback. According to Bax (2011) and Chapelle (2001), digital tools not only improve proficiency but also increase student engagement, making language learning more personalized and dynamic.

Padlet is widely used to create collaborative spaces where students can post and share responses anonymously. This encourages participation from students who might feel hesitant to speak in front of others. The anonymity feature and collective responsibility foster a safe learning environment, aligning with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes peer-supported learning and scaffolding to help students achieve higher levels of performance (Vygotsky, 1978).

2. The Role of Digital Tools in Enhancing ESL Learners' Speaking Skills

Digital tools support speaking skill development by providing learners with multiple ways to practice and improve their pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy. Speech recognition tools such as Google Translate and Rosetta Stone provide real-time corrective feedback, helping students refine their speaking patterns and pronunciation (Godwin-Jones, 2018). Mobile apps such as Memrise and Busuu incorporate gamification strategies that motivate learners to engage in regular practice and offer opportunities to speak through interactive exercises. Furthermore, VR and AR technologies offer immersive learning environments, enabling students to practice language use in real-world contexts without geographical or classroom constraints (Dunleavy, 2014).

3. Psychological Approaches in Language Learning

Psychological factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety play a crucial role in language acquisition. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) posits that motivation can be both intrinsic (driven by personal satisfaction and growth) and extrinsic (driven by external rewards such as grades). Digital tools can foster intrinsic motivation by offering personalized, engaging, and rewarding language learning experiences.

Speaking anxiety, a common issue among ESL learners, can be alleviated through strategies such as peer-assisted learning. This approach, grounded in Vygotsky's ZPD, allows students to support each other, thereby reducing the fear of making mistakes in public and increasing confidence in speaking (Horwitz, 2001).

4. The "All for One, One for All" Method: Integrating Digital Tools

The "All for One, One for All" method, when combined with digital tools such as Padlet, shifts the focus from individual assessments to group-based evaluation, creating a collaborative environment where students support one another. In this method, students are required to complete individual tasks (e.g., memorizing irregular verbs), but the class is evaluated as a group based on collective performance. Through Padlet, students can anonymously post their answers, allowing them to participate without fear of judgment. The teacher then displays the group percentage of correct answers, encouraging students to contribute to each other's success and fostering peer accountability and motivation.

This group-based approach aligns with Collaborative Learning Theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1999), which stresses the importance of group interaction and mutual support in the learning process. Additionally, the visible percentage-based evaluation reduces anxiety and encourages students to engage more deeply with the material, knowing their performance affects the group's outcome.

5. Benefits of Using Padlet in the "All for One, One for All" Method

Padlet serves as a real-time formative assessment tool, allowing teachers to instantly assess the collective progress of students. By anonymously submitting their answers and viewing the results displayed on Padlet, students are motivated to perform better, both individually and as part of the group. The visual feedback in the form of percentages is a powerful tool for engagement and accountability (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Moreover, Padlet's interactive platform allows for immediate peer feedback, where active learners can assist passive learners, facilitating collaborative learning and reinforcing speaking skills.

Additionally, Padlet's anonymity feature helps students overcome their fear of speaking in front of others, a significant barrier in language acquisition (Horwitz, 2001). This feature encourages all students to participate without fear of embarrassment, thereby increasing their speaking confidence.

6. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study integrates digital tools, psychological approaches, and collaborative learning to enhance ESL learners' speaking skills. The framework links theoretical components—motivation, anxiety reduction, and peer-assisted learning—to the methodology (the "All for One, One for All" method), using Padlet as a central tool.

Conceptual Framework Diagram

Digital Tools	Psychological Strategies	Learning Outcomes
Padlet	Motivation (Intrinsic & Extrinsic)	Improved Speaking Fluency
Collaboration and engagement platform	Fosters intrinsic and extrinsic motivation	Fluency through consistent practice
Speech Recognition Tools	Reducing Anxiety through Peer Learning	Reduced Anxiety in Speaking Tasks
Google Translate, Duolingo	Supportive peer interaction reduces fear	Confidence in speaking tasks
Mobile Apps (Memrise, Busuu)	Peer-Assisted Learning (ZPD)	Enhanced Collaborative Engagement
Interactive tasks and quizzes	Learners collaborate to help one another	Improved speaking skills through collaboration

Digital tools facilitate engagement and provide immediate feedback. Padlet encourages collaborative learning by allowing students to post responses, view group performance, and engage in peer feedback.

Motivation is fostered through both intrinsic (personal satisfaction) and extrinsic (grades or rewards) factors. Peer-assisted learning reduces speaking anxiety, and collaborative learning ensures active participation from all students.

Learning outcomes of the the combination of digital tools and psychological strategies leads to improved speaking fluency, reduced anxiety, and enhanced collaborative engagement—all crucial for developing ESL speaking skills.

The integration of digital tools like Padlet with psychological strategies such as peer-assisted learning and motivation enhancement provides a comprehensive approach to improving ESL learners' speaking skills. The "All for One, One for All" method, underpinned by these technologies and theories, creates a supportive, engaging, and less intimidating learning environment. By using Padlet, the teacher can evaluate the class as a group, thereby fostering a sense of collective responsibility and motivating students to contribute to their peers' success.

Methodology

The study aims to explore the effectiveness of digital tools in enhancing ESL learners' speaking skills using the "All for One, One for All" method. This aligns with the objective of investigating how collaborative, technology-driven tasks can improve student engagement and speaking performance.

To achieve these objectives, a mixed-methods approach is employed, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data. This approach provides a holistic view of the impact of digital technology on language learning and helps validate the findings through multiple data sources.

Data triangulation is an essential aspect of the study, ensuring the credibility and richness of the findings. Data is collected through:

- Qualitative methods: In-depth interviews and focus groups with students and teachers to capture perceptions and experiences.

- Quantitative methods: Pre- and post-tests to measure speaking fluency and engagement levels before and after implementing digital tools.

By collecting data from both students' perspectives (qualitative) and performance metrics (quantitative), the study ensures that the results are well-rounded and supported by multiple data sources, thereby enhancing validity.

Quantitative Analysis

The pre- and post-tests are designed to assess improvement in students' speaking skills based on established language proficiency criteria. The results will be analyzed using statistical methods (e.g., paired sample t-tests) to determine whether significant changes in speaking fluency occurred after using digital tools.

To ensure the reliability of the quantitative data, the tests will be administered consistently, with clear instructions provided to all participants. Additionally, potential biases in grading will be minimized by having multiple raters assess the speaking tasks.

Qualitative Analysis

The interviews and focus groups will be transcribed and coded using a thematic analysis approach. The trustworthiness of the qualitative data will be established through techniques such as member checking (having participants review the findings for accuracy) and peer debriefing (consulting with colleagues to ensure interpretations are grounded in the data).

The mixed-methods approach is specifically chosen to address the dual objectives of the study:

- To assess the effectiveness of digital tools (e.g., Padlet, speech recognition software) in improving speaking skills.

- To explore the psychological impact of the "All for One, One for All" method on students' motivation, anxiety levels, and group participation.

By combining qualitative insights into student experiences with quantitative analysis of performance data, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how digital tools and collaborative learning affect speaking skills in ESL learners.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Fluency Pre- and Post-Test

Group	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)	t-value	p-value
Experimental	56.4 (5.2)	73.8 (4.7)	4.98	0.0001
Control	55.3 (6.1)	59.1 (5.3)	1.68	0.102

The Experimental Group shows a statistically significant improvement in speaking fluency ($t = 4.98$, $p = 0.0001$), whereas the Control Group did not show significant improvement ($t = 1.68$, $p = 0.102$).

2. Inferential Statistics:

1. Used paired t-tests or ANOVA (if comparing multiple groups) to compare pre- and post-test scores of speaking skills. The t-test will determine if there is a statistically significant difference in students' speaking fluency before and after using the "All for One, One for All" method.

Table 2: Inferential Statistics for Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Scores

Group	t-value	df	p-value
Experimental	4.98	29	0.0001
Control	1.68	29	0.102

3. Visual Aid - Bar ChartTo visualize the results, we can create a Bar Chart comparing the Pre-Test and Post-Test scores for the Experimental and Control Groups. Comparison of Speaking Fluency Scores (Pre-Test and Post-Test)

Example 1: Homework completion before and after using the Padlet-based "All for One, One for All" method:

Group	Before Padlet (%)	After Padlet (%)
A	45	82
B	50	88
C	38	79

Bar Chart 1: Homework Completion Rates Before and After Padlet Method
Y-axis: Completion Percentage (%)
X-axis: Student Groups (A, B, C)
Two bars per group:
- Light Blue = Before Padlet
- Dark Blue = After Padlet

Example 2: Speaking Fluency Improvement (Pre-test vs Post-test)

Student Group	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score
Group A	62	78
Group B	59	81
Group C	60	79

Bar Chart 2: Speaking Fluency Improvement
Y-axis: Speaking Score (out of 100)
X-axis: Student Groups
- Bar 1 = Pre-Test (e.g., Orange)
- Bar 2 = Post-Test (e.g., Green)

The Experimental Group demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in speaking fluency, whereas the Control Group did not show any statistically significant improvement.

Qualitative Results- To present the qualitative findings, such as student interviews, focus groups, or observational data, follow a structured approach:

1. Themes and Categories:

Identifying key themes from qualitative data, such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety reduction. Providing direct quotes from students that highlight these themes.
Example: I feel less anxious because I know my classmates are working with me to improve." (Student 5)

2. I liked using Padlet because I could see how the class was doing as a whole." (Student 2)

2. Content Analysis:

Present the analysis of the qualitative data in thematic categories, such as: Motivational Impact: 75% of students reported feeling more motivated due to the group-based evaluation system. Confidence Boost: 60% of students indicated that peer support during the tasks helped reduce speaking anxiety.

Table 3: Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

Theme	Percentage of Students Reporting	Example Quote
Motivation	75%	"I felt like I had to do well for the group."
Confidence Boost	60%	"Working with my group made me feel less nervous."
Anxiety Reduction	65%	"Padlet helped me prepare without stress."

Quantitative Results:

The quantitative results of the experimental group demonstrated significant improvement in speaking fluency, as evidenced by pre- and post-test comparisons. These findings support the effectiveness of the "All for One, One for All" method when combined with digital tools like Padlet.

Qualitative Results:

Students reported higher motivation, increased self-confidence, and reduced anxiety during speaking tasks, attributing these improvements to the collaborative nature of the method and the use of Padlet for real-time feedback.

This methodology provided a robust framework for investigating the impact of the "All for One, One for All" group-based evaluation method on ESL students' speaking skills. By integrating digital tools with psychological support strategies, the study aimed to create a supportive and engaging environment that fostered confidence and motivation among students, ultimately enhancing their speaking abilities. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods ensured a comprehensive analysis of the intervention's effectiveness and highlighted its potential for broader application in ESL classrooms.

Research Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of integrating digital technology and psychological strategies in improving ESL learners' speaking skills. Through the "All for One, One for All" method, combined with platforms like Padlet, the study explored how digital tools and group-based evaluation strategies could enhance motivation, reduce anxiety, and ultimately improve speaking fluency.

The findings indicate that the experimental group, which utilized digital tools such as Padlet, demonstrated significant improvement in speaking fluency compared to the control group. This improvement was supported by quantitative data, which showed higher post-test scores for the experimental group, and qualitative data, which revealed positive student experiences regarding motivation, confidence, and anxiety reduction.

Discussion

The research findings underscore the pivotal role of digital technology in fostering language learning, particularly in speaking skills. The integration of Padlet allowed students to engage with the content interactively, reducing the intimidation often associated with traditional speaking assessments. Additionally, the psychological strategy of peer-assisted learning (based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development) proved to be an essential factor in motivating students, particularly passive learners, to engage more actively in the tasks.

However, several challenges emerged during the study, including the limited generalizability of the findings. The study was conducted in a specific educational context with a relatively small sample size, which may limit the applicability of the results to other settings. The findings are highly context-dependent, and future research should aim to replicate the study in different educational contexts to assess the transferability of the results.

Bias may have influenced the results, particularly given the researcher's involvement in the classroom setting. As both teacher and researcher, there is an inherent risk of bias in interpreting data and providing feedback. To reduce such bias in future studies, independent evaluators could be introduced, and a more neutral perspective could be ensured in both the design and analysis phases.

Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations:

1. Sample Size: The small number of participants may not accurately represent the broader population of ESL learners. A larger sample size would increase the statistical power of the findings and improve their generalizability.

2. Researcher Bias: As the researcher also served as the teacher, there may have been an unintended influence on the results. To minimize this bias, future studies could involve external evaluators or assessors who are not directly involved in the teaching process.

3. Limited Scope: The study focused solely on speaking fluency and did not examine other language skills, such as listening, reading, or writing. Future studies should explore a more holistic view of language proficiency.

4. Duration of Study: The study was conducted over a relatively short period. Long-term studies would be beneficial to assess the sustainability of improvements in speaking skills over time.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and limitations, several recommendations can be made:

Replicating the Study: It is recommended that similar studies be conducted with larger, more diverse participant groups across various educational settings. This would help validate the findings and enhance the generalizability of the results.

1. Incorporating Other Skills: Future research should incorporate other language skills (e.g., listening, reading, writing) to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how digital tools and psychological strategies affect overall language acquisition.

2. Further Exploration of Bias: Future studies should seek to minimize researcher bias by involving multiple researchers or independent evaluators to assess the outcomes. This would increase the credibility and objectivity of the findings.

3. Longitudinal Studies: To understand the long-term effects of digital tools and collaborative methods on ESL learners' speaking skills, longitudinal studies should be conducted. These studies would help determine if the improvements are sustained over time.

This study highlights the significant role of integrating digital technology and psychological strategies in enhancing ESL learners' speaking skills. By utilizing the "All for One, One for All" method, combined with platforms such as Padlet, the research demonstrated how collaborative, technology-driven tasks could effectively engage students, boost motivation, reduce anxiety, and improve speaking fluency.

The findings suggest that digital tools, especially those fostering interactivity and real-time feedback, have the potential to transform traditional language learning environments. Moreover, psychological strategies, such as peer-assisted learning, proved crucial in motivating passive learners and addressing speaking anxiety, which are common barriers in language acquisition.

Despite the promising results, the study also acknowledges limitations, including a small sample size and potential researcher bias, which affect the generalizability and objectivity of the findings. To build on these results, future research should focus on larger, more diverse participant groups, explore other language skills, and employ longitudinal designs to assess the sustainability of the improvements over time.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the effective use of digital tools and psychological approaches to improve speaking skills in ESL education. The results encourage further exploration of these methods, with the potential for broader application in diverse educational contexts, helping educators create more engaging, inclusive, and effective language learning environments.Author's data

Ummihabiba Nurullaevna was born in Uzbekistan Tashkent district in 1989 march 25. Graduated bachelor degree in 2013 and master degree in 2015 from Karakalpak State University in Nukus. I have experience of 10 year teaching at school from 2013 to 2022 with high category certificate. From 2022 I have started working at high school in Nukus. Currently, I'm an assitant teacher of Nukus innovation institute.
Email : jamalovaummihabiba@gmail.com.

Referemces

Ahn, J., & Kim, K. (2021). The effectiveness of speech recognition technology for improving ESL learners' speaking skills. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 24(1), 12-27.

Ahmed, M. K. (2023). Pedagogy in speaking challenges addressed by teacher-student interactions in ESL contexts. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(3), 309-324.

Anuradha, V. (2022). Enhancing students' speaking competencies in ESL classrooms through digital stories. *Journal of Language and Education*, 36(4), 55-72.

Gao, Y., & Zhang, S. (2020). Enhancing speaking skills through digital technologies in ESL classrooms. *Language Learning & Technology*, 24(2), 20-38. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alltech.2020.01.001

Kern, R. (2022). Technology and language learning: The role of multimedia and digital environments in speaking acquisition. *Modern Language Journal*, 106(1), 13-29.

Liu, M., & Zhang, L. (2021). Virtual reality as an immersive tool for developing ESL learners' speaking proficiency. *Journal of Educational Technology & Innovation*, 19(2), 85-103.

Solotova, N. V. (2023). The influence of digital technology on foreign language teaching in higher education. *Russian Journal of Linguistics,* 34(1), 72-89.

Swanta, S., Yamal, K. N., & Suyensah, S. (2022). Enhancing ESL rural students' speaking skills through multimedia-assisted project-based learning. *International Journal of Educational Research,* 58(3), 94-108.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). Mind in society: *The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Wang, X., & Zhang, X. (2019). Project-based learning in language education: A systematic review. *TESOL Quarterly*, 53(4), 823-841.

Zhang, R., & Li, Y. (2021). The impact of mobile apps on the development of ESL learners' speaking skills. *Computers & Education*, 159, 53-62.

The Development of English Writing by Using Process Writing Approach of Students Majoring in English, Western Languages Program, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University

Manee Champaphaeng
Waraporn Srinarach
Sirikanya Dawilai
Bhudtree Wetpichetkosol
Nanfa Chanthaphrom
Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, Thailand

Abstract

This research aimed to (1) examine the development of English writing ability through the process writing approach among first-year students in the English Western Languages Program at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University and (2) investigate students' satisfaction with this approach. The study sample consisted of 30 students enrolled in ENP1102 Basic Writing. Research instruments included (1) lesson plans based on the process writing approach, (2) a pre-test, (3) a post-test, and (4) a questionnaire assessing students' satisfaction. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t-test. The findings revealed that students' writing ability significantly improved after using the process writing approach. The mean pre-test score (40.43) was significantly lower than the post-test score (68.70) at the 0.05 level (t = 37.82). Moreover, students expressed high satisfaction with the approach ($\overline{x}$ = 4.67, S.D. = 0.59). The most highly rated aspect was the structured sequence of steps ($\overline{x}$ = 4.90, S.D. = 0.31), followed by the clarity of teaching examples ($\overline{x}$ = 4.87, S.D. = 0.43). These results suggest that the process writing approach effectively enhances students' writing skills and is well-received by learners.

Keywords : *English Writing, Teaching Process Writing Approach, Satisfaction*

Introduction

English writing is one of the most important and necessary skills to learn and is also one of the most complex skills that even some native speakers cannot achieve high levels of writing. One reason may be due to language problems or writing competencies. In writing good English language, the writer must have a writing plan, determine the purposes of the writing, and identify the audience or readers. Writing English can also be used for communication in various occasions and for different purposes, such as social communication, career, further education, contact with the outside world or even online society. In real situations, most students today have less listening and speaking skills than reading and writing skills, which are skills that can be used in studying and researching at all times (Saisunee Tirmsinsuk, 2005). Therefore, both reading and writing skills are very important to students.

Chiang Rai Rajabhat University is a higher education institution that focuses on and gives importance to teaching English, especially writing skills, and the Bachelor of Arts in English program of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences requires all students to take an English writing course.

It was found by the instructor that the students' writing skills achievement was still at a low level, which was very troubling to the instructor. Although the important grammar principles used in writing were reviewed before the students started writing according to the specified format, there were still grammatical deficiencies, which made the writing ideas not broad, lacking creativity, and mostly copying the examples to write continuously, which resulted in the teaching and learning process not achieving its goals.

The researcher realized that the current teaching method did not enable students to have good English writing skill, so the researcher began to search for an appropriate method by studying the process approach for teaching writing and studied the process approach theory of the writing teaching as Olshtain (1991: 235-236) mentioned that the process writing approach was a communicative writing process that involved interaction between the writer and the reader, using writng as a medium, which required the organization of contents in order. Therefore, the researcher was interested in studying and using the process writing approach to solve the students' English writing problems and to further develop their better English writng skills.

Research Objectives

1. To study the development of English writing skills of students who received process-oriented writing instruction.

2. To examine the students' satisfaction with process-oriented writing instruction.

Related Documents and Research

1. The Meaning and Importance of Writing

Many educators (Murray.1982: 11: White.1987: x: Cathy. 1993: 211) have given similar definitions of writing that writing is a tool used to stimulate the thought process, the process of communicating meaning to convey and organize it into writing for readers to understand clearly. In addition, writing also leads to the development of thinking, encouraging each person to express their opinions in society. It is the use of language to transmit information that the receiver understands and can respond to the received message. This is consistent with Brown (Brown.2000: 335) and Hedge (Hedge. 1988: 407), who believed that writing is the use of language instead of words with letters, conveying the writer's experiences and feelings into letters that have meaning in the context of communication. In brief, writing is a process of communicating meaning that conveys knowledge about the mechanism of language, mediated as letters for readers or recipients to understand.

2. The Elements of Writing

Raimes (1983: 6-9) emphasized that the elements of writing must have a purpose in order to use writing styles in various forms that are appropriate for the recipients. He also mentioned other interesting elements that are currently used in writing, which is the organization of content, emphasizing that writiers should consider organizing content into essays or paragraphs, and the essay must have sentences with important ideas (topic sentences) and supporting sentences that are consistent, linking content, and continuing as one (cohesion and unity). In addition, language use is an important element of writing. The writer must consider the importance of words in phrases and sentences, as well as have knowledge of the complexity of sentences and the range of structures and vocabulary to be appropriate for the students' levels and to have grammatical accuracy. In conclusion, the elements of good writing are that there must be a purpose for writing. The content must consider the recipient and the use of vocabulary, grammar, paragraph, and the organization of the content must be continuous and unified.

3. Process-oriented Writing Instruction

3.1 The Meaning of Process-oriented Writing Instruction

Hairston (1982) defined process-oriented writing instruction as a process of searching for information through the process of searching, organizing information from ideas, where the process that occurs is natural, has no fixed rules is not divided into separate steps, and it is a process that can occur alternately or reversely.

3.2 Important Characteristics of Process-oriented Writing Instruction

Raimes (1983: 6) and White and Arndt (Nunan. 1999: 273-274; as cited in White and Arndt. 1991) stated that process-oriented writing is the production of writing that students must follow the steps completely, going back and forth until the work is complete. To do writing activities in the classroom, students should do group activities throughout the process, and students with writing ability should be the group leaders to assist, check, and advise students with less ability. Following the steps in sending feedback according to the process will make the students with less ability see the way to write and develop their writing to be better.

Raimes (1983: 18) proposed the stages of process-oriented writing instruction as follows:

1. Pre-writing Stage

The pre-writing stage may consist of generating ideas, discussing with classmates in a small group or pair or brainstorming, selecting ideas and establishing a viewpoint, writing a rough draft, organizing ideas or information into a continuous text, checking the draft (preliminary self-evaluation), organizing information or creating a story to write (arranging information and structuring the text), etc.

2. While-writing Stage

2.1 Students write their first draft, and they write according to the rough drafting format. They do not need to worry about any errors.

2.2 Students exchange their writing with their peers by considering the objectives to be consistent with the content. The content must be organized, and there must be supporting sentences to support the topic sentence (main idea).

2.3 Students use feedback from their peers as a guideline to improve their first draft to write their second draft.

2.4 Students exchange checking of the second draft with their peers by discussing the details of vocabulary, language mechanisms, and grammar with an assistance of the instructor. For some writings that focus on sequence of events, students will be asked to check grammar (tense), and for those are descriptive writings, students will be asked to check the usage of adjectives, nouns, and subject-verb agreement.

2.5 Students bring back the feedback of the second draft to write the final draft.

3. Post-writing Stage

The written tasks were reviewed by the students for completion and were submitted to the instructor for marking. The instructor should clearly explain to students how their written tasks will be graded and what criteria will be used to evaluate their works. There must be a mutual agreement between the instructor and the students on the criteria for grading the essay writing.

The Evaluation of Writing

An English writing evaluation is an important process in teaching English writing, which will help instructors know how much students have developed their English writing in order to improve it. There are writing evaluation criteria adapted from Jacob's concept (Jacobs.1981: 89-105). He suggested another way to evaluate a comprehensive essay using the evaluation criteria called ESL Composition Profile, which is a very detailed essay evaluation method in the book Testing ESL Composition, in which the examiner must judge the entire essay that the writer has communicated by considering the overall writing. The method of using ESL Composition Profile to evaluate essays has scoring criteria, divided into 5 important parts that show the overall picture as follows:

1. Content	30 points
2. Organization	20 points
3. Vocabulary	20 points
4. Language Use	25 points
5. Language Mechanics	5 points

In addition, each level has a clear description of each characteristic so that the examiner can use these descriptions to judge by expanding the importance completely in relation to the given topic. Jacobs also proposed the following 2 steps in checking the writing:

1. In first reading, it is about to create a feeling towards the writing that the writer has presented the content clearly and completely, focusing on the content the writer wants to convey, and the examiner evaluates in parts 1 and 2, which are Content and Organization.

2. In second reading, the examiner tries to clarify the writer's communication in the first reading by considering the issues in parts 3, 4, 5 and giving scores for each issue. The scoring criteria are how each element affects the meaning of the writing, and the examiner must not consider each element separately. These elements are all integrated together. Therefore, when scoring each element, the total score is added, which indicates the

student's writing ability. The focus of this type of evaluation is on the efficiency of meaning communication and the evaluation of the writer's success in clearly communicating opinions according to the details in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1: ESL Composition Profile Essay Criteria (Jacobs et al. 1981: 30)

Elements	Scores	Ability Levels	Criteria
1. Content	30 - 27	Excellent-Very good	-Demonstrate complete knowledge and understanding of the content related to the given topic.
	26 – 22	Good – Average	-Demonstrate moderate knowledge, limited plot, mostly related to the topic but lacked details.
	21 – 17	Fair – Poor	-Demonstrate limited knowledge, little content, insufficient plot.
	16 - 13	Very poor	-Do not demonstrate knowledge about the written topic at all, not on point.
2. Content Organization	20 – 18	Excellent-Very good	- Express opinions fluently and clearly with support, concise and clear, well-organized, logical and coherent.
	17 – 14	Good – Average	-Somewhat abrupt, loose organization, not very clear but still important points, few supporting details, coherent but incomplete.
	13 – 10	Fair – Poor	-Write incoherent text, confusing or discontinuous ideas, lack of elaboration and coherence.
	9 - 7	Very poor	-Do not communicate at all, no storytelling, or insufficient information for evaluation.
3. Vocabulary	20 – 18	Excellent-Very good	-Demonstrate knowledge of wide vocabulary, effective use of words, high ability to use appropriate language writing patterns.
	17 – 14	Good – Average	-Demonstrate knowledge of wide enough vocabulary, use incorrect words, expressions, and word choices in some sentences, but the meaning is clear.
	13 -10	Fair – Poor	-Write limited vocabulary, use incorrect words, expressions, and word choices frequently, unclear meaning, confusion.
	9 - 7	Very poor	-Use word-by-word translation, write very few words and expressions.
4.Language Use	25 -22	Excellent-Very good	- Use complex structures effectively, with very few errors in the consistency of subject and verb use, tense, number of functional word order, pronouns, prepositions and articles.
	21 – 18	Good – Average	- Use simple, uncomplicated structures effectively, with few problems in the use of complex structures, with many errors in the consistency of tense, number of functional word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions, continuous phrases, clauses and omissions, but the meaning is mostly clear.
	17 – 11	Fair – Poor	-Appear major problems in constructing both simple and complex sentences, with frequent errors in negative sentences, consistency of words, tense, number of functional word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions, continuous phrases, clauses and omissions, and ambiguous, confusing meanings.
	10 – 5	Very poor	- Rarely construct any sentences, with many errors, meaning is not conveyed.

Elements	Scores	Ability Levels	Criteria
5.Language Mechanics	5	Excellent-Very good	-Demonstrate good knowledge of writing rules, very few errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraph initiation.
	4	Good – Average	-Appear occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraph initiation.
	3	Fair – Poor	- Appear frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraph initiation, illegible handwriting, incomprehensible.
	2	Very poor	- Demonstrate no knowledge of writing rules at all, only errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraph initiation, incoherent writing, insufficient data to evaluate.

From the concept of in the ESL Composition Profile Essay Criteria of writing assessment methods mentioned above, the researcher had selected the criteria for writing evaluation of Jacobs et al. to use in evaluating writing that emphasized process-oriented writing instruction in this research because it covered the elements of writing, had an analysis method that clearly separated the elements of essay writing, was convenient and easy to evaluate writing. Besides this, students could see their own shortcomings and could use them to develop their own writing.

Process-oriented Writing Instruction

The research related to teaching writing with process writing approach that showed the effectiveness of process-oriented writing instruction and its effect on students' writing development were as follows:

Pornjit Kaewlee (2000) researched the comparison of writing ability and anxiety in English writing of Mathayom 5 students who were taught with Hewins' writing process and taught according to the teacher's manual. The sample group was Mathayom 5 students in the language arts program who studied English 14 (Eng. 0110) in the second semester of the 1999 academic year. It was found that the English writing ability of the students who were taught with Hewins' writing process was significantly different from that taught according to the teacher's manual at a statistical level of .01, and the English writing ability after the experiment was significantly higher than before the experiment at a statistical level of .01.

Nattha Thilawat (2004) studied the development of English writing ability of Mathayom 6 students through process-focused writing training and found that the student's English writing ability was at a good level with an average of 3.51 using a 5-point rating scale from self-assessment of writing ability and teacher assessment. The English writing ability after the experiment was significantly higher than before the experiment at a statistical level of .01.

Louie (1994: 86 - 90) researched improving the essay writing of high school students in San Francisco who studied English as a second language using the writing process theory. He found that the writing process method helped students like writing in a second language and have a better attitude towards writing. It also helped students have more self-confidence and motivation. The results of the pre-test and post-test showed that students had improved their writing skills. Students enjoyed group activities. The instructor consultation helped students solve problems and improve their writing skills. Having students practice writing regularly helped them develop fluency in using the language. Group activities helped students expand their ideas and improve their writing. Training students to revise and critique their friends' writings also helped improve the quality of their writing.

From the related researches and documents both domestically and internationally, the researcher had seen that teaching writing with a focus on process can effectively develop students' writing and stimulate students to be interested and able to write English better. In addition, instructors have guidelines for using it to improve teaching methods to develop students' writing to have more success and effectiveness.

Research Methodology

The research entitled, "The development of English writing by using process writing approach of students majoring in English, Western Languages Program, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, which the researcher had conducted according to the following steps;

1. The target group of the research
2. The instrument used for data collection
3. Construction and quality of instruments
4. Data collection
5. Data analysis

The Target Group of the Research

The target group used in this research was 30 first-year students who registered for the course ENP1102: Introduction to Writing at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University.

The Instrument Used for Data Collection

The instruments used in this data collection consisted of:

1. The process-oriented writing instruction approach

2. Writing skills tests using process-oriented writing instruction including 2 sets as follows: Pre-test; a writing skills test using process-oriented writing instruction before the lesson and 2) Posttest; a writing skills test using process-oriented writing instruction after the lesson. Both tests were writing skills tests that required students to write paragraph-level essays (paragraphs), specifying the context, type of writing, and length of the essay, approximately 150 words long, taking 60 minutes. The writing evaluation criteria were adapted from the concept of Jacobs et al. (Jacobs, et al. 1981:30). The scoring criteria and students' writing ability levels were set at 5 levels, considering the following 5 components; content, content organization, vocabulary, language use, and language mechanics. The scoring criteria for each level were clearly defined. The criteria were used to score students' writing in the pre-writing stage (pre-test), while-writing stage, and the post-writing stage (post-test).

3. Students' satisfaction evaluation form for process-oriented writing instruction
In this research, the researcher used One Group Pre-test Posttest Design as follows:

	T1	X
T2		
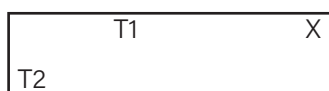
T1 = Pre-test; a writing skills test using process-oriented writing instruction before the lesson
X = The process-oriented writing instruction approach
T2 = Posttest; a writing skills test using process-oriented writing instruction after the lesson

Construction and Quality of Instruments

The process of developing English writing skills using process-oriented writing instruction and the quality of the instruments were as follows:

1. The researcher created an English writing teaching activity using process-oriented writing instruction with the following steps:

1.1 Study documents, theories and concepts related to the creation of teaching and learning activities to be used as guidelines for creating activities to develop English writing skills using process-oriented writing instruction.

1.2 Determine the content to be used to create activities to develop English writing skills using process-oriented writing instruction.

1.3 Create activities to develop English writing skills using process-oriented writing instruction according to Raimes's concept (Raimes, 1983: 3-23).

1.4 Take the activities to develop English writing skills using process-oriented writing instruction to experts to check their accuracy and then improve and correct errors.

1.5 Take the activities to develop English writing skills using process-oriented writing instruction that had been improved to teach 15 students who were not in the target group.

1.6 Take the activities to develop English writing skills using process-oriented writing instruction, focusing on the improved process and try out with the target group of 30 students.

2. Create an English writing skills test using process-oriented writing instruction as follows:

2.1 Create an English writing skills test using process-oriented writing instruction, which was a writing skills test that assigned students to write an essay at the paragraph level, specifying the context, type of writing tasks, and length of the essay.

2.2 Take the English writing skills test using process-oriented writing instruction to experts to check for linguistic accuracy and appropriateness.

2.3 Take the English writing skills test using process-oriented writing instruction, which was improved according to the experts' comments, to try out with 15 students who were not the target group.

2.4 Take the revised English writing skills test using process-oriented writing instruction to apply with the 30 target students.

3. Create and find out the quality using writing evaluation criteria, as follows:

3.1 Study the principles of measurement and evaluation of writing tasks and consider selecting an evaluation form. The writings of Jacobs, et al. (Jacobs, et al. 1981:30)

3.2 Apply the principles of writing assessment according to the concepts of Jacobs, et al. to adapt and create writing evaluation criteria that were consistent with the curriculum and the feasibility of the students.

3.3 Take the writing evaluation criteria to experts for a review.

3.4 Take the revised writing evaluation criteria recommended by experts to test with 15 students who were not the target group.

3.5 Use the revised writing evaluation criteria with 30 students in the target group.

4. Create a student satisfaction evaluation form for teaching writing using process-oriented writing instruction, as follows:

4.1 Create a student satisfaction evaluation form for teaching writing using process-oriented writing instruction.

4.2 Take the student satisfaction evaluation form for teaching writing using process-oriented writing instruction to experts for a review of language accuracy and appropriateness.

4.3 Take the student satisfaction evaluation form for teaching writing using process-oriented writing instruction, which was revised according to the experts' recommendations, to test with 15 students who were not the target group.

4.4 Take the student satisfaction evaluation form for teaching writing using a modified process-oriented writing instruction to be applied to a target group of 30 students.

Data Collection

The data collection methods used in this research were conducted according to the following steps:

1. Planning and Analysis – Assessing the current situation and identifying problems in classroom teaching and learning management.

2. Pre-test – Measuring first-year students' English writing skills before learning through process-oriented writing instruction.

3. Post-test – Measuring first-year students' English writing skills after learning through process-oriented writing instruction.

4. Satisfaction Assessment – Evaluating students' satisfaction with process-oriented writing instruction.

5. Data Analysis – Analyze and interpret the collected data by comparing the achievement scores before and after learning, as well as assessing students' satisfaction with the process-oriented writing instruction.

6. Research Report – Compiling and writing the research report.

Data Analysis

The classroom research on the development of English writing by using process writing approach among English major students in the Western Languages Program at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University employed data analysis methods including Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test.

In this research on developing English writing skills using process-oriented writing instruction, the researcher presents the data analysis results in two parts:

Part 1: Study on the Development of English Writing Ability of Students by using process writing approach.

The researcher analyzed students' English writing skills using the process writing approach by examining their learning achievement in writing before and after the instruction. The evaluation criteria and proficiency levels were divided into five levels, considering five key components as follows:

1. Content	30 points
2. Content Organization	20 points
3. Vocabulary	20 points
4. Language Use	25 points
5. Language Mechanics	5 points

A total of 100 points was assigned to assess the writing performance of 30 target students. The collected data were then analyzed as follows:

English Writing Achievement Using Process Writing Approach (Pre-test & Post-test)

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of English Writing Achievement Using Process Writing Approach (Pre-test & Post-test)

Pre-test and Post-test	$\overline{x}$	S.D.	t	df	Sig.
Pretest	40.43	9.29	37.82	29	.000
Posttest	68.70	7.90			

According to Table 1, it was found that the descriptive statistics of students' English writing achievement using process writing approach before and after learning showed a statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level (t = 37.82). This indicates that students' English writing ability improved after receiving process-oriented writing instruction. The mean scores before and after the instruction were *40.43 and 68.70, respectively.

Part 2: Analysis of Students' Satisfaction by using process writing approach

After implementing the activities according to the process writing approach plan, the researcher evaluated students' satisfaction, which is summarized in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2: Evaluation of Students' Satisfaction using process writing approach

Evaluation Criteria	Satisfaction Level		
	$\overline{x}$	S.D.	Meaning
1. The writing instruction activities were interesting.	4.57	0.68	Very satisfied
2. The content volume was appropriate for the class time.	4.80	0.55	Very satisfied
3. The writing instruction activities were diverse.	4.60	0.67	Very satisfied
4. The instructor assigned an appropriate amount of work.	4.47	0.82	Very satisfied
5. The writing instruction activities included clear examples.	4.87	0.43	Very satisfied
6. The writing instruction activities helped develop teamwork skills.	4.77	0.57	Very satisfied
7. The process writing approach aligned with the course content.	4.63	0.67	Very satisfied
8. The writing instruction activities enhanced students' confidence in writing.	4.67	0.48	Very satisfied
9. The writing instruction activities were appropriate for students' proficiency levels.	4.53	0.73	Very satisfied
10. The writing instruction activities motivated students to be more interested in the subject.	4.50	0.57	Very satisfied
11. The sequence of steps in the writing instruction activities was well-structured.	4.90	0.31	Very satisfied

12. Overall satisfaction level of students with process writing approach	4.73	0.58	Very satisfied
Total Mean Score	4.67	0.59	Very satisfied

Table 2 indicated the evaluation of students' satisfaction by using process writing approach. The overall mean score of students' satisfaction with process-oriented writing instruction was at the highest level ($\overline{x}$ = 4.67, S.D. = 0.59). When considering individual aspects, students rated the sequence of steps in writing instruction activities as the most appropriate ($\overline{x}$ = 4.90, S.D. = 0.31), followed by the clarity of examples used in writing instruction activities ($\overline{x}$ = 4.87, S.D. = 0.43).

Research Findings

1. Students majoring in English at the Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, took a pre-test before the course with an average score of 40.43 and a post-test after the course with an average score of 68.70. The difference in learning achievement in writing between the pre-test and post-test was statistically significant at the 0.05 level (t = 37.82). This shows that the students' English writing skills improved after using process-oriented writing instruction.

2. The results of the students' satisfaction evaluation of the process-oriented writing instruction showed that the overall satisfaction average was at the highest level ($\overline{x}$ = 4.67, S.D. = 0.59). When looking at specific items, students were most satisfied with the logical sequencing of the steps in the writing activities ($\overline{x}$ = 4.90, S.D. = 0.31). The next highest satisfaction was with the clarity of the examples provided in the writing instruction activities ($\overline{x}$ = 4.87, S.D. = 0.43).

Discussions of Results

This research aimed to (1) study the development of English writing skills of students who used process-oriented writing instruction and (2) evaluate the satisfaction of first-year students majoring in English at the Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, with process-oriented writing instruction.

The research findings showed that the process-focused writing activities were an effective writing strategy, consisting of distinct stages: pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing activities. Each stage had a clear objective, allowing for a continuous flow of activities. This helped students to improve their writing skills, as indicated by the statistically significant improvement in post-test scores compared to pre-test scores at the .05 level, as detailed below.

1.1 Pre-writing Stage

The pre-writing stage aims to prepare students by beginning with an icebreaker activity to help them get to know each other within the group and become familiar with one another. The preparation activities include both content-related tasks and writing skills, as well as activities to build familiarity. Students are organized into groups of 3 to 4 people to provide opportunities for collaboration and mutual support, which helps motivate the students.

For content preparation, the activities are divided into steps, starting with gathering information. The students collaboratively suggest ideas and engage in discussions on the topic they will write about. It was found that the students had diverse ideas and held group discussions as planned to work together. The instructor also organized activities where students read writing related to the topic to serve as models for studying ideas, vocabulary, and expressions. It was found that students helped each other express ideas and support one another.

Once the students gathered information, the writing skills preparation activities were organized. The researcher designed activities to improve students' basic writing knowledge, including training them to use mind maps for organizing information. It was found that students used these mind maps effectively in subsequent writing tasks. Additionally, activities were organized to help students understand and use supporting sentences, which was found to be effective as students were able to use the information in the mind maps to write supporting sentences for the topic sentence. They also improved in organizing the flow of ideas (coherence) and became more proficient in using transitional words, making their writing smoother and easier to read. Moreover, they were able to use their knowledge of sentence structures, grammar, and vocabulary more appropriately.

As a result, students demonstrated more confidence in their writing and showed a genuine interest in asking questions and consulting the instructor. They exhibited a strong desire to learn and actively participated in the learning activities, fully engaging in the lessons. Students were seen collaborating within their groups, and when it came time for discussions or brainstorming, they supported one another and gained increased confidence.

1.2 While-writing Stage

The purpose of the while-writing stage is to enable students to write according to the plan they developed in the pre-writing stage. In this phase, students engage in a process-oriented writing activity, which includes writing, exchanging drafts, and revising. During this stage, students apply the information from the mind map created in the preparation phase to their writing.

1.3 Post-writing Stage

The purpose of the post-writing stage is to ensure that students can produce complete and correct writing according to writing principles. In this phase, the steps involved in linking ideas are seen as part of a continuous writing process.

Additionally, the researcher found that having students review their own writing, instead of having the teacher review it, significantly contributed to the development of their writing skills. In process-oriented writing instruction, students are required to review their peers' work, which allows them to identify flaws and apply corrections to their own work in future assignments. Moreover, reviewing writing as part of this process-oriented approach fosters more interaction between students and teachers, as opposed to just submitting work for evaluation. (Raimes 1983:153). The researcher believes this leads students to develop a positive attitude toward writing, creating a desire to learn, as well as fostering interaction between the teacher and students, which aligns with Sommers' (1980: 378-380) idea that writing is a process of organizing and structuring thoughts developed through interaction between teachers and students. Systematic and step-by-step writing practice helps improve students' writing skills, as evidenced by students' post-test performance being significantly better than their pre-test performance.

In this study, the researcher applied cooperative learning as the instructional method for all three stages of the writing process. In the pre-writing stage, the teacher organized students, who were first-year students, meeting each other for the first time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to online learning. These students had a basic to intermediate level of English proficiency and were divided into groups of 2-3 students. The activity began with students getting to know each other in their groups to foster familiarity. It was found that small groups allowed students to work together and support one another. More proficient students helped less proficient students, creating a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. This encouraged students to be eager to improve their writing, which led to successful outcomes in the experiment. This is consistent with the research of Pimpan Wessakosol (1990: 117-130) and Pornpana Pithayakit (1999: 46-47), who found that mutual assistance throughout the writing process helps improve both strong and weak students' abilities. The research found that it was easier to follow the steps of process-oriented writing. Additionally, this collaboration motivated students to engage in the learning process, fostering a supportive environment and building confidence. Less proficient students were able to see examples from more proficient peers, which encouraged them to attempt to share their ideas and cooperate in activities, becoming valuable group members. This is in line with the views of Raimes (1983: 6, 18), White, and Arndt (1991; cited in Nunan, 1999: 273-274), who argue that cooperative learning motivates students to write and promotes the development of both proficient and less proficient students simultaneously.

In the while-writing stage, cooperative learning supported students in improving their writing. In the first draft, students asked questions, worked together to draft their writing, exchanged feedback, and in the second draft, there was continuous discussion and questioning within the group. Students enjoyed this interactive process, as it allowed them to actively participate in the learning activities. As a result, students became more confident and willing to ask the teacher questions. In the post-writing stage, students collaborated to review, revise, and improve their final drafts carefully. This collaboration and interaction—among students and between students and teachers—created motivation to learn, as students helped each other and didn't feel isolated. Observing the activities throughout the three stages, it was evident that cooperation (cooperative learning) was essential for students to follow the systematic writing process, from planning before learning, researching information, brainstorming, exchanging written work, and providing feedback. This required serious collaboration and learning how to work together and be responsible members of the group.

Recommendations for applying the research findings

1. Before starting the process-oriented writing instruction, the teacher should explain group work or collaboration, which should involve students with different skill levels in the group. There should be both strong and weaker students, as well as students who like group work and those who don't. The teacher should help students understand the benefits of group work in process-oriented writing instruction, which is different from group report work. Weaker students will try harder, while stronger students won't feel burdened by helping weaker peers. This will improve the learning atmosphere.

2. Assigning essay writing homework will help students gather more information and enhance their critical thinking, which will allow them to collaborate better with others in group work.

Recommendations for future research

1. The process-oriented writing instruction should be applied to other subjects in the curriculum to determine if it is effective in teaching writing skills.
2. The process-focused writing approach should also be applied to other groups of students from different courses.

References

Brown, D.H. (2000). *To Language Pedagogy.* San Francisco State University.

Cathy Colleges Block, (1993). *Teaching The Language Arts.* Needham Heights: Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.

Hairston, M. (1982). "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing," 113-126. In Sondra Perl (Ed.) Landmark Essays on Writing Process. Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press.

Jacob, Holly L. (1981). *Testing ESL Composition.* Rowley : Newbury House.

Kaewlee. P. (2000). *A comparison of writing ability and anxiety in English writing of Mathayom 5 students taught by Hewin's process method and the teacher's manual method.* Master of Education (Secondary Education) Thesis. Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakharinwirot University.

Louie, Anne Chen. (1994). *Improving Composition for Secondary ESL Students through the Process Approach.* Dissertation Thesis (M.Ed.). San Francisco: Graduate School San Francisco University. Photocopied.

Murray M. Donald. (1982). *Learning by Teaching.* Boynton Cook Press.

Nunan, David. (1999). *Second Language Teaching & Learning.* Hong Kong: Heinle & Heinle.

Olshtain, Elite. (1991) *"Functional Tasks for Mastering the Mechanics of Writing and Going Just Beyond"*, in Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language. Edited by Marianne Celec Murcia. Massachusetts: Heinle and Heinle.: 235 – 245.

Pithayakit. P. (1999). *A study of writing ability of Mathayom 4 students who received teaching of drafting with emphasis on process.* Master of Arts Thesis (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakharinwirot University.

Raimes, Ann. (1983). *Techniques in Teaching Writing.* New York : Oxford University Press.

Sommers, Nancy. (1980). *Revision Strategies of Student Writers.* College Composition and Communication. 31: 378 – 388.

Thilawat. N. (2004). *Development of English writing ability of Mathayom 6 students through process-focused writing practice.* Master of Arts Thesis (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakharinwirot University.

Tirmsinsuk. S. (2005). *Development of a Strategic Transfer Teaching Model to Develop English Writing Ability of Higher Education Students.* Ph.D. Thesis. Khon Kaen: Graduate School, Khon Kaen University.

Wessakosol. P. (1990). *Development of a Process-Based English Writing Teaching Model for Thai Higher Education Students.* Ph.D. Thesis (Curriculum and Instruction). Bangkok: Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University.

White, Ronald and Arndt. (1991) Process *Writing. London: Longman.*

The Positive Impact of Team Building Activities in English Classrooms of Upper Intermediate Level Students

Feruza Abdurakhimova Bokhadirovna
Fergana State University, Fergana, Uzbekistan
Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal
School of Distance Education, University Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
Feruza Rashidova Rasulovna
Namangan State University, Namangan, Uzbekistan

Abstract

This study investigates the effects of team-building activities on upper-intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Recognizing the challenges these learners often face in bridging the gap between classroom knowledge and real-world communication, this research explores how collaborative, interactive activities can positively impact key areas of language development. Specifically, the study examines the influence of team-building activities on learners' communication skills, motivation, classroom engagement, and the development of essential soft skills crucial for successful interaction. A teacher survey serves as the primary data collection instrument. This survey shows teachers' perceptions of how team-building activities affect various aspects of their students' learning. The research focuses on gathering data related to improvements in oral communication fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and grammatical accuracy. Teachers are asked to reflect on observed changes in their students' performance and engagement following the implementation of team-building strategies. The study aims to provide empirical evidence supporting the benefits of integrating team-building activities into the upper-intermediate EFL classroom. By analyzing teacher perspectives, the research seeks to identify specific activities and implementation strategies that are most effective in promoting language acquisition and fostering holistic student development. The findings will contribute valuable insights for educators seeking to create more dynamic, collaborative, and supportive learning environments that empower EFL learners to achieve greater communicative competence and confidence. Ultimately, this research aims to demonstrate the potential of team-building activities as a valuable pedagogical tool for enhancing EFL learning outcomes.

Keywords: *team-building activities, upper-intermediate learners, communication skills, motivation, engagement, soft skills, mixed-methods research.*

Introduction

Upper-intermediate EFL learners often face the challenge of bridging the gap between classroom knowledge and real-world communication. While possessing a solid foundation, they may struggle with fluency, complex grammatical structures, and confident language use. Traditional EFL methodologies, emphasizing individual work, can sometimes be insufficient in addressing these challenges. Team-building activities offer a potential solution by promoting collaboration, interaction, and a sense of community, creating a more engaging and supportive learning environment. This study investigates the impact of team-building activities on upper-intermediate EFL learners, hypothesizing that they will positively influence communication skills, motivation, engagement, and the development of essential soft skills. The need to analyze the positive effects of team-building activities in the EFL classroom can demonstrate their value in improving language learning and foster to increase students' comprehension through motivating working in teams. Team-building activities offer a potential pedagogical solution by

cultivating collaboration, promoting authentic interaction, and fostering a sense of community within the learning environment (Brown, 1994, p. 81; Johnson, 2005). As Brown (1994) suggests, cooperative learning promotes student-student interaction via working in small groups to maximize their learning and reach their shared goal. Johnson (2005) emphasizes that true cooperation involves more than just assigning tasks; it requires interdependence and mutual support among group members. Dovleac and Ionica (2021) highlight the importance of team cohesion and a shared vision, particularly in start-up businesses, arguing that team-building activities can be crucial for success in such contexts. These activities can create a more engaging and supportive atmosphere conducive to language acquisition and, potentially, improved comprehension. Johnson and Johnson's (1995, cited in Nakahashi, 2007) work on cooperative learning highlights five key elements: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual and group accountability, development of social skills, and group processing. These elements provide a framework for structuring effective cooperative learning experiences. When learners feel supported by their peers and actively participate in meaningful tasks, their motivation and willingness to take risks in communication can increase. This, in turn, can positively impact their language development. This study investigates the impact of strategically implemented team-building activities on upper-intermediate EFL learners, hypothesizing that such activities will positively influence several key areas: communication skills, learner motivation, classroom engagement, and the development of essential soft skills crucial for real-world communication. Furthermore, this research explores the relationship between these improvements and learners' comprehension of English language concepts. The need to rigorously analyze the positive effects of team-building activities within the EFL classroom context is underscored by the potential to demonstrate their significant value in enhancing language acquisition and promoting deeper comprehension through motivated teamwork. This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence of the benefits of integrating team-building activities into upper-intermediate EFL instruction. By examining teachers' perceptions of these benefits, the research seeks to offer practical insights for educators seeking to create more effective and engaging learning environments.

Literature review

Existing research underscores the positive impact of collaborative learning and communicative language teaching (CLT) within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). These pedagogical approaches emphasize interaction and communication, creating opportunities for learners to actively engage with the target language. Studies have demonstrated that team-based activities, a key component of both collaborative learning and CLT, can significantly enhance language acquisition (Brown, 2010). This enhancement stems from the provision of authentic communication opportunities, where learners must negotiate meaning, express their ideas, and work together to achieve shared goals. Such interactions facilitate peer learning, allowing students to learn from and support one another. Moreover, research suggests a strong link between team-building activities and increased learner motivation and engagement (Dörnyei, 2001). By fostering a sense of belonging and creating a more enjoyable learning experience, team-building can address affective factors crucial for successful language acquisition. Learners who feel connected to their peers and perceive the learning environment as positive are more likely to be motivated to participate actively and persist in their language learning journey. While the benefits of collaborative learning and team-based activities are well-documented, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature by specifically examining the impact of structured team-building activities on upper-intermediate EFL learners. This particular learner group, while possessing a foundational knowledge of the language, often faces unique challenges related to fluency, accuracy, and confidence. Investigating the effects of team-building on this specific population can provide valuable insights for educators seeking to optimize their instructional strategies and address the specific needs of upper-intermediate EFL learners. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence of the effects of team-building on this often-overlooked learner demographic. Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive impact of team-based activities on language learning outcomes. Brown (2010) argues that such activities not only improve linguistic proficiency but also foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills. For instance, group discussions, role-playing exercises, and collaborative projects require learners to actively use the target language to achieve specific objectives, thereby reinforcing vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy, and oral fluency. Moreover, these activities facilitate peer learning , allowing students to learn from one another through feedback, modeling, and shared experiences. Peer learning is particularly valuable in EFL contexts, where opportunities for authentic language use outside the classroom may be limited. By engaging in collaborative tasks, learners are exposed to diverse perspectives and language styles, which can broaden their understanding of the target language and its cultural nuances. In addition to enhancing linguistic skills, research suggests a strong link between team-building activities and

increased learner motivation and engagement. Dörnyei (2001) emphasizes the role of affective factors—such as motivation, confidence, and a sense of belonging—in successful language acquisition. Team-building activities create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that reduces anxiety and boosts learners' self-confidence. When students feel connected to their peers and perceive the classroom as a positive space, they are more likely to participate actively and persist in their language learning journey. Furthermore, the enjoyment and satisfaction derived from collaborative activities can serve as intrinsic motivators, encouraging learners to invest more effort in mastering the language. This is especially important for upper-intermediate learners, who often face challenges related to fluency, accuracy, and confidence. At this stage, learners may experience a plateau in their progress, leading to frustration or disengagement. Team-building activities can help overcome this plateau by reigniting learners' interest and providing them with fresh opportunities to practice and refine their skills.

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by examining the impact of structured team-building activities on upper-intermediate EFL learners in Uzbekistan. Specifically, it seeks to explore how these activities influence learners' communication skills, motivation, engagement, and the development of soft skills. By focusing on this particular learner group, the study addresses a significant gap in the literature and provides empirical evidence of the benefits of team-building activities for learners at this critical stage of language development. The findings of this research have the potential to inform EFL teaching practices not only in Uzbekistan but also in other non-native English-speaking contexts. By highlighting the value of team-building activities, this study underscores the importance of creating learning environments that prioritize interaction, collaboration, and holistic development. Ultimately, the goal is to equip learners with the skills they need to thrive—not just as proficient language users, but as confident, adaptable, and globally-minded individuals.

What is team building?

Team building refers to a variety of activities designed to enhance social relations and define roles within the team, often involving collaborative problem-solving or communication exercises (Kavaliauskas, 2024). It's all about bringing a group of people together and helping them become a strong, cohesive unit. These activities aim to improve team performance, group cohesion, collective efficacy, and member satisfaction. Working in team during the lesson can be effective if it is organized in correct way to reach desirable goals.

What are the key benefits of team-building activities in EFL classrooms?

Team-building activities can foster a more supportive and engaging learning environment in the EFL classroom, which can lead to several positive outcomes. Team-building activities offer a multitude of benefits within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, extending beyond mere language skill development to encompass crucial affective and social dimensions. These activities contribute to a more holistic learning experience, impacting several key areas:

1. Enhanced Communication Skills: Team-building fosters increased student interaction, moving away from traditional teacher-centered instruction (Brown, 2004). By engaging in collaborative tasks, students practice practical language use in meaningful contexts, which can lead to improved fluency and accuracy (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The need to negotiate meaning and express ideas within a team setting necessitates active participation and provides opportunities for peer feedback, contributing to communication skill development.

2. Increased Motivation and Engagement: The incorporation of fun and engaging team-based activities can significantly boost student motivation and make learning more enjoyable (Dörnyei, 2001). A supportive team environment can also reduce language anxiety, encouraging more active participation (Krashen, 1985). Furthermore, the sense of accomplishment derived from successfully completing team challenges can enhance student confidence in their language abilities.

3. Development of Essential Soft Skills: Team-building naturally cultivates vital soft skills, including collaboration and teamwork (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Activities often require clear communication, active listening, and negotiation among team members. Moreover, problem-solving and critical thinking skills are honed through collaborative tasks, while opportunities for leadership and shared responsibility may also emerge.

4. Improved Classroom Dynamics: Team-building activities contribute to a more cohesive and supportive classroom environment, fostering a stronger sense of community and belonging (Slavin, 1995). Increased peer support and a positive classroom atmosphere create a space where students feel more comfortable taking risks with their language use and learning from their peers.

5. Enhanced Language Acquisition: Collaborative tasks and discussions within team-building activities can expose students to a wider range of vocabulary and provide opportunities for contextualized practice. Reinforcement of grammar concepts can occur organically within team-based activities, and the overall increase in student confidence can positively impact language acquisition (Ellis, 2003).

How do team-building activities affect students' comprehension, considering both their potential benefits?

Team-building activities, while often lauded for their potential to enhance learning, present a complex interplay of positive and negative impacts on students' comprehension. A balanced perspective requires acknowledging both the benefits and drawbacks to effectively leverage these activities in educational settings.

Positive Impacts:

▪ Enhanced Communication and Collaboration: Team-building activities can foster improved communication skills, crucial for collaborative learning (Millis, 2011). Students learn to articulate their ideas clearly, listen actively to others, and engage in constructive dialogue, leading to deeper understanding and comprehension of complex concepts. The shared experience of working towards a common goal encourages students to negotiate meaning and co-construct knowledge, enriching their learning.

▪ Development of Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills: Many team-building activities involve problem-solving tasks that require students to analyze information, evaluate different solutions, and apply their knowledge (Smith, 2000). This active engagement with the material promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills, essential components of comprehension. The collaborative nature of these activities allows students to learn from each other's problem-solving strategies and perspectives, further enhancing their learning.

▪ Increased Engagement and Motivation: Team-building activities can make learning more interactive and enjoyable, leading to increased student engagement and motivation (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). When students are actively involved in the learning process, they are more likely to pay attention, retain information, and develop a deeper understanding. This heightened engagement can be particularly beneficial for students who struggle with traditional lecture-based learning.

▪ Stronger Interpersonal Relationships and Supportive Learning Environment: Team-building activities can contribute to building stronger relationships and a sense of community within the classroom (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2014). When students feel connected to their peers, they are more likely to participate actively, share their ideas freely, and seek help when needed. This supportive learning environment can be particularly beneficial for comprehension, as students feel more comfortable asking questions and learning from their mistakes.

Negative Impacts:

▪ Potential for Unequal Participation and Social Dynamics: Team-building activities can sometimes exacerbate existing social hierarchies or lead to unequal participation, where some students dominate while others are marginalized. This can be particularly problematic for students who are shy, introverted, or have social anxieties. If not carefully managed, these dynamics can hinder comprehension for some students.

▪ Time Constraints and Curriculum Integration: Implementing team-building activities requires careful planning and integration with the curriculum. If not done effectively, these activities can take away valuable instructional time without necessarily leading to significant gains in comprehension. It is crucial to select activities that align with learning objectives and can be effectively incorporated into the existing curriculum.

▪ Risk of Superficial Engagement and Lack of Transferability: Some team-building activities may focus on fun and games without necessarily promoting deep learning or comprehension. If the activities are not designed with clear learning objectives in mind, students may engage superficially without developing a genuine understanding of the material. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the skills and knowledge gained through team-building activities are transferable to other learning contexts.

▪ Potential for Conflict and Group Dynamics Issues: Working in teams can sometimes lead to conflict and disagreements, which can negatively impact comprehension. If group dynamics are not managed effectively, these issues can distract students from the learning task and hinder their ability to process information and develop understanding. Facilitators need to be prepared to address conflict constructively and ensure that all students feel respected and valued.

It is crucial to recognize that the effectiveness of team-building activities depends on various factors, including the design of the activities, the facilitator's role, and the specific context of the learning environment. By carefully considering both the potential benefits and drawbacks, educators can leverage team-building activities effectively to promote student comprehension and create a more engaging and collaborative learning experience. Team-building activities offer a promising avenue for enhancing students' comprehension by fostering communication, problem-solving skills, engagement, and a collaborative learning environment (Millis, 2011; Smith, 2000; Chickering & Gamson, 1987). The literature suggests a strong positive correlation between well-designed team-building activities and improved learning outcomes, particularly in areas requiring collaborative problem-solving and critical thinking (Smith, 2000). These activities can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment where students actively construct knowledge and develop a deeper understanding of concepts. However, the potential for unequal participation, time constraints, superficial engagement, and group dynamic issues cannot be ignored (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2014). Effective implementation requires careful planning, thoughtful activity selection, and skilled facilitation to mitigate these risks and maximize the benefits. Ultimately, the successful integration of team-building activities hinges on a balanced approach that leverages their strengths while addressing their limitations, ensuring that they serve as a valuable tool for promoting meaningful comprehension and enriching the learning experience for all students. Further research exploring best practices for design and implementation, particularly in diverse learning contexts, is crucial for optimizing the impact of team-building activities on student comprehension.

What are the types of team-building activities?

Several types of team-building activities are available for teacher implementation within the lesson context. The key is they need to be fun, inclusive and lighthearted in order to make all team members feel comfortable. Here we want to list some team-building activities that can be applied in Uzbek classroom settings. Let's delve into some of them:

Electric Fence: This activity simulates navigating an electrified fence. Two chairs are positioned with a barrier (e.g., rope, wire) approximately one meter above the ground, representing the "fence." Participants must remain physically connected (e.g., holding hands) throughout the exercise. The objective is for the entire group to traverse the "fence" without any individual touching it. This necessitates collaborative problem-solving, communication, and physical coordination, as jumping over the barrier may not be feasible for all participants. Such activities are grounded in the principles of experiential learning, where experience serves as the source of learning and development (Kolb, 1984), and promote cooperation within the group (Johnson et al., 2001).

Human Knot: Participants form a circle and grasp the hands of different individuals across from them. The group then becomes "knotted" as members weave between each other, passing over or under linked hands and between legs, while maintaining their hand connections. Two designated individuals then work together to guide the "knot" back into a circle, providing verbal instructions to untangle the group without releasing hands. This activity emphasizes communication, problem-solving, and collaborative decision-making, skills vital for effective teamwork (Johnson et al., 2001). Like the "Electric Fence," this activity encourages participants to learn through direct experience (Kolb, 1984). These types of activities are often found in resources aimed at promoting group interaction (Rohnke, 1984).

Escape the Classroom: This activity involves creating an "escape room" scenario within the classroom. Students, working in groups, must locate clues and decipher codes hidden within the classroom environment and on provided computer resources. This type of activity can incorporate elements of scavenger hunts, breakout games, or digital escape rooms. The objective is to "escape" the classroom by collaboratively planning a strategy, distributing tasks among team members, and communicating progress effectively. Escape room activities, like other game-based learning approaches (Prensky, 2001), can be highly engaging for students. They also offer opportunities to develop problem-solving skills and apply knowledge in a dynamic setting (Nicholson, 2018).

Bob the Builder: This activity focuses on collaborative construction and problem-solving. Students are divided into teams and presented with a building challenge. Examples include constructing the tallest Lego tower, the largest bridge using toothpicks and marshmallows, or the biggest castle from cardboard. For older students, challenges could involve designing and creating an "alien" species using a 3D printer. Alternatively, a bingo card format can be used, where teams must achieve five tasks in a row (vertically, horizontally, or diagonally). The tasks can be diverse to cater to different interests, allowing students to choose challenges that appeal to them. This activity, like many hands-on learning experiences, encourages teamwork, critical thinking, and learning from both successes and failures, aligning with the principles of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984).

Storytime: This activity promotes creative collaboration and communication. Students gather in a circle, each holding a picture of an animal, object, place, or an emoji. The teacher begins a story, and each subsequent student adds to the narrative, incorporating their assigned picture or emoji into the storyline. This continues until all students have contributed, resulting in a complex and collaborative story. This activity fosters imaginative thinking and effective communication skills, both crucial components of successful teamwork (Johnson et al., 2001).

Shrinking Classroom: This activity challenges students to work together to maximize space and adapt to changing conditions. Two groups compete to fit within a designated area of the classroom, marked by a rope or cones. The teacher progressively reduces the size of the area, requiring students to find creative ways to accommodate everyone within the shrinking space. The group that can fit into the smallest "classroom" wins. This activity emphasizes teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability, skills that are often developed through interactive games and activities (Rohnke, 1984).

Get on the Chair: This activity focuses on balance, flexibility, and collaborative problem-solving. Each student stands on a chair, arranged in a line. The teacher then instructs the students to rearrange themselves according to a specific order (e.g., age, height, alphabetical by name) without touching the ground. Students must work together to navigate the chairs and change positions while maintaining balance and supporting one another. This activity promotes physical coordination, communication, and teamwork. Variations include setting time limits or using a "wheel of fortune" to randomly select the ordering criteria. Such activities can be a valuable tool for enhancing engagement and motivation in the learning process (Prensky, 2001).

Classroom Party: This activity promotes collaborative planning and execution. Students are divided into teams and tasked with organizing a classroom party (e.g., for Halloween or Christmas). Teams are responsible for specific aspects of the event, such as designing the food and buffet, creating decorations, and planning games. This activity fosters teamwork, creativity, and event-planning skills. Such collaborative project work allows students to experience distributed cognition, where knowledge and problem-solving are shared amongst group members (Salomon, 1993).

Blanket Switch: This activity challenges teams to coordinate their movements and work together to achieve a shared goal. Teams stand on a blanket, occupying most of its surface area. The objective is to flip the blanket over without any team member stepping off it. This requires careful planning, communication, and synchronized movements, promoting teamwork and problem-solving skills. This type of physical challenge can enhance kinesthetic learning and engagement (Dunn & Dunn, 1993).

Movie Time! This activity encourages creative collaboration and project management. Students work together to create a class movie. The process involves several stages, including writing a synopsis (with class voting), assigning character roles, gathering costumes, preparing and filming scenes, editing the footage, and organizing a movie night. This project-based learning approach (Thomas, 2000) allows students to develop a range of skills, from creative writing and acting to filmmaking and project management.

Obstacle Run: This trust-building activity involves pairs of students. One student is blindfolded, and the other guides them through an obstacle course constructed from classroom furniture. This activity emphasizes trust, communication, and empathy. Trust-building activities can be essential for establishing a positive classroom climate and fostering collaboration (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

Minefield: Similar to the Obstacle Run, this activity uses a defined area marked as a "minefield," with plastic cones or cups representing "mines." Students work in pairs, with one blindfolded and the other providing verbal instructions to navigate the minefield without touching the "mines." This activity reinforces trust, communication, and spatial reasoning skills.

Look into My Eyes: This activity involves students taking turns staring into each other's eyes for a set period. While potentially intimidating, this activity can enhance eye contact skills and promote a sense of connection between students. It can also be a valuable exercise in emotional regulation and non-verbal communication.

Falling Trees: Students stand in a circle, with one student ("the tree") in the center. The "tree" keeps their body stiff and falls toward different individuals in the circle, who must catch and gently push them back. This activity requires trust and physical coordination, fostering a sense of group responsibility and support.

Blind Artist: This creative trust game involves pairs of students who cannot see each other. One student has a drawing and must provide verbal instructions to the other student, who attempts to replicate the drawing without seeing the original. This activity emphasizes communication, descriptive language, and interpretation, and can be adapted to reinforce learning in various subject areas. When used as a revision activity, students can explain their drawings to the class, further consolidating their understanding.

This research investigates the impact of team-building activities on students' comprehension of subject matter, classroom cooperation, and the creation of a positive motivational atmosphere. The study involved a survey of English language teachers who shared their experiences and perspectives on the use of specific team-building activities in their classrooms. The activities explored in this research include: e.g., Bob the Builder, Storytime!, Obstacle Run, etc. The survey instrument was designed to gather data on teachers' observations regarding the effects of these activities on student comprehension, collaborative skills, and classroom motivation. This paper presents the findings of this survey, analyzing teachers' perceptions of the benefits and challenges associated with incorporating team-building activities into the English language learning environment.

This research investigates the impact of team-building activities on students' comprehension of subject matter, classroom cooperation, and the creation of a positive motivational atmosphere. The study involved a survey of English language teachers who shared their experiences and perspectives on the use of specific team-building activities in their classrooms. The activities explored in this research include:

▪ Construction Challenge (e.g., Bob the Builder): Teams are tasked with building a structure using provided materials, promoting problem-solving and creative thinking.

▪ Collaborative Storytelling (e.g., Storytime!): Students collaboratively create a narrative, fostering communication and imaginative expression.

▪ Trust-Building Exercises (e.g., Obstacle Run, Minefield): Students work in pairs, with one blindfolded and the other guiding them through a course, emphasizing trust and communication.

▪ Project-Based Filmmaking (e.g., Movie Time!): Students collaborate to create a short film, developing project management, creative, and technical skills.

These team-building activities fall within several broader categories of collaborative and engaging learning strategies. These include:

▪ Language-Based Games (e.g., Pictionary, Charades): While not directly used in this study, language-based games like Pictionary and Charades share the goal of fostering communication and vocabulary development, similar to the collaborative storytelling activity. These games, like the activities explored in this study, can create a fun and engaging learning environment.

▪ Collaborative Storytelling/Writing: The "Storytime!" activity is a direct example of collaborative storytelling. It highlights the power of shared narrative creation to enhance communication and imaginative thinking.

▪ Problem-Solving Challenges (e.g., building tasks): The "Bob the Builder" activity exemplifies this category. It demonstrates how hands-on building tasks can promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork. The "Escape the Classroom" activity (mentioned elsewhere in the paper) also incorporates elements of problem-solving challenges.

▪ Debates/Discussions: While not directly represented in the selected activities, structured debates and discussions are valuable for developing critical thinking and argumentation skills. They share the emphasis on communication and collaborative exploration of ideas seen in the activities studied.

▪ Role-Playing/Skits: The "Movie Time!" activity incorporates elements of role-playing and performance. Creating and performing skits, like filmmaking, allows students to explore different perspectives and develop communication skills.

▪ Information Gap Activities: While not a primary focus of the chosen activities, information gap activities, where students must exchange information to complete a task, share the common goal of promoting communication and collaboration. They are similar in principle to aspects of activities like "Minefield" and "Obstacle Run," which require information sharing for success.

▪ Creative Projects (e.g., creating a class newspaper): The "Movie Time!" and "Classroom Party" (mentioned elsewhere in the paper) activities fall under this category, demonstrating how collaborative creative projects can engage students and develop a wide range of skills.

▪ Other: This category, included in the survey, allows teachers to specify other types of team-building activities they use, providing a broader perspective on classroom practices.

These broader categories of activities, while encompassing a wide range of specific examples, share the common goals of promoting communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and engagement in the learning process. The activities selected for this study exemplify these broader principles and provide concrete examples of how such approaches can be implemented in the classroom. The survey instrument was designed to gather data on teachers' observations regarding the effects of these activities on student comprehension, collaborative skills, and classroom motivation. This paper presents the findings of this survey, analyzing teachers' perceptions of the benefits and challenges associated with incorporating team-building activities into the English language learning environment.

Teacher Survey: Team-Building Activities in the English Language Classroom

This survey aims to understand the types of team-building activities currently being used in English language classrooms and teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness. Your participation is greatly appreciated and will help us improve resources and support for educators.

Section 1: Background Information (Optional)

1. Years of experience teaching English: ....
2. Grade level(s) you currently teach: ....
3. Approximate class size(s): ....

Section 2: Team-Building Activities in Your Classroom

1. Do you regularly incorporate team-building activities into your English language lessons?
   - Yes, frequently (at least once a week)
   - Yes, occasionally (a few times a month)
   - Yes, rarely (once a month or less)
   - No, I do not use team-building activities.
2. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, please list the types of team-building activities you use in your classroom. (Please be as specific as possible. For example, instead of "games," you could write "Pictionary," "Charades," or "Jeopardy.")

TABLE 1. Google form Poll

Question: How frequently do you use the following types of team-building activities? (Please check one box for each activity type.)

Activity Type	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Language-Based Games (e.g., Pictionary, Charades)				
Collaborative Storytelling/Writing				
Problem-Solving Challenges (e.g., building tasks)				
Debates/Discussions				
Role-Playing/Skits				
Information Gap Activities				
Creative Projects (e.g., creating a class newspaper)				
Other (please specify)				
Total Responses				

Note. Respondents = 67.

Section 3: Perceived Impacts of Team-Building Activities

Considering the activities you listed, please rate your agreement with the following:

☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Neutral
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly Agree

This scale of options was used for the rest questions

Impact on Comprehension: Team-building activities improve students' understanding of English concepts.

- **Impact on Collaboration:** Team-building activities improve students' ability to work together.
- **Impact on Motivation:** Team-building activities increase student motivation and engagement.
- **Impact on Classroom Atmosphere:** Team-building activities create a more positive classroom.
- **Impact on Communication Skills:** Team-building activities improve students' communication.
- **Impact on Problem-Solving:** Team-building activities enhance students' problem-solving.
- **Impact on Critical Thinking:** Team-building activities enhance students' critical thinking.
- **Impact on Creativity:** Team-building activities foster students' creativity.

Open-Ended Questions:

1. How have team-building activities positively impacted your students or classroom?

----

2. What challenges do you face when using team-building activities?

----

3. Which activities are most effective for improving communication? Give examples.

----

4. Any suggestions for improving team-building activities in the English classroom?

Thank You!

Results and Discussion

The first section of this survey explored the use and perceived effectiveness of team-building activities in English language classrooms, gathering insights from experienced educators. The majority of the 67 respondents were teachers with 10-20 years of experience, while a smaller proportion had 3-5 years in the field. This suggests the survey primarily reflects the perspectives of seasoned educators.

Regarding the frequency of team-building activity implementation, most participating teachers indicated that they incorporate such activities approximately once a month, citing time constraints as a primary factor. A minority of participants reported using these activities weekly, highlighting the challenge of integrating them regularly into busy teaching schedules.

The second part of the survey revealed a preference among teachers for certain types of team-building activities. Role-playing and creative projects were popular choices, although teachers acknowledged that these activities can be challenging for students. Nevertheless, they recognized the value of these activities in fostering collaboration and achieving successful outcomes. Debates and discussions were employed occasionally by 23 teachers, indicating a moderate use of this activity type. Problem-solving activities were used rarely by 12 teachers, with some teachers expressing concerns about their difficulty level and student engagement. Language-based games emerged as a frequently used strategy, with 45 teachers finding them easier to implement and effective in enhancing students' comprehension. Information gap activities were utilized rarely by 36 teachers, suggesting that this activity type may not be as widely adopted.

In terms of student engagement, debates, role-playing, and language-based games were identified as activities that students frequently engaged in. Additional activities reported by teachers included scavenger hunts and construction challenges using materials like marshmallows, coins, and Legos. This suggests a diverse range

of activities are being employed, even if some are used less frequently. The open-ended responses about "other" activities provide valuable qualitative data that adds context to the quantitative findings.

The third section of the survey also collected data on teachers' perceptions of the impact of team-building activities on various aspects of student learning and classroom environment. These findings, collected through Google form questions, will be analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role and effectiveness of team-building activities in the English language classroom. Specifically, a majority of teachers (63) strongly agreed that these activities positively impact students' collaboration skills, fostering teamwork, respect, and mutual understanding. A substantial number of teachers (59) agreed that such activities increase student motivation. While half of the teachers (33) agreed that team-building positively influences classroom atmosphere, this indicates a less unanimous perception of this benefit. A majority of teachers (55) agreed that these activities improve students' communication skills. Regarding problem-solving, 46 teachers agreed on a positive impact, while 13 strongly disagreed, 5 were neutral, and 3 strongly agreed, indicating a divided opinion on this aspect. For critical thinking, 30 teachers were neutral, 11 strongly agreed, 19 disagreed, and 7 strongly disagreed, showing a lack of clear consensus on the impact on this skill. A strong majority of teachers (59) strongly agreed that team-building activities enhance creativity.

This survey reveals that team-building activities are a common, though not uniformly frequent, practice in English language classrooms. Teachers perceive strong positive impacts on collaboration, motivation, communication, and creativity. However, there is less agreement about the impact on classroom atmosphere, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, suggesting that the design and implementation of these activities may need further consideration to maximize their effectiveness in these areas. The teachers' comments highlight the importance of careful planning, clear instructions, and a focus on learning objectives when incorporating team-building activities. Further research could explore best practices for designing and implementing team-building activities to address the perceived challenges and optimize their benefits for all students.

These findings underscore the importance of careful planning and execution when integrating team-building activities into the curriculum. Teachers' comments emphasize the need for clear instructions, active student participation, effective time management, and a strong alignment with learning objectives. Simply incorporating activities for the sake of entertainment is deemed insufficient; the focus must remain firmly on learning.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the potential of team-building activities to enrich the upper-intermediate EFL learning experience, particularly in collaboration, motivation, communication, creativity, and comprehension. The survey results, gathered from 67 experienced English language teachers, reveal a strong consensus about the positive influence of these activities on collaboration, motivation, communication, and creativity. Teachers perceive these activities as fostering teamwork, increasing student engagement, improving communication skills, and sparking creative expression. Furthermore, the data suggests a perceived positive impact on comprehension, likely through the reinforcement of language skills and the creation of a more interactive and supportive learning environment. For example, language-based games like "Pictionary" and "Charades," frequently used by teachers, can enhance vocabulary acquisition and understanding of concepts, directly impacting comprehension. Collaborative storytelling and information gap activities, while less frequently used, also offer opportunities for students to practice using language in meaningful contexts, contributing to improved comprehension. While the survey did not specifically isolate comprehension as a separate measured variable, its improvement is likely intertwined with gains in communication, motivation, and collaboration. The teachers' responses highlight the importance of careful planning, clear instructions, and alignment with learning objectives for successful implementation. However, the less unanimous agreement regarding the impact on classroom atmosphere, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills underscores the need for further research to identify best practices for maximizing the benefits of team-building activities across all learning domains. In our future studies we explore specific activity characteristics, strategies and application in the classroom challenges to fully realize the potential of team-building activities in fostering holistic student development.

The Authors

Feruza B Abdurakhimova teaches at Fergana State University. She is a distinguished educator, linguist, and lecturer with a profound commitment to advancing English language teaching and teacher development.
Email: feruz.abdurakhimova818@gmail.com

Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal teaches at School of Distance Education, University Sains Malaysia. She is a distinguished scholar with extensive expertise in teaching, evidenced by a significant publication record.
Email: sorayalin@usm.my

Feruza R Rashidova teaches at Namangan State University specializing in English for Specific Purposes and American literature. She is passionate about educational technology and have integrated digital tools into her teaching to enhance student engagement.
Email: feruza.rashidova.uz@gmail.com

Authors' Contriɓutions

FBA – Conceptualization, Research Design, Data Analysis & Evaluation, Manuscript Writing.

SSLAK – Revising, Data, Data Analysis & Evaluation.

FRR – Statistical Analysis, Survey design, Evaluation.

References

Barkley, E. F., Cross, K. P., & Major, C. H. (2014). *Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty.* John Wiley & Sons.

Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices.* Pearson Education.

Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (Eds.). (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE bulletin*, 39(7), 3-7.

Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom.* Cambridge University Press.

Dovleac, R., & Ionica, A.. Team building be a game changer for start-ups? *MATEC Web of Conferences*, 343, 05005. https://doi.org/10.1051/matecconf/202134305005

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language teaching.* Oxford University Press.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1999). *Learning together, working together: Cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning.* Allyn & Bacon.

Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications.* Longman.

Kavaliauskas, M.. Theoretical approach towards professional English learning: Conceptual holistic language learning model. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 162, 01007. https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202316201007

Millis, B. J. (2011). *Cooperative learning: A guide to effective design.* Stylus Publishing.

Mirzaei, M., & Zoghi, M.. Understanding the language learning plateau: A grounded-theory study. *Teaching English Language*, 11, 195–218.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Slavin, R. E. (1995). *Cooperative learning: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

Smith, K. A. (2000). An active learning approach to teaching introductory materials science and engineering. *Journal of Engineering Education,* 89(1), 51-57.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Harvard university press.

Wichadee, S., & Orawiwatnakul, W.. Cooperative language learning: Increasing opportunities for learning in teams. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, 9, 99–106.

Unlocking the Power of Computational Thinking: A Journey to Enhance Expository Writing Proficiency via Flipped Learning

Elsa
Graduate School of Technological and Vocational Education,
National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, Douliu 640, Taiwan
Astrid Tiara Murti
Department of Management Information Systems,
National Chung Hsing University, Taichung, 402, Taiwan

Abstract

Effective expository writing remains a critical challenges for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly in contexts where instructional methods lack opportunities for cognitive engagement and structured guidance. This study explores the integration of Computational Thinking (CT) within a flipped learning model as a means to enhance students' expository writing skills. CT principles, including decomposition, abstraction, pattern recognition, and algorithmic thinking, align with writing processes, was embedded into in-class activities to scaffold learners cognitive processes and improve writing outcomes. Using a quasi-experimental design, 58 Indonesian university students were divided into the control and experimental groups. Both groups completed five writing tasks, assessed using the Jacobs ESL Composition Profile. Statistical analyses using repeated measures ANOVA revealed that the experimental group achieved significantly greater improvements, particularly in content, organization, and language use, with notable gains observed in vocabulary. While improvements in mechanics were modest, they still favored the experimental group. These results affirm the potential of CT as a pedagogical framework that not only supports higher-order writing skills but also promotes analytical thinking and metacognitive awareness. The findings highlight the value of integrating CT into EFL writing instruction to foster more structured, reflective, and confident writing practices. Future research should investigate the long-term scalability of this model across varied learner profiles and educational settings.

Keywords: *computational thinking; flipped learning; EFL writing*

Introduction

The significance of writing cannot be overstated, as it is an indispensable skill in every society (Duke, 2000). Success in the contemporary workplace hinges on the ability to write effectively (Graham et al., 2012; Wolbers et al., 2015) in order to achieve certain goals. Furthermore, effective writing skills are imperative for career advancement, both on a local and global scale (Troia & Olinghouse, 2013). It is needed in numerous aspects of life because it may enable clear communication and foster critical thinking. However, researchers contend that mastering the art of writing is a challenging and intricate process due to the complexity of writing which makes it a skill requiring significant effort and practice to master (Harris et al., 2006). For example, writers must possess a profound understanding of their subject matter (Graham et al., 2005), be well-versed in the writing process (Graham et al., 2012), demonstrate proficiency in language mechanics, including spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar, and exhibit a keen awareness of their audience while communicating with clarity (Harris et al., 2003). These common challenges faced by novice writers, who require deliberate and substantial support to progress as writers by improving their writing skill with time, practice, and guidance (Cutler & Graham, 2008).

Expository writing, characterized by its focus on clear explanation and factual presentation, holds a central role in academic writing. However, for many learners acquiring English as foreign/second language (EFL/L2), developing the skills for complex expository tasks required advanced processes of explanation and clarification (Hall-Mills & Apel, 2013). These challenges often manifest in difficulties related to drafting, composition, and comprehension. Numerous scholars have extensively explored different aspects of EFL/L2 expository writing, engaging diverse participants in various contexts (Chen et al., 2020; Sasaki, 2002). Despite this growing interest, EFL students continue to face difficulties in mastering expository writing, potentially stemming from shortcomings in instructional approaches, including limited class hours, reduced interaction, and decreased motivation (Gómez Burgos, 2017; Jamoom, 2021). The traditional instruction with teacher-centered approach that adopt authoritative roles, limits students interest and achievement (Buitrago & Díaz, 2017; Jozwik & Mustian, 2020). Traditional instructional characterized by a quiet atmosphere where students concentrate on absorbing their teacher's insights regarding the course content followed by a period of silent individual writing (Al-Seghayer, 2021). Such unidirectional instruction has been criticized as outdated, inefficient, and disconnect with the needs of 21st-century students (Souza & Rodrigues, 2015).

Recognizing these persistent challenges, forward-thinking educators are advocating for instructional approaches that can enhance learning, as well as inspire students to excel (Johnson et al., 2014). One method gaining attention in recent year is flipped classroom model. This approach engage students with intructional content outside of class, allowing in-class time to be used for discussions, projects, and interactive feedback sessions (Lee & Martin, 2020) (Etemadfar et al., 2020). This shift in instructional structure creates a more active, student-centered learning environment and provides increased opportunities for peer and teacher interaction. For instance, Ekmekci (2017) observed a statistically significant improvement in students' writing performances with the implementation of the flipped model. Similarly, Blau and Shamir-Inbal (2017) emphasized that the flipped model enhances writing performances by fostering active student-student interaction and richer teacher feedback. Abdelrahman et al. (2017) highlighted its success in developing the writing skills of Sudanese students, while Soltanpour and Valizadeh (2018) demonstrated that it effectively elevated the writing standards of EFL students. Further supporting these findings, Swamy Chatta and Imdadul Haque (2020) identified flipped model as promising tool for strengthening English writing skills, as supported by Harmankaya et al. (2023) and Qader & Yalcin Arslan (2019).

In summary, these studies highlights the positive impact of the flipped classroom model on students' writing skills and performance across various educational settings. By promoting self-paced learning and offering "anywhere, anytime" access to instructional materials, the flipped model empowers learners with greater flexibility and autonomy (Arslan, 2020). However, the effectiveness of flipped classroom model depends significantly on the quality of classroom engagement. When students do not participate in meaningful discussions and interactive tasks, their achievement scores can fall behind those of peers in more discussion-oriented flipped learning environments (Yilmaz & Simsek, 2022). This underscores the importance of designing student-centered class activities that build on prior preparation and foster critical thinking. In writing instruction, an inherently complex and time-sensitive skill (Graham, 2018), the flipped classroom model offers unique advantages. In-class meetings serve as vital opportunitis for students to apply and refine the concepts they explored independently at-home (Chen Hsieh et al., 2017). Teachers can present real-worlds tasks or writing challenges that prompt students to engage deeply with the material. As Han (2015) and Chen Hsieh et al. (2017) suggest, class activities should be structured to promote autonomy and engagement through collaborative work, peer evaluations, presentations, and group-based problem-solving.

The alignment between writing and problem-solving is not incidental. Researchers such as Flower & Hayes (1981) and Galbraith (1992) have long emphasized the cognitive parallels between the two, noting that both involve structuring thoughts, organizing information, and developing coherent solutions. Viewing writing as a form of problem-solving reinforces the rationale for incorporating interactive, task-based instructional approaches, such as those promoted by the flipped classroom model. To cultivate problem-solving skills within writing instruction, scholars havee proposed the integration of computational thinking (CT) into learning process. As described by Wing (2006), CT encompasses a set of problem-solving strategies that draw on principles of computer science, such as decomposition, abstraction, pattern recognition, and algorithmic thinking, to devise effective solutions. In details, the application of CT components in writing can be explained as follows (Palts & Pedaste, 2020; Voon et al., 2022). Decomposition involves breaking down writing tasks into manageable components that are deeply interconnected with the topic. Abstraction helps learners focus on identifying the main ideas ensuring their attention remains on solving relevant subtasks and generating cohesive content. Pattern recognition enables learners to

recognize patterns in their writing and apply previously learned techniques to new contexts. Algorithmic thinking provides learners with a structured workflow, guiding them through processes such as drafting, revising, and organizing their writing systematically.

Importantly, CT is not confined to computer-related contexts; rather, it equips students with a transferable mindset that supports logical reasoning and structured thinking in a variety of domains, including writing (García-Peñalvo & Mendes, 2018). By incorporating CT into writing instruction, learners are empowered to approach the writing process with strategic precision—much like a computer analyzing and resolving complex tasks. This approach fosters deeper cognitive engagement and enhances students' capacity for structured, independent problem-solving beyond reliance on technology. CT emphasizes problem-solving, information organization, and logical solutions by guiding students through a structured writing process, which align closely with the cognitive demands of proficient writing (Jacob & Warschauer, 2018). They also point out that only few studies have investigated the use of CT in English teaching and learning, particularly in writing instruction (Jacob & Warschauer, 2018). Notable studies by Wu et al. (2019) and Weng and Wong (2017) have highlighted the potential of CT to enhance collaborative learning and EFL language acquisition. When applied to writing, CT can guide students through a structured process that includes decomposing the essay into parts (e.g., introduction, body, conclusion), abstracting key arguments, recognizing patterns in model texts, and applying algorithmic thinking through step-by-step drafting and revision. These stages help learners approach writing as a solvable problem with logical sequencing and clarity.

This reveals a significant opportunity to integrate CT into English education, especially for developing the complex skills required in expository writing. In this context, the integration of CT into in-class activities within flipped learning framework for EFL expository writiing as a promising educational innovation. Within the flipped classroom model, students are first introduced to CT concepts during out-of-class preparation, often through teacher-created videos or digital materials. In-class sessions then become vital opportunities for learners to apply these concepts through interactive activities, collaborative writing exercises, and problem-solving tasks. This pedagogical shift encourages deeper engagement with the intricacies of expository writing while fostering self-paced learning and offering greater flexibility in accessing learning materials. By embedding CT into flipped classroom framework, educators aim to equip EFL students with confidence, logical reasoning, and analytical skills needed to tackle writing tasks effectively. Therefore, this integrated approach prepares learners for success in cognitively demanding domain of academic writing and represents a meaningful advancement in EFL expository writing practice.

Research Objectives

This study primarily aimed to investigate the impact of integrating CT principles into a flipped learning model on the expository writing proficiency of EFL university students. Recognizing the persistent challenges EFL learners face in producing well-structured and coherent expository texts, the research sought to determine whether embedding CT strategies—such as decomposition, abstraction, pattern recognition, and algorithmic thinking—within in-class activities could lead to measurable improvements in students' writing performance. By assessing five key components of writing—content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics—across multiple writing stages, the study intended to provide empirical evidence on how CT-enhanced flipped learning influences the development of both higher-order and basic writing skills. The central goal was to evaluate whether this integrated approach could offer a more effective alternative to traditional flipped classroom instruction, ultimately supporting students in managing complex writing tasks with greater structure, coherence, and critical engagement.

Methodology

This study utilized a quasi-experiemental research design to assess the impact of integrating CT within a flipped learning model on EFL writing skills. In quasi-experimental design, there is a treatment group that receives a treatment, and at the same time, there is a control group that does not receive the treatment (Cook et al., 1979). The treatment in this study is the integration of CT procedures during in-class activities. The research involved evaluating students' writing performance at five stages: initial writing, writing 1, writing 2, writing 3, and final writing. Statistical analyses of Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess within-and between-group progress as well as the differences.

Context and Participants

The study observed 58 university students majoring in English at a public university in Indonesia, divided into two groups: an experimental group (n=29), which engaged in flipped learning activities enhanced with CT strategies, and a control group (n=29), which followed flipped learning with teacher-led instructional (traditional flipped learning). All participants had completed academic writing courses and provided informed consent to participate in the study.

Research Procedure

The experimental procedure in this study is grounded in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), wherein lower-order cognitive tasks are assigned as pre-class activities and class time is dedicated to higher-order thinking, peer collaboration, and application of concepts. This aligns with the flipped learning design theorized and popularized by Bergmann and Sams (2012), which emphasizes active engagement and interactive learning during class sessions. In line with these theoretical foundations, the present study implemented a six-week instructional procedure to integrate CT into Flipped Learning for EFL writing skills, as shown in Figure 1.

In Week 1, both the control and experimental groups began with an initial writing assessment to establish baseline writing skills. During Week 2, the control group was introduced to traditional flipped learning in writing, while the experimental group experienced flipped learning with an added emphasis on CT. For Weeks 3 through 5, both groups received video and PowerPoint (PPT) materials one day before their in-class sessions, allowing students to review and learn from these resources independently as part of the flipped learning model. Each week, the students engaged in progressively challenging writing tasks: Writing 1 in Week 3, Writing 2 in Week 4, and Writing 3 in Week 5. The control group followed the traditional flipped learning approach, whereas the experimental group applied CT strategies in their writing activities, integrating skills such as decomposition, pattern recognition, and algorithmic thinking.

Finally, in Week 6, both groups completed a final writing assessment to evaluate their progress. This assessment was designed to measure the impact of CT integration on the experimental group's writing skills, allowing for a direct comparison with the control group, which used only the traditional flipped learning approach. This six-week procedure provided a structured framework to assess the effectiveness of CT-enhanced flipped learning in improving EFL writing skills.

FIGURE 1. Experimental Procedure
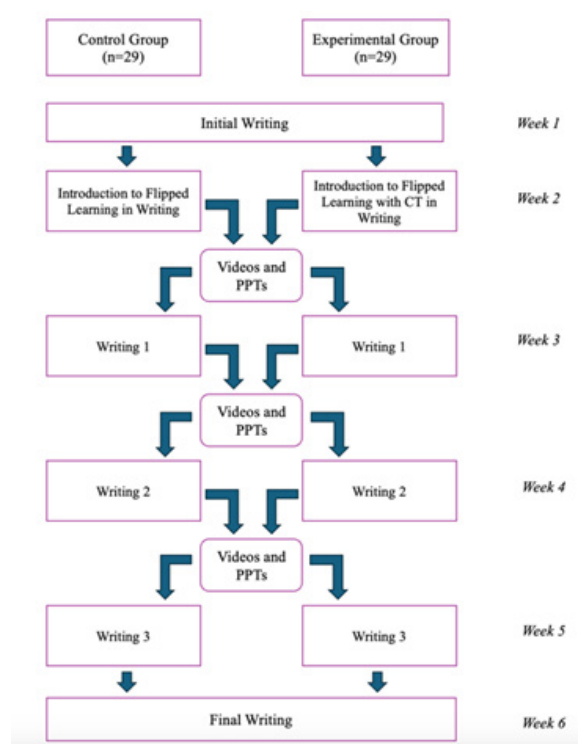
Note. Adapted from Cook et al. (1979) and Anderson & Krathwohl (2001)

Table 1 provides an explanation of in-class activities for English writing without the intervention of CT outlining typical teacher-centered activities, where students work together to refine their outlines with the teacher's support, focusing on clarity and logical structure. The traditional writing process, adapted from Murray (1972), consists of three key stages: prewriting, writing, and rewriting. In the prewriting stage, students brainstorm ideas, gather information from credible sources, define the purpose of their writing, and identify their target audience. They then organize their ideas into a structured outline and craft a clear thesis statement to focus their essay. The writing stage involves drafting the essay, starting with an engaging introduction that includes a hook and thesis statement. Students then develop body paragraphs that present their main ideas, supported by evidence and examples, and conclude the essay with a meaningful summary and closing thought. This stage encourages content creation without worrying about perfection. Finally, in the rewriting stage, students refine their drafts by revising content for clarity, coherence, and alignment with the thesis. They improve sentence flow, ensure logical structure, and correct grammar, punctuation, and style, producing a polished and audience-appropriate final draft. This process emphasizes creativity, logical organization, and iterative improvement to create effective written work.

TABLE 1. In-Class Activities without CT

Student Activities
Prewriting
Brainstorm: Write down ideas related to the topic and identify what they already know.
Research: Gather facts and information from credible sources.
Identify Purpose and Audience: Decide why they are writing and who will read their work.
Organize Ideas: Create an outline with the main points and supporting details for each paragraph.
Write a Thesis Statement: Draft a clear statement summarizing the main idea of the text.
Writing
Draft an Introduction: Start with a hook and include the thesis statement.
Write Body Paragraphs: Develop each main idea with explanations, evidence, and examples.
Conclude the Text: Summarize the main points and restate the thesis in a meaningful way.
Don't Worry About Perfection: Focus on getting ideas down without editing too much.
Rewriting
Revise Content: Ensure the thesis is clear, paragraphs are well-organized, and evidence supports the main points.
Improve Clarity: Rewrite sentences for better flow and readability.
Check Structure: Confirm the text follows a logical progression with smooth transitions.
Edit Grammar and Style: Correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.
Polish the Final Draft: Ensure the text is concise, coherent, and audience-appropriate.

Table 2 breaks down the implementation CT concepts in EFL writing. Each CT concept is defined and linked to specific student tasks that make the writing process more structured and analytical. For example, decomposition involves students breaking down the essay into sections, while abstraction encourages them to focus only on essential information. Pattern recognition helps students identify common structures and themes in writing, and algorithmic thinking guides them through a logical, step-by-step drafting process. This table demonstrates how integrating CT concepts into in-class activities can foster more organized, independent, and analytical approaches to writing.

TABLE 2. In-class activities with CT

Computational Thinking Concept (Wing, 2006)		Student Activities
Decomposition	Breaking down tasks into smaller parts	**Outlining the Essay:** • Students create a diagram or table to divide the essay into sections (introduction, body, conclusion). • For each section, they write down its purpose (e.g., introduction: hook and thesis, body: key arguments, conclusion: summary and closing thoughts). **Listing Main Ideas Separately:** • Students brainstorm all potential main points for their essay. • Categorize these points under the relevant sections of the essay (e.g., body paragraph topics). **Reviewing Parts One at a Time:** • Students work on one section at a time, starting with the introduction, then moving to each body paragraph and finally the conclusion. • Peer reviews focus on one section at a time to ensure detailed feedback.
Abstraction	Focusing on the essential information	**Summarizing Main Points Only:** • After brainstorming, students highlight the top 3–5 main points that directly relate to their thesis. • Use sticky notes or a highlighter to identify supporting evidence for each point. **Writing a Clear Thesis Statement:** • Students complete the statement: "This essay explains/argues/describes … because …." • They refine this draft into a concise thesis statement and test it against their main points to ensure alignment. **Listing Only the Key Arguments:** • Students create a bulleted list of arguments under their thesis and rank them by relevance. • Any ideas that don't align with the thesis are moved to a "parking lot" (saved for later consideration or discarded).
Pattern Recognition	Recognizing common structures or themes	**Looking for Patterns in Sample Essays:** • Students analyze model essays provided by the teacher. • They annotate examples of clear introductions, well-structured body paragraphs, and strong conclusions. • Discuss in groups what makes these patterns effective (e.g., topic sentences, evidence placement). **Identifying Where Transitions Are Used:** • Students highlight or underline all transitional words and phrases in their draft or in sample essays. • Create a chart categorizing transitions (e.g., addition, contrast, cause/effect). **Noticing Style Differences:** • Discuss how tone, vocabulary, and structure change based on the audience and purpose.

Computational Thinking Concept (Wing, 2006)		Student Activities
Algorithmic Thinking	Creating a step-by-step approach	**Noticing Style Differences:** ▪ Compare formal essays to informal writing or narratives. ▪ Discuss how tone, vocabulary, and structure change based on the audience and purpose. **Following a Draft Process:** ▪ Students draft their essay following a checklist: - Introduction: Start with a hook → state the thesis. - Body paragraphs: Begin with a topic sentence → provide evidence → explain the evidence → connect back to the thesis. - Conclusion: Restate the thesis → summarize key points → add a closing thought. **Using a Checklist to Review:** ▪ Provide students with a revision checklist, such as: - Does the introduction include a hook and thesis? - Are all paragraphs clearly linked to the thesis? - Are transitions used effectively between sections? - Is the conclusion impactful and logical? ▪ Students self-assess their work or conduct peer reviews using the checklist.

Instruments

Both groups completed five expository writing tasks throughout the study: an initial baseline writing sample, followed by three writings (Writing 1, Writing 2, Writing 3), and a final writing piece. The students' writing was evaluated using the Jacobs ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs, 1981), which rates writing quality across five categories on a 100-point scale. The categories include content (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), language use (25 points), and mechanics (5 points), with each element having specific scoring criteria and descriptive levels.

After each composition was scored by the classroom teacher, the scores were grouped according to the university's standard grading system, which categorizes student performance as follows: excellent (91–100), very good (84–90), good (77–83), average (71–76), below average (66–70), poor (61–65), very poor (55–60), and fail (45–54). For the purposes of this study, student performance was further categorized into three main levels: high (84–100), moderate (71–83), and low (61–70). This scoring approach allowed the researchers to analyze improvements in writing across these performance levels.

Data Collection

Each student will produce five writings: initial writing, writing 1, writing 2, writing 3, and final writing. To ensure meaningful and communicative writing, students will be instructed to complete the tasks in handwriting. The students' writing performance was evaluated by the classroom teacher using the Jacobs ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs, 1981), which assesses content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. To reduce potential bias, all student writing samples were anonymized by the researchers prior to evaluation, ensuring that the teacher did not know which student had written which piece. This procedure aimed to enhance the objectivity of the assessment despite the use of a single rater. Utilizing rubrics as an assessment tool for EFL writing skills brings structure and clarity to the learning process (Chan & Ho, 2019). With the complexity of assessing language proficiency, rubrics serve as an indispensable resource for teachers and students alike. They offer a detailed breakdown of the criteria for effective writing, ensuring that both educators and learners share a common understanding of expectations (Chowdhury, 2020). Well-constructed rubrics play a crucial role in guiding the assessment process and enhancing the teaching and learning experience by offering clear expectations and focused feedback. In the absence of a rubric, assessments could become subjective and rely solely on individual opinions which may result in inconsistent evaluations and unfair treatment (Suciati et al., 2023).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistic scores of mean and standard deviations were provided to give insights into the distribution of writing skills across content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics across five expository writing tasks. To analyze the impact of CT instructional intervention across multiple stages of writing development, a Repeated Measures ANOVA was conducted using IBM SPSS. The analysis evaluated students performance across pre-writing 1, pre-writing 2, pre-writing 3, and final writing categories. Groups (experimental vs. control) was included as between-subject factor, allowing for the examination of group differences over time. Additionally the initial writing scores of each categories were entered as covariates to reduce confounding effects, enhancing the precision of the model. This setup enable a comprehensive evaluation of both within-subject effects (writing categories over time), between subjects effects (group differences) and potential interaction effects (group x time). All statistical analyses were performed using Type III Sums of Squares, with significance set at $p < .05$. These statistical analyses provided a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the CT-integrated flipped learning model in enhancing EFL writing skills.

Results

Descriptives Statistics

As shown in Tables 3 and 4, both the control and experimental groups demonstrated progressive improvements across the five writing stages (initial writing to final writing) in all writing components: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. However, the magnitude of improvement was noticeably higher in the experimental group. For instance, in the final writing, the total writing score for the experimental group reached a mean of 91.72 (SD=6.76) compared to 77.60 (SD=5.79) in the control group. Similarly, across individual components such as content (M=26.29 vs. 20.98), organization (M=17.93 vs. 15.72), and vocabulary (M=17.85 vs. 12.90), the experimental group consistently outperformed the control group.

TABLE 3. Descriptive Statistics of Writing Components Across Stages in the Control Group

Writing Component	N	Initial Writing		Writing 1		Writing 2		Writing 3		Final Writing	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Content	29	12.66	2.83	14.05	3.92	17.98	3.43	19.16	4.37	20.98	1.68
Organization	29	7.00	2.81	7.47	2.83	9.56	1.58	11.60	2.62	15.72	2.06
Vocabulary	29	7.20	2.76	7.85	2.71	12.20	2.03	13.09	2.32	12.90	2.45
Language Use	29	14.80	4.17	16.48	4.05	18.70	3.21	21.60	1.16	24.00	0.00
Mechanics	29	3.00	0.18	2.91	0.17	2.94	0.63	4.00	0.00	4.00	0.00
Total writing	29	44.66	9.23	48.78	10.49	61.39	6.574	69.41	8.31	77.60	5.79

TABLE 4. Descriptive Statistics of Writing Components Across Stages in the Experimental Group

Writing Component	N	Initial Writing		Writing 1		Writing 2		Writing 3		Final Writing	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Content	29	12.78	0.39	20.2	4.89	21.47	3.98	23.62	4.41	26.29	3.45
Organization	29	6.75	1.67	13.62	2.74	14.7	2.71	16.38	2.00	17.93	2.42
Vocabulary	29	7.13	1.38	14.36	2.53	15.29	2.82	17.60	2.21	17.85	2.31
Language Use	29	14.60	1.37	19.90	2.46	21.09	2.97	23.70	2.0	24.64	1.37
Mechanics	29	2.90	0.68	4.63	0.28	4.55	0.48	4.89	0.33	5.00	0.00
Total writing	29	44.16	3.66	72.73	10.02	77.13	10.09	86.19	7.42	91.72	6.76

Repeated Measures ANOVA

The results of repeated measures ANOVA as seen in Table 5 confirmed significant main effects of repeated writing activities for all writing components, such as content (F=14.507, p<0.001), organization (F=53.240, p<0.001), vocabulary (F=34.296, p<0.001), language use (F=79.101, p<0.001), mechanics (F=8.454, p<0.001), and overall writing (F=48.090, p<0.001). These results indicate that students significantly improved their writing skills over time.

There were also significant between-group effects for all components, with the experimental group outperforming the control group for each writing components: content (F=14.507, p<0.001), organization (F=53.240, p<0.001), vocabulary (F=34.296, p<0.001), language use (F=79.101, p<0.001), mechanics (F=8.454, p<0.001), and overall writing (F=48.090, p<0.001).

Furthermore, interaction effects (writing components × group) were statistically significant for all components except content (p=.151), suggesting that the experimental group's improvement trajectory was significantly different from the control group in all areas except content. Significant interaction effects (writing components × group) were observed for organization (F=18.700, p<0.001), vocabulary (F=8.887, p<0.001), language use (F=42.350, p<0.001), mechanics (F=27.060, p<0.001), and overall writing (F=11.040, p<0.001). These interaction effects indicate that the CT-integrated flipped learning model had a statistically significant effect on accelerating the improvement of students' writing skills—particularly in organization, vocabulary, language use, mechanics, and overall writing.

TABLE 5. The Results of Repeated Measures ANOVA

	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Content		418.19	3	139.40	14.507	0.000*
	Group	1334.20	1	169.99	53.818	0.000*
	Content × Group	51.65	3	17.21	1.792	0.151
Organization		514.00	3	171.35	53.240	0.000*
	Group	1257.10	1	1257.08	160.320	0.000*
	Organization × Group	180.50	3	60.17	18.700	0.000*
Vocabulary		337.91	3	112.63	34.296	0.000*
	Group	1326.80	1	1326.84	132.160	0.000*
	Vocabulary × Group	87.56	3	29.19	8.887	0.000*
Language Use		630.41	3	210.13	79.101	0.000*
	Group	286.80	1	286.75	65.530	0.000*
	Language Use × Group	337.52	3	112.51	42.350	0.000*
Mechanics		2.51	3	0.83	8.454	0.001*
	Group	99.25	1	99.25	819.747	0.000*
	Mechanics × Group	8.04	3	2.68	27.060	0.000*
Overall Writing		3961.50	3	1320.48	48.090	0.000*
	Group	18576.10	1	18576.10	180.060	0.000*
	Overall Writing × Group	909.80	3	303.26	11.040	0.000*

*p < 0.001

Discussion

The integration of CT within the flipped classroom model has shown promising results in enhancing students' expository writing performance in EFL contexts. CT structured as problem-solving approach, that emphasizing decomposition, abstraction, pattern recognition, and algorithmic thinking, which align with the cognitive demands of expository writing that require students to organize complex ideas and develop coherent arguments (Wu et al., 2024). The CT's principles appear to provide an effective scaffold that helps EFL learners deconstruct the writing process into manageable steps, enabling them to focus on logic, coherence, and content development. This clearly reflected in Figure 2, which illustrate the progression of writing performance across all components for both the control and experimental groups. The results show a consistent upward trend in scores for both groups, with the experimental group consistently outperformed the control group across all stages.

In terms of content, both the control and experimental groups improved steadily by revealing consistent upward trend as illustrated in Table 3, 4, and Figure 2. This suggests that the CT concept integration

in flipped classroom played a significant role in enhancing students' ability to generate and develop ideas effectively. The findings of repeated measures ANOVA support this observation. There was a significant main effect of Content over repeated measures (F=14.507, p<0.001), indicating that students in both groups improved over time. The main effect of group was also significant (F=53.818, p<0.001), confirming that the experimental group consistently achieved higher content scores. Interestingly, the interaction between Content×Group was not statistically significant (F=1.792, p=0.151), which suggests that while the experimental group scored higher overall, both groups followed a relatively parallel trajectory of improvement across all writing stages. Figure 2 reinforces the interpretation that students in the experimental group improved at a faster rate. Although the interaction effect was not significant, the consistent higher scores in the experimental group highlight the potential of CT approach to enhance critical content generation.

The organization components exhibited notable improvements across both the control and experimental groups. The mean scores that illustrated in Figure 2 show a rapid increase over time for the experimental group that suggests that the CT concept had substantial effect on students' ability to organize their writing more coherently and logically. The statistical analysis reinforces this interpretation. The repeated measures ANOVA revealed a significant improvement in main effect of Organization across stages (F=53.240, p<0.001). Moreover, the main effect of group was also significant (F=160.320, p<0.001), confirming that the experimental group achieved higher scores in organization across all stages. Importantly, the interaction effect between Organization×Group was also statistically significant (F=18.700, p<0.001), suggesting that the experimental group improved so at a more accelerated rate compared to the control group. This interaction highlights the differential impact of the CT approach in flipped classroom model on enhancing students' organizational skills over time. The ability to structure ideas clearly, logically sequence arguments, and maintain coherence throughout the text appears to have been strengthened by CT strategies such as decomposition, pattern recognition, and algorithmic thinking.

The vocabulary scores also reflected a clear pattern of improvement in both groups, with the experimental group demonstrated a greater degree of progress over time as shown in Table 3 and 4, as well as illustrated in Figure 2. Repeated measures ANOVA results offer strong statistical backing for this observation. A significant main effect of Vocabulary over time (F=34.296, p<0.001) indicates that vocabulary use improved significantly over the writing stages in general. Furthermore, the group effect was highly significant (F=132.160, p<0.001), showing that the experimental group consistently outperformed the control group. Importantly, the interaction between Vocabulary×Group was also statistically significant (F=8.887, p<0.001), indicating that the experimental group experienced a different trajectory of vocabulary growth due to CT intervention, benefiting more substantially than the control group. These findings suggest that CT approach have facilitated deeper language engagement by encouraging students to analyze language patterns, identify lexical gaps, and apply more precise word choices. CT principles such as abstraction and algorithmic thinking had a targeted impact on vocabulary acquisition, not merely enhancing vocabulary size but also improving the strategic deployment of language in context.

The language use component demonstrated consistent and notable improvement across both the control and experimental groups, with a steady upward trajectory. While both groups showed marked improvement, the experimental group's gains were slightly higher and reflected more dynamic progression over time. Statistical analysis through repeated measures ANOVA reinforces these observations. First, the significant improvement in main effect of Language Use over stages (F=79.101, p<0.001). Additionally, the main effect of group was also significant (F=65.530, p<0.001), indicating that the experimental group outperformed the control group. Crucially, the interaction between Language Use×Group was statistically significant (F=42.350, p<0.001), suggesting that the experimental group followed a distinct and accelerated trajectory of language development. This pattern is clearly illustrated in the line graph (Figure 2), where the experimental group's curve rises more sharply than that of the control group, particularly from Writing 1 to Writing 3. These findings imply that the experimental group improvement in grammar and sentence structure through a mechanism that may have been supported by the CT approach. The significant interaction effect highlights that this instructional method have enabled deeper internalization and more consistent application of language structures, leading to stronger gains in written language use.

The mechanics component showed the least variation and improvement among all evaluated aspects of writing (Table 3, 4, and Figure 2). This limited range of improvement suggests that students had already acquired a strong foundational understanding of writing mechanics prior to the intervention, leaving minimal room for growth throughout this study. The statistical results from repeated measures ANOVA further underscore this interpretation. While the main effect of Mechanics over writing stages were still significant (F=8.454, p<0.001), the magnitude of improvement was marginal when compared to other components. The main effect of group was

highly statistically significant (F=819.747, p<0.001). The interaction between Mechanics×Group was also significant (F=27.060, p<0.001), suggesting that the rate of improvement differed between groups, with the experimental group benefiting more substantially from the CT intervention in flipped classroom model. The mechanics scores in Figure 2 visually supports these findings, showing a sharper and more sustained upward trend in the experimental group compared to the relatively flatter trajectory of the control group. Thus, while mechanics exhibited the smallest gains in absolute terms, the statistical and visual evidence point to the effectiveness of CT strategies in fostering expository writing accuracy and detail over time.

FIGURE 2. Writing Improvement for Each Dimension Across Stages
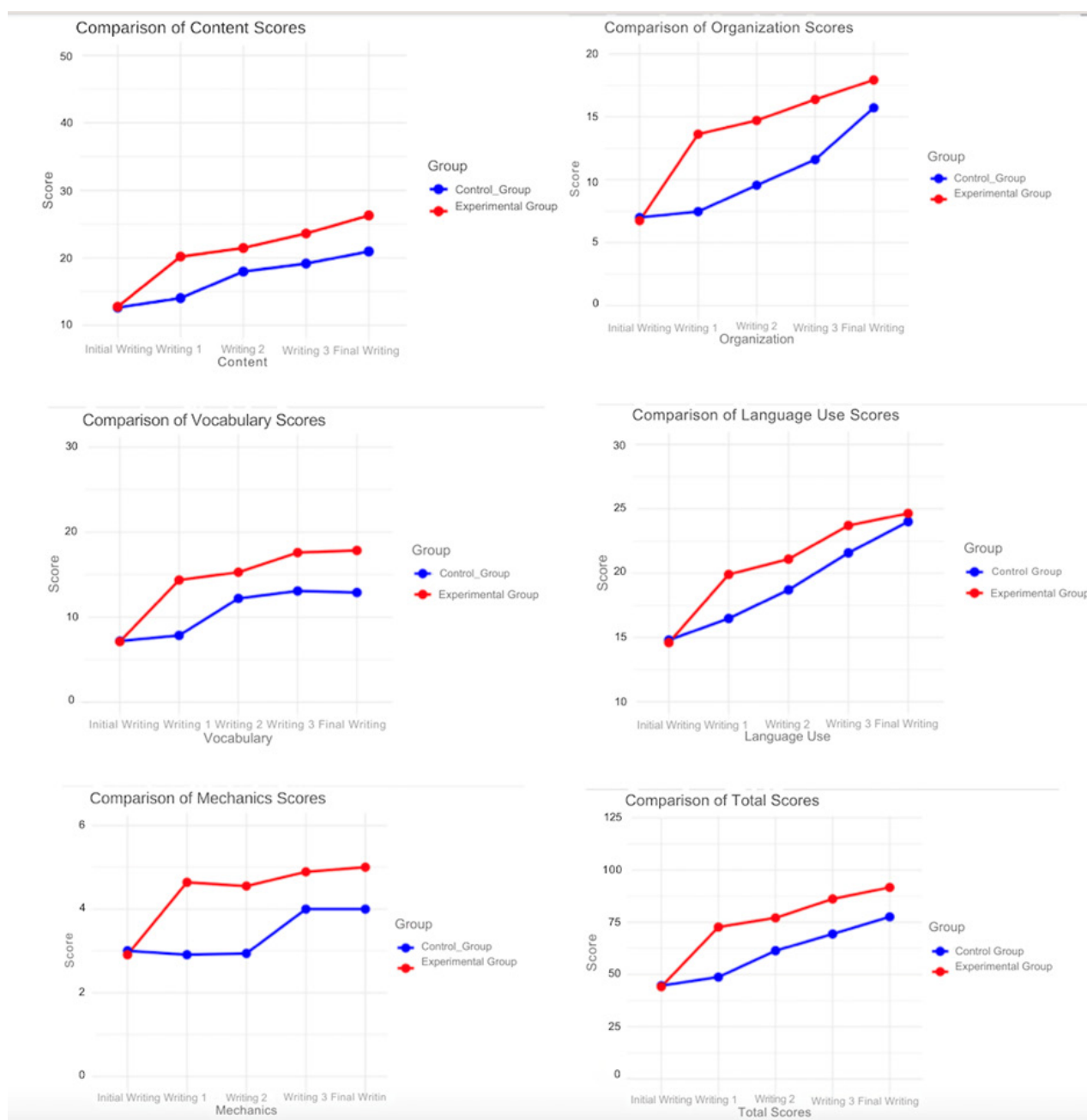
The overall writing scores closely mirrored the trends observed in individual components, with the experimental group displaying consistently higher gains across all stages. The sharpest increase occurred between the initial writing and the first post-intervention task, suggesting an early and pronounced impact of the CT-integrated flipped learning approach. This aligns with prior findings that highlight the cognitive benefits of CT in enhancing learners' planning, reasoning, and organizational strategies—skills essential for academic writing. The differential gains across components, particularly the substantial improvements in organization and content versus the more modest progress in mechanics, underscore how CT is particularly effective in supporting higher-order writing skills. Importantly, these results resonate with existing scholarship that frames computational thinking not

merely as a technical competency, but as a cognitive and pedagogical framework that fosters interdisciplinary learning (Wing (2006), (Lodi & Martini, 2021). In the context of EFL writing, CT equips students with the tools to deconstruct complex writing tasks, manage abstract language structures, and build logically coherent texts. As noted by Murti et al. (2023), such instruction also cultivates learner motivation and classroom engagement. Furthermore, the structured and stable progress demonstrated by the experimental group contrasts with the greater variability observed in the control group, reinforcing the role of CT in creating more consistent and supportive learning environments.

This study also echoes findings from recent work by Yeni et al. (2022), who found that CT-enhanced digital storytelling improved students' narrative organization, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy by leveraging CT principles such as abstraction and decomposition. Not only did these strategies enhance linguistic skills, but they also promoted student creativity, collaboration, and engagement through interactive, self-expressive tasks. Together, these findings suggest that CT instruction provides a dual benefit: it strengthens students' analytical and language abilities while simultaneously enhancing their confidence and motivation through meaningful, structured learning experiences. Overall, the integration of CT into writing instruction offers a promising avenue for improving both the quality and consistency of student writing. It bridges cognitive skill development with expressive language use, equipping learners to handle the multifaceted challenges of academic writing. However, the relatively static improvement in mechanics across both groups points to the need for supplementary strategies—such as focused grammar instruction or micro-feedback techniques—to address lower-level writing features. These insights emphasize the value of a hybrid instructional approach that combines the structural and metacognitive benefits of CT with targeted attention to rule-based language mechanics, thereby fostering more comprehensive writing proficiency.

Conclusions

This study offers important insights into the integration of CT within EFL writing instruction, particularly through a flipped classroom framework. The results highlight CT's potential to enhance key aspects of student writing, especially in higher-order components such as content development and organization by cultivating logical reasoning, structured thinking, and metacognitive awareness. These findings underscore CT's value not merely as a technical skillset, but as a transformative pedagogical approach that bridges language learning with interdisciplinary cognitive development. While the outcomes are promising, further research is warranted to examine the long-term sustainability of CT instruction, its adaptability across diverse educational contexts, and its impact on learners with varying proficiency levels. Nonetheless, this study supports a broader call to embed CT principles within EFL curricula, given their capacity to strengthen both domain-specific writing abilities and transversal competencies such as critical thinking, organization, and self-regulation. In conclusion, when thoughtfully embedded into instructional design, CT can serve as a powerful catalyst for language development, enabling learners to engage with writing tasks more critically, creatively, and confidently. Its integration into EFL pedagogy presents a meaningful step toward equipping students with the cognitive tools necessary for academic success in an increasingly interdisciplinary world.

Acknowledgements

The Authors

Elsa is a PhD student in Graduate School of Technological and Vocational Education in National Yunlin University of Science and Technology. **Email: eelsa570@gmail.com**

Astrid Tiara Murti was a post-doctoral researcher at National Chung Hsing University. She obtained her Ph.D. degree in Technological and Vocational Education from National Yunlin University of Science and Technology. **Email: astrid.tiaram@gmail.com**

Authors' Contributions

E – Conceptualization, Research Design, Data Collection, Manuscript Writing (Initial Draft, Final Review and Revisions).

ATM – Data Analysis, Data Evaluation, Manuscript Writing (Data Interpretation, Results, Final Review and Revisions).

References

Abdelrahman, L. A. M., Dewitt, D., Alias, N., & Rahman, M. N. A. (2017). Flipped Learning for ESL Writing in a Sudanese School. In *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technolog*y (Vol. 16, Issue 3).

Al-Seghayer, K. (2021). Characteristics of Saudi EFL Learners' Learning Styles. *English Language Teaching,* 14(7), 82. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v14n7p82

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: *A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives.* Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

Arslan, A. (2020). A systematic review on flipped learning in teaching English as a foreign or second language. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 16(2), 775–797. https://doi.org/10.17263/jlls.759300

Bergmann, Jonathan., & Sams, Aaron. (2012). *Flip your classroom : reach every student in every class every day.*

Blau, I., & Shamir-Inbal, T. (2017). Re-designed flipped learning model in an academic course: The role of co-creation and co-regulation. *Computers and Education*, 115, 69–81. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2017.07.014

Buitrago, C. R., & Díaz, J. (2017). Flipping Your Writing Lessons: Optimizing Time in Your EFL Writing Classroom. *Innovations in Flipping the Language Classroom,* 69–91.

Chan, Z., & Ho, S. (2019). Good and bad practices in rubrics: the perspectives of students and educators. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 44(4), 533–545. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2018.1522528

Chen Hsieh, J. S., Wu, W. C. V., & Marek, M. W. (2017). Using the flipped classroom to enhance EFL learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 30(1–2), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2015.1111910

Chen, Y., Smith, T. J., York, C. S., & Mayall, H. J. (2020). Google Earth Virtual Reality and expository writing for young English Learners from a Funds of Knowledge perspective. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 33(1–2), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2018.1544151

Chowdhury, T. A. (2020). Towards Consistent and Fair Assessment Practice of Students' Subjective Writing. *International Journal of Linguistics and Translation Studies*, 1(1). http://ijlts.org/index.php/ijlts/index

Cook, T. D., Campbell, D. T., & Day, A. (1979). Quasi-experimentation: *Design & analysis issues for field settings* (Vol. 351). Houghton Mifflin.

Cutler, L., & Graham, S. (2008). Primary Grade Writing Instruction: A National Survey. *Journal of Educational Psychology,* 100(4), 907–919. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012656

Duke, N. K. (2000). 3.6 Minutes per Day: The Scarcity of Informational Texts in First Grade. *In Source: Reading Research Quarterly* (Vol. 35, Issue 2). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.35.2.1

Ekmekci, E. (2017). The Flipped Writing Classroom in Turkish EFL Context: A Comparative Study on A New Model. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education.*

Etemadfar, P., Soozandehfar, S. M. A., & Namaziandost, E. (2020). An account of EFL learners' listening comprehension and critical thinking in the flipped classroom model. *Cogent Education*, 7(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2020.1835150

Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1981). A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 32(4), 365–387. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/356600

Galbraith, D. (1992). *Conditions for Discovery through Writing*. In Instructional Science (Vol. 21).

García-Peñalvo, F. J., & Mendes, A. J. (2018). Exploring the computational thinking effects in pre-university education. *In Computers in Human Behavior* (Vol. 80, pp. 407–411). Elsevier Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.12.005

Gómez Burgos, E. (2017). Use of the Genre-Based Approach to Teach Expository Essays to English Pedagogy Students. *HOW*, 24(2), 141–159. https://doi.org/10.19183/how.24.2.330

Graham, S. (2018). Introduction to Conceptualizing Writing. *In Educational Psychologist* (Vol. 53, Issue 4, pp. 217–219). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2018.1514303

Graham, S., Berninger, V., & Abbott, R. (2012). Are attitudes toward writing and reading separable constructs? a study with primary grade children. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 28(1), 51–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2012.632732

Graham, S., Harris, K. R., & Mason, L. (2005). Improving the writing performance, knowledge, and self-efficacy of struggling young writers: The effects of self-regulated strategy development. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 30(2), 207–241. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2004.08.001

Hall-Mills, S., & Apel, K. (2013). Narrative and Expository Writing of Adolescents With Language-Learning Disabilities. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 34(3), 135–143. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525740112465001

Han, Y. J. (2015). Successfully Flipping the ESL Classroom for Learner Autonomy. In *NYS TESOL JOURNAL* (Vol. 2, Issue 1).

Harmankaya, M. Ö., Sallabas, M. E., & Toker, T. (2023).   The Effect of Flipped Writing Lessons on Writing Skills and Writing Self-Efficacy of Learners of Turkish as A Foreign Language. *International Journal of Education Technology and Scientific Researches*, 8(24), 2621–2648. https://doi.org/10.35826/ijetsar.689

Harris, K. R., Graham, S., & Mason, L. H. (2003). Self-Regulated Strategy Development in the Classroom: Part of a Balanced Approach to Writing Instruction for Students With Disabilities. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 35(7), 1–16.

Harris, K. R., Graham, S., & Mason, L. H. (2006). Improving the Writing, Knowledge, and Motivation of Struggling Young Writers: Effects of Self-Regulated Strategy Development with and without Peer Support. In Source: *American Educational Research Journal , Summer* (Vol. 43, Issue 2).

Jacob, S. R., & Warschauer, M. (2018). Computational Thinking and Literacy. *Journal of Computer Science Integration*, 1(1). https://doi.org/10.26716/jcsi.2018.01.1.1

Jacobs, H. L. (1981). *Testing ESL Composition: A Practical Approach.* English Composition Program. Newbury House Publishers, Inc.

Jamoom, O. A. (2021). EFL Students' Needs for Improving Their Writing Skills. *Scholars International Journal of Linguistics and Literature*, 4(4), 106–111. https://doi.org/10.36348/sijll.2021.v04i04.004

Johnson, Larry., Adams Becker, Samantha., Estrada, Victoria., Freeman, Alex., Kampylis, Panagiotis., Vuorikari, Riina., Punie, Yves., Institute for Prospective Technological Studies., Directorate-General for Education and Culture., & New Media Consortium (N.M.). (2014). *The NMC horizon report Europe : 2014 schools edition*. Publications Office.

Jozwik, S., & Mustian, A. L. (2020). Effects of Technology-Supported Language Experience Approach for English Learners With Exceptional Needs. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 36(5), 418–437. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2019.1655690

Lee, Y. Y., & Martin, K. I. (2020). The flipped classroom in ESL teacher education: An example from CALL. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25(4), 2605–2633. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-019-10082-6

Lodi, M., & Martini, S. (2021). Computational Thinking, Between Papert and Wing. *Science & Education*, 30(4), 883–908. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11191-021-00202-5

Murray, D. M. (1972). *Teach writing as a process not product.*

Murti, A. T., Sumardiyani, L., & Wu, T.-T. (2023). An Analysis of Student Perceptions of Computational Thinking in Writing Classes. In Y. M. Huang & T. Rocha (Eds.), Innovative Technologies and Learning. ICITL 2023. *Lecture Notes in Computer Science* (Vol. 14099, pp. 560–566). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-40113-8-55

Palts, T., & Pedaste, M. (2020). A Model for Developing Computational Thinking Skills. *Informatics in Education*, 19(1), 113–128. https://doi.org/10.15388/infedu.2020.06

Qader, R. O., & Yalcin Arslan, F. (2019). The Effect of Flipped Classroom Instruction in Writing: A Case Study with Iraqi EFL Learners. *Teaching English with Technology,* 19(1), 36–55.

Sasaki, M. (2002). Building an empirically-based model of EFL learners' writing processes. In *New directions for research in L2 writing* (pp. 49–80).

Soltanpour, F., & Valizadeh, M. (2018). A Flipped Writing Classroom: Effects on EFL Learners' Argumentative Essays. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies,* 9(1), 5. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.9n.1p.5

Souza, M., & Rodrigues, P. (2015). Investigating the effectiveness of the flipped classroom in an introductory programming course. *The New Educational Review*, 40(2), 129–139. https://doi.org/10.15804/tner.2015.40.2.11

Suciati, S., Elsa, E., Silitonga, L. M., Lin, J. M., & Wu, T. T. (2023). Enhancing English Writing Skills through Rubric-Referenced Peer Feedback and Computational Thinking: A Pilot Study. *International Conference on Innovative Technologies and Learning*, 587–596.

Swamy Chatta, B., & Imdadul Haque, M. (2020). Improving Paragraph Writing Skills of Saudi EFL University Students Using Flipped Classroom Instruction. *Arab World English Journal,* 6, 228–247. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/call6.15

Troia, G. A., & Olinghouse, N. G. (2013). Featured Research Commentary The Common Core State Standards and Evidence-Based Educational Practices: The Case of Writing The current educational Zeitgeist of ev-loudly in the offices of school administrators, idence-based practices and interventions rings professional organizations and research cen. *In School Psychology Review* (Vol. 42, Issue 3).

Voon, X. P., Wong, S. L., Wong, L.-H., Khambari, M. N. Md., & Syed-Abdullah, S. I. S. (2022). Developing Computational Thinking Competencies through Constructivist Argumentation Learning: A Problem-Solving Perspective. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology,* 529–539. https://doi.org/10.18178/ijiet.2022.12.6.1650

Weng, X., & Wong, G. K. (2017). Integrating Computational Thinking into English Dialogue Learning through Graphical Programming Tool. 2017 IEEE 6th *International Conference on Teaching, Assessment, and Learning for Engineering* (TALE) , 320–325.

Wing, J. M. (2006). *Computational Thinking.* Communications of the ACM, 49(3), 33–35.

Wolbers, K. A., Dostal, H. M., Graham, S., Cihak, D., Kilpatrick, J. R., & Rachel Saulsbury. (2015). The writing performance of elementary students receiving strategic and interactive writing instruction. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education,* 20(4), 385–398. https://doi.org/10.1093/deafed/env022

Wu, B., Hu, Y., Ruis, A. R., & Wang, M. (2019). Analysing computational thinking in collaborative programming: A quantitative ethnography approach. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning,* 35(3), 421–434. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12348

Wu, T.-T., Silitonga, L. M., & Murti, A. T. (2024). Enhancing English writing and higher-order thinking skills through computational thinking. *Computers & Education*, 213, 105012. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2024.105012

Yeni, S., Nijenhuis-Voogt, J., Hermans, F., & Barendsen, E. (2022). An Integration of Computational Thinking and Language Arts: The Contribution of Digital Storytelling to Students' Learning. *Proceedings of the 17th Workshop in Primary and Secondary Computing Education*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1145/3556787.3556858

Yilmaz, E. O., & Simsek, N. (2022). Examining the effectiveness of discussion-oriented flipped learning environments. *International Journal of Assessment Tools in Education*, 9(Special Issue), 146–161. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21449/ijate.1126788