

VINH UNIVERSITY

Proceedings
THE 2nd VINHTESOL CONFERENCE

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION
IN THE 21st CENTURY**

VINH, 26th OCT 2019



NHÀ XUẤT BẢN ĐẠI HỌC VINH

VINH UNIVERSITY

PROCEEDINGS
The 2nd VinhTESOL Conference

English Language Education in the 21st Century

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NHÀ XUẤT BẢN ĐẠI HỌC VINH

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A REVIEW ON CULTURE PARTS IN “LIFE” PRE-INTERMEDIATE TEXTBOOK FOR NON-ENGLISH- MAJOR FRESHMEN AT VINH UNIVERSITY: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Nguyen Thi Lien^[1]
Luu Ngoc Bao^[2]

Abstract: The paper presents the challenges of instructing the last part (F) of the main material, “Life” Pre-Intermediate (John Hughes, et al. 2010) for non-English major students at Vinh University and contributing some suggestions to tackle those. The final session of each unit concerning related-topic culture exploration can be seen as one of the noticeable parts of the new press “Life” because via each video clip students could learn a new culture of a certain area across the world in the most vivid way. However, due to the time limit for each unit and the mixed-level class, all of the tasks designed for this part cannot be fulfilled effectively as expected. As a result, some solutions should be applied with the aim of activating students’ excitement to get involved in discovering the clip content. Those might be named as group work presentations or some kinds of games that are adapted from the main tasks of the part. The result of these modifications could encourage students not only to practice their English skills cooperatively with their partners but explore the other countries’ traditions in natural and engaging activities.

1. Introduction

Interpreting the meaning of a certain language must consider it under a specific context in which culture associations mostly take

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a vital part. Consequently, “Life”, a new series of English textbooks for the second language learners recommended under the corporation between Cengage and National Geographic encompasses a culture part out of 6 other parts dealing with various linguistics dimensions. Apart from other its prominent features, its difference from many existing language books in terms of the cultural context of each unit which is not only posited separately with other parts but performed through lively clips that enable students to engage the lessons much more than concrete pictures earn its prerogative to be chosen as official English materials for the non-English major students at Vinh University. However, after a period of application, some problems in connection with time restraint of the course, students’ level, and cultural content have manifested. And the focus of this study is merely taken into figuring out some challenges and solutions for those.

2. Literature reviews

2.1 Culture

The notion of culture has been defined variously by different linguists, “ranging from all-encompassing concepts like “it is everything” to some narrowly-viewed concepts like “it is opera or ballet” (Lin Zu et. al., 2009, p.1)

According to Samovar et al (2000, p.36), culture can be noted as “the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, actions, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and artifacts acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving”. The definition seemingly covers everything of life and humankind, even the aspect of nonverbal communication. Compared with that, the following statement of Cristina De Rossi, an anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London is possible less intricate “Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things”. This view can employ its intelligibility not only because of its common-word expression but it sticks with something routinely done daily.

2.2 Culture and Language relationship

The proximity between culture and language was stated by Puente (1997) that “language reflects and affects culture”. In more details, Brown (2001, p.165) depict this inextricable relationship as follows: “A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one can not separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture.” As language is a unique communication tool of humankind, the term “communication” then was used by Linzu et. al. (2009, p.2) in his definition about this interrelation: “Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted. Culture is the foundation of communication.” For instance, instead of saying “Hello” as a form of conventional greetings, Vietnamese people may ask the acquaintances they meet on their way some personal questions such as “Where are you going?” or “Are you back from work?”. Such a weird type of greetings may root from the lua nuoc culture of Vietnam in which people own the habit of expressing their care towards the personal life of their communicators. In other words, language should be understood and utilized properly within a certain socio-cultural context otherwise communication process may be in failure.

2.3 Culture in Foreign Language Teaching

Perceiving the inseparability of language and culture, the educators and academic material makers have worked jointly to embed cultural aspects into EFL instructional materials in which language could bridge learners to explore the target culture. This goal seems to coincide with Byram’s confirmation that is (1991, p. 13) “language was not to be studied but to be learned and spoken”. In this way, the necessity of studying a second language accompanying with discovering a specific culture about its use has been especially emphasized. Consequently, “culture is not an independent aspect of language learning or teaching, it is a feature of the language, it is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners’ proficiency when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them.” (Kramsch, 1993, p.1)

2.4 Related studies

The issues with regard to culture and language teaching seem so broad that numerous linguists leave significant attention towards that topic in their language research. The research of Claire Kramsch (1993) and M.Byram et. al (2002) calls the attention on clarifying the indispensable role of context and culture in language teaching and learning, though the first one embraced more massive information associated with a variety of related- academic term distinction such as dubious dichotomous and deceptive symmetries. Both of them, yet, came to an agreement that “culture in language and teaching-learning is usually defined pragmatically as a/the culture associated with a language being learnt”, hence implied that “language teachers need to be aware of this phenomenon... they can fully understand their learner interlanguage.”

Despite numerous respectful studies in response to this topic, my research is seemingly unique because it is associated with a certain group of people and educational institutions.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

50 freshmen whose English was not their major took part in the research procedure. They were mixed genders. Though 54% of them were from town center, 82% started studying English when they were at primary school.

3.2 Research tools

3.2.1 Test

The participants participated in a vocabulary test online which is made up of 92 words. In the test, they needed honestly tick onto the words they know at least one meaning. Basing on the numbers of the words the students got familiar with, the maximum lexical amount that indicates students possibly achieve would be calculated, which helped the researcher estimate the current level of the students in accordance with criterion-referenced Vietnam’s English 6-level language ability framework. The results then would be used to explicit the cause of the troubles that the students were struggling with.

3.2.2 Interviews

If the test supplied quantitative data for analysis, the interview stage

displayed the qualitative approach which would make the study more reliable. 6 bilingual questions in English and Vietnamese essentially concerning the students' obstacles and affinity reaction towards the cultural parts in their English book entitled "Life" were retorted frankly by 50 students. The time allowed for each interviewee is around 3 minutes.

3.3 Procedure

The research was conducted during the second semester of the year when the students had already completed the first half of the book.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1 Challenges

4.1.1 Students' mixed level

The vocabulary test identified the range of students' English competence in terms of lexical resources. Only 1 out of 50 test-takers equivalents to 0.2% attained B2 level, whereas up to 73% were at A2 level, 7% for A1, and nearly 20% of the students achieving B1.

The above statistic reflects a fact that this experimental group held mixed language proficiency with the majority of the elementary level students.

4.1.2 Cultural content

The result of the interview has shown that almost 75% approached the culture section which was introduced in their English textbooks when they were in lower education. But there were no clips present as in "Life" that over 87% of the learners conveyed their interest in because they could expand their cultural horizon through those. No matter how engaging those clips are, only 9 students (8% of total) could understand about 70% the meaning of the clips, which was relatively consistent with the students' level mentioned above. Apart from their lexical resources deficiency and the speed of the readers, the other reasons were confessed by the interviewees were that the attractive images of the videos somehow distracted them from the content being read by native speakers.

Besides, in response to the question "Do you want to make any modifications for this part?", if 3% gave no ideas, the rest preferred to localize some clips which had better be related to Vietnamese culture introduction.

4.1.3 Course time impediment

According to “detailed outline” for English 2 with “Life” as the main material, averagely 4 periods will be divided evenly for each part. Cultural sections, thus, normally take up 1 period, equal to 50 minutes that will be impossible to fulfill well all tasks present in this part, particularly “After you watch” activities which would enhance students’ communication skills but they need so much time for preparation. Additionally, the current English proficiency of these students generally cannot respond to such tough exercises under time pressure

4.2 Solutions

In order to address the above intricacies, the following solutions were applied.

Firstly, concerning the students’ mixed competency, they were divided into 8 groups (6-7 students/group) with one leader who gained B1 levels from the test. B1 level students had to be distributed equally into each group so that they could support the other fellows who might struggle with the tasks for a long time without the expected completion.

Secondly, so as to save time at class as well as strengthen the student’s capacity of group corporation, each above group were assigned a certain clip and then prepared a presentation for what they had watched beforehand basing on the following outline:

- a. What is mentioned in the clip?
- b. What is its meaningfulness?
- c. What is happening?
- d. What do you impress most?
- e. Comprise one similar related-cultural topic

Each group needed to design follow-up questions, quiz or activities modified from the suggestions in the textbooks or they even could express their creativity with different ones. This activity could also be considered as a replacement for the presentation task which is one of the three compulsory components for each student to get their scores from the teacher.

5. Conclusion

At the end of the semester, a survey handed out to collect the

students' feedback about what they had done with culture part. Most of the participants indicated their excitement especially the lower English competency ones as they could search for assistance from the better classmates. They could discover the new words and content of the clip without any time pressure, also maximum their creativity. Moreover, by asking students to make a presentation in groups, teachers not only can complete the culture part as the syllabus outlined but at the same time have students' grade records, which is possible partly sort out the difficulties.

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A STUDY ON THE USE OF SITCOMS IN TEACHING SPEAKING TO ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS AT VINH UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: This study set out to describe the implementation of using sitcom situations in speaking classes and explore how it had influences on students' motivation, and language proficiency. Quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used in this study. In terms of methodology, reliable data were provided after conducting pretest and posttest. Interviews and classroom observations were also conducted to collect data from 36 students in a multi-level class. The collected results highlighted the complexity of how the use of sitcoms allowed the teacher to facilitate the enhancement of students' oral skills as well as create a positive and motivational atmosphere in speaking classes. It was found that sitcoms indeed are handy tools for both English learners and instructors. Both the teacher and students found that sitcoms brought them completely new English learning experiences. Based on the findings of the study, some discussions, conclusions, and suggestions were also provided.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

All English major students at Vinh university had to spend at least 7 or 8 years studying English since elementary school before enrolling the professional long-term English course, but most of them frequently failed to use English to communicate. The reasons, which were pointed out, were the lack of exposure of students to an English environment,

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they have few chances to listen to and speak in English, and the speaking lessons were not interesting enough. Even though, students are able to use a mix of simple and complex structures, vocabularies with reasonable accuracy to produce and maintain meaningful conversations, English is often used in an inaccurate way in some different and specific contexts that possibly lead to misunderstandings, embarrassment and unnatural conversations due to lack of pragmatic knowledge. According to the input hypothesis and studies in second language acquisition, a large amount of exposure to a language speaking and listening environment is the key to a success in language learning (Hammond, 1898; Nicola, 1989; Nikolov & Krashen, 1997; Swaffer & woodruff, 1982; Wolfe & Jones, 1982; Winitz, 1996, cited in Krashen, 1997). Over the past decade, there have been numerous workshops, journal papers on the use of the authentic materials in language classroom in- order to increase learner's motivation and effective learning. In her TESL journal, Christine Canning Wilson mentioned that "*Video is at best defined as the selection and sequence of messages in an audio-visual context. Considerable confidence is placed in the value of audio-visual aids to enhance the learning of foreign languages*". Moreover, in terms of learner motivation with videos, a number of studies and journals have shown that "*video appear to be more interesting to students so that they are likely to become actively involved in the lesson*" (Chiang, 1996, 1997; Lin & Fox, 199a; Lin, 2002a; Lo, 2004). Stephen Ryan in his journal on "using films to develop learner motivation" says that "*Students will often express an interest in using movies as a medium for language learning.*" It can be seen that students will have a great motivation if they have chance to study with films in class, and teachers will have a very new and exciting teaching experience as well comparing to using traditional textbooks.

1.2 Review of the previous studies

There were several studies describing the implementation of the sitcom - based instruction in a spoken English class and discussing how they enhanced learner motivation, improvement in English listening and speaking proficiency, and learner autonomy. However, the improvement of students in English proficiency were shown generally and some important aspects impact on student's speaking performance are "the ability to become aware of the implication of situation", "sentence stress", "question intonation" were not mentioned yet. Lin

(2002) carried out his study on the effect of feature films combined with learner-centered approach on college student motivation, listening and speaking skills, the data collected were not shown any improvement of those aspects which were mentioned above. Moreover, the participants of those studies were not English major students. Hui Ying, Bai finished his study with 24 non - English major participants from “national university of science and technology in southern Taiwan”. Besides that, none of those studies were carried out in Vietnam - the country with different culture, different attitude toward to learning English as well as sitcoms.

2. Research methodology

Based on the purpose of the research, describing the implementation of using sitcom situation in speaking class and explore how it influences student’s motivation language proficiency, the methodology of the study adopted qualitative method and quantitative method. John (2006) clarifies that Qualitative Research is collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data by observing what people do and say. Whereas, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things, qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. Bawden (1990) defines qualitative data as studying the behavior of individuals in all the complexity of their real-life situations. In contrast to quantitative data, qualitative data does not simply count things, but is a way of recording people’s attitudes, feelings, and behaviors in greater depth.

2.1 Research questions

This study aimed to describe the implementation of using sitcom situation in speaking class and explore how it influences on student’s motivation, language proficiency.

The following research questions were guided by the mentioned purposes.

1. How can the use of sitcoms facilitate the development of student’s oral skills?

1a. How does using sitcoms increase student’s motivation in learning oral skills?

1b. What aspects of oral skills does the use of sitcoms enhance?

2.2 Scope of the study

This study was conducted in the freshmen's basic speaking class in the Foreign languages Department of Vinh university. Moreover, this study would concentrate on the changes in 36 students' performances in term of "wh / how and yes/ no questions intonation", "sentence stress", and "the ability of becoming aware of the implication of situation" after 3 sitcoms-based classes.

2.3 Definition of terms

1. Sitcom

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, "A regular programme on television that shows the same characters in different amusing situations".

2. Motivation

"Interest in and enthusiasm for the materials used in class, persistence with the learning task, as indicated by levels of attention or action for an extended duration, and levels of concentration and enjoyment" (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991)

3. Authentic materials

Materials designed for native speakers for real purposes rather than language "invented" by linguistics and textbook writers (Baddock, 1996).

2.4 Participants

The current study took place in a speaking class at Vinh university in 4 weeks.

The participants included one teacher and a "basic speaking class" with 35 students. All student participants were fresh men with at least 7 years learning English but rarely have any chance to speak English before. The description of the teacher and the student participant's demographic information is presented as follows.

Table 1. Demographic information of Teacher Participant

Number of Teacher Participant	One
Gender	Male
Academic Degree	Bachelor in English Pedagogy, Vinh University
Course	Basic speaking

Table 2 Demographic information of student Participants

Number of Student Participants	36
Age	18-19 years old
Gender	Female / 31 Male / 5
Current Major	Linguistics and pedagogy
Accumulated English learning experience	7-10 years
English oral proficiency level	Basic

2.5 Material

In this study, “Friends” was chosen to design and build a lesson around it. This TV series was on air from 1994 - 2004. The sitcom was about the group of friends, Rachel Green, Ross Geller, Monica Geller, Joey Tribbiani, Chandler Bing and Phoebe Buffay, go through massive confusion and fear, past and future romances, family trouble, fights, laughs, tears and surprises, to find success and happiness in life. The length of running time for each episode is about 22 minutes, and in each episode, there are a lot of small funny scenes, so teachers can easily pick one of them to design activities for students.

“Friends” is full of American culture materials that can be used in class to discuss, for example, the attitude of American towards to the L.G.B.T community, dating. In this sitcom, Ross got divorced and he found out that his wife is a lesbian, which caused a lot of pain for him. Monica dated with her workmate and her story was a hot talk for her friends.

Moreover, it goes without saying that sitcom language is much more authentic and natural than that of dialogues found in textbooks. In “Friends”, students will have a great chance to get along with the daily languages used by native speakers in daily life. For example, students can learn the short phrases: “wanna”, “gotta”, “kinda”.

2.6 The procedure of building a lesson around a sitcom

In order to make speaking class using sitcoms as efficient as possible, the researcher exploited sitcoms by selecting the suitable episodes or scenes from “Friends” and dividing the lessons into 3 stages, pre-viewing, while - viewing and post - viewing. Besides that, in three weeks the researcher used 7 new different activities based on sitcoms to motivate and create new humorous atmosphere in speaking class,

the ideas of 3 activities which were taken from “sitcoms as a Tool for English Language Teaching” by Markéta Hložková (2013) and suitably adapted for class, brought both students and teacher new experience in learning and teaching English.

2.6.1 Pre-viewing

“Prediction from the Snapshots” was the new activity applied into use in the first stage of class. The idea using snapshots from videos to design a activity in speaking class were taken from Markéta Hložková’s 2013 work. This activity reveals some pictures from the video that keep students’ concentration, interest curiosity and guessing the content of the video, until the teacher shows them the completed one. The purpose of this activity was shown clearly in Markéta’ work.

“Prior to viewing the episode, the sets of snapshots from the episode are distributed among learners. The students are asked to work in pairs and develop the story on the basis of the episode snapshots. Besides enhancing students’ speaking skills, the activity also broadens their imagination and contextualises subsequent sitcom viewing.

Timing: 5 minutes.

Organisation: pair work.

Evaluation: self-evaluation after watching the episode, comparing, and contrasting own ideas with the sitcom.” (p.49).

2.6.2 While - viewing

2.6.2.1 Only sound, no picture

If in the pre-viewing stage, some snapshots were provided for students to guess and predict the content of the video. In this first activity of while-viewing stage the students had more clue to complete the picture of the video in their mind. The researcher only played the audio without showing the pictures so that students would still keep their interest until the sitcom scene revealed.

The 3 small tasks were designed basing on the tape script of the video to not only provide student’s a drilling listening opportunity but also help them gain more knowledge about the “pragmatic”, “question intonation” and “sentence stress”.

2.6.2.2 Mediated - watching

This activity was described in Sitcoms as a tool for English Language Teaching by Markéta Hložková (2013, p.53) as follow.

“A teacher chooses a humorous scene full of action and turns the sound of the sitcom down. Learner are asked to work in pairs, one of them is sitting backward to a screen while the other one is watching the scene and describing what is happening. After watching the short sequence, the teacher turns the volume up and the student sitting back to the screen turns back to the screen turns round in order to watch the scene this learner can compare and contrast his/her image with reality. Student’s roles in the pair interchange and the process repeats with a different scene in focus.”

This activity promotes learner’s imagination as well as speaking and listening skills”.

2.6.2.3 Dubbing

Dubbing is very new idea in speaking class, students has a great opportunity to practice real English pronunciation, accent, and articulation and experience enjoyment, feeling of cooperation in the teamwork.

Markéta (2013, p.54) describes the steps to put this activity into use in class very clearly in “sitcoms as a Tool for English language teaching”.

“Students are given a script of a particular scene. First of all, they are asked to read the script while watching the scene of the sitcoms. Then, a teacher divides student into groups of as many people as characters acting in the scene. Each learner reads aloud the script of his/ her character. Then a teacher turns the volume of the sitcom down. Students are supposed to dub voices of the characters in a convincing way. Their tasks are to play with their voices, intonation and articulation”.

Besides voices, intonation and articulation, the researcher decided to put one more factor in their task was non-verbal communication. Students have to try to imitate exactly the way actors and actresses used their body language, face expressions, hand gestures, this make them feel more excited.

2.6.3 Post- viewing

2.6.3.1 Role play

It goes without saying that role play is an effective activity in speaking class; it put students into someone’s shoes or put them into an imaginary situation. This activity piqued students’ language ability and brainstorming to produce the real performances.

In this study, the researcher took an issue from the first Friends 'episode and created a situation for students. If one day, you found out that your beloved girl/ boyfriend he/ she is gay, lesbian, what would you do? The situation was built based on Ross' story; this hot and sensitive issue gave students opportunity to show their attitude, point of views about the common social issues. Students worked in group to find the solution for the situation, and then they had to act out to show their team work's answers. By developing the situation based on the sitcom, the students felt like they were parts of it, and they found interesting to share their thinking and problem-solving skills.

2.7 Data collection methods

The data collection methods in this study includes the pre-test before sitcoms-based classes, post- test after 3 sitcoms-based classes, classroom observation after each class, survey after each class, and interviews after 3 classes.

2.7.1 Pre- test and post- test

In order to evaluate exactly the changes of 36 students after the 3 sitcoms-based speaking classes in term of "stress", "intonation", "ability awareness of the implication of situation", pre-test and post - test were put into use. The whole 36 Students were asked to work in pairs to create a short conversation about the topic "family" for the pre- test, each pair has 5 minutes to prepare and then perform, all answers were recorded. Moreover, a mini test on "pragmatic" was also given. The pre-test was held and recorded on 13 November 2015 at the Foreign languages department office from 7.30 to 12.00 am. Total 18 conversations were recorded and analyzed with the great help from the former lecturer of the center for continuing and adult education - American University at Cairo, Mr. Alex Porter On 13 December 2015, the post- test was carried out with the same procedure with the same pairs of students, at classroom: B1101, from 1:30 to 4:40 pm. However, the topic of the conversation this time was about "hobbies".

All recording's script were transferred to the paper later for the researcher to analyze to collect the data in terms of "question intonation" and "sentence stress".

2.7.2 Classroom observation

The researcher observed what was happening in the classroom and focused on the language learning activities designed based on

sitcom “Friends” and how students and teachers cooperate in class. Moreover, by doing classroom observation, the insider’s view of what was happening in class was developed. Thanks to this, the researcher found the differences between using sitcoms and traditional textbooks in speaking class.

2.7.3 Interviews

After 3 sitcoms-based classes, students were interviewed to explore the student’s perspective towards the activities based on sitcoms in class. The semi- structure interviews in this study was categorized into group interviews with the students. There were 6 students in each group, so each student could individually tell the researcher what they learnt about the sitcoms, and how they interacted to each other when getting involved in activities based on sitcoms in class.

2.7.4 Survey

By doing the after each class survey, the researcher could know more about individual viewpoint and detailed information on the students’ learning outcome and their changes of learning habits through sitcoms. The survey was designed with several multiple-choice questionnaires, which were easy for students to finish easily and quickly after 3 classes.

2.7.5 Data analysis

The data in this study were analyzed as follows. Firstly, the researcher collected the data basing on the analysis results from the pre- test. Secondly, the researcher read through all the observational field notes, interview transcripts, and questionnaires and then grouped into several broader categories. Thirdly, the researcher collected the data from the post - test then comparing the results between the pre-test with the post one to show the differences in student’s performances as well as the changes in their pragmatic knowledge.

Finally, the researcher offered explanation, and drew conclusions.

3. Finding

3.1 Motivation enhancement

Motivation plays a crucial role in using sitcom in speaking class; in this study the researcher identified 2 main factors that made a great

impact on student's motivation in class. They were "active classroom interactions" and "entertaining teaching material".

The researcher soon realized that the important role of creating an active and comfortable atmosphere in class, but the fact is students didn't really enjoy doing group works, and were afraid of making presentation, because the difference of student's levels leading to the dominant of the excellent students, and unintentionally put more boredom, shyness and pressure on lower level ones. As the results, just only few good students got involved in all activities. To change this fact, the teacher used more activities that force students to have more interaction to each other and gave students more chances to move around instead of sitting all time in class. And he succeeds in changing student's attitude toward to group work, highly motivating and creating more active, comfortable, and relaxed learning environment. Furthermore, questions students suggested that teachers based on the comedy situation were far more interesting comparing to the "dry" questions in traditional textbooks.

Several new activities were used in class to create new learning and teaching experiences, all students seemed to be more excited with the new ones in class, they were so enthusiastic and eager to join all the activities. However, not all new activities were warmly welcomed by all students, teachers needed to ask student's feedback to reuse their favorite activities and change or adapt those not interesting enough for students. Student would find excited dealing with the activity that provides equal duties or roles in group work, everyone must get his job done and contribute for the whole team. All students have opportunity to speak, to express, to perform; no matter how good their English is.

Entertaining teaching material is another factor having huge contribution in motivating student's progress, all of them agreed that they had fun and felt comfortable learning with sitcoms. Although, in the context of student's anxiety to pass FCE or IELTS to graduate from university or for abroad studying goals, sitcoms seemed not able to satisfy their academic purposes, sitcom "Friends" indeed offered both students and teacher great benefit such as rich contexts, relevant contents, real situations, daily languages and autonomous awareness-raising.

3.2 Wh / How - Yes / No question intonation improvement

The changes in students' question intonations performances from the analyzing progress of the students' pre-test and post-test were clearly shown. It can be seen that there was great improvement in student's

question intonation performances, although, some students seemed to show less effort than the other students to enhance their results. 91,7% was a noticeable number of the improved students who had better performances in the post test. Especially, there were 4 students showing their great effort in increasing up their question intonations. Student “B1” did not have any correct question intonation out of her 5 produced question intonations, but she rapidly became much better after 3 sitcoms-based classes with 60% correction. Having significant question intonation enhancement were the other 2 students “H1” and “N1” both of them had 0% correct question intonation in the pre-test compared with “60%”, “40%” correct ones in the post test, respectively. On the other hand, there were only 3 students who did not show any changes, “T2” was a phenomenon having the same percentage of the correct question intonation “0%”. Despite of few poor remained results we cannot deny that using sitcoms was a great idea for speaking class.

3.3 Sentence stress improvement

It can be seen clearly and easily from the analysis of the results, after 3 sitcom-based classes, 100 % student enhanced their sentence stress, even though the improvement were just slightly. It is said that the sentence stress is one of the most difficult factors in English to achieve by Vietnamese students. The reason why students in particular and English learners in Vietnam in general found the sentence stress challenge is due to the fact that Vietnamese is a language allowing people to express themselves or convey their messages accurately without sentence stress.

Speaking English with flat intonation is not a strange phenomenon in English classes in Vietnam. Despite students are aware the important role of stress sentence in English, they still unconsciously speak the language without stress. Sentence stress indeed cannot be achieved and mastered overnight. The improvement was modest after a short period of time, however, using sitcom in class was a great idea to help students build up new English-speaking habit.

3.4 Pragmatic knowledge improvement

Several speech acts were provided for students to practice such as giving suggestion and requesting. Overall, almost students had better result at the post test that was a good sign of the effectiveness of using sitcoms in class. At the first attempt, there were only 11 students having more than 50% of right answer, and there were 8 students

having extremely poor result without getting any right one. However, students showed their significant improvement at the post test. The number of students had at least 3 right answers was more than 3 times as high as the number of students having the same number of right ones at the pre-test. Especially, there were 8 students having perfect scores with 5 out of 5 right answers, compared to 3 students at the first test. On top of that, we should not forget to mention about the great enhancement of those students who had 0% of right answer at their first test. “B1” was the only students who had only 1 right answer after the second attempt, the other 7 students had at least 2 right ones.

Even though, some students did not show any changes by remaining the average result after the pre-test, we need to admit that using sitcom is really useful and powerful tool to help students develop the ability of becoming aware the implication of situation in speaking class.

3.5 Student participation improvement

According to the time allocated to each activity, it appeared that all students in class had a chance to speak English and presented their speaking. Students got involved in all of them very enthusiastically and teacher always asked students questions to get their attention and timely gave feedback to encourage them. The way of ordering the activities in class stimulated student’s imaginations and curiosity that kept them exciting until the very last minute of the class. After each activity, a small piece of the video was unveiled and the full one was not shown until the last section, that blew student’ mind after a certain time guessing the scene and content of the video. Using authentic material like sitcom in class enabled students not only to be better understanding of common language, phrases, idiomatic expressions used by native speaker in daily conversation but also improve student’ speaking skills greatly. However, some noticeable shortcomings still occurred. Because of the size of the class, teacher was not able to cover and really know what students discussed about in pair work activity, moreover, in the last section when one group performed, the other not-yet- performed groups seemed not to really pay attention on it. Furthermore, Vietnamese was still used when students had difficulties in finding suitable words and expressing themselves in English.

In a nutshell, class was well-organized and very interesting. There was a logical connection between the activities that creating a story in the whole sections of class that maintained student’s motivation in 3

classes. It was evident that the more fun students have, the more they gained and comprehended from the show.

3.6 Student's attitude toward the usefulness of sitcoms

After analyzing the questionnaire, it can be seen that there have been many great changes in attitude of students toward the use of sitcom in speaking class. 64% of students believed that sitcom was extremely helpful in speaking class, 75% of them thought that sitcom motivated them extremely. 91% of students agreed that using sitcom enhanced pragmatic knowledge and 77% said that their sentence stress was improved after having lessons built around sitcoms. And 86% of students believed that the use of sitcoms in the classroom improved their question intonation. Among all activities designed around sitcoms, dubbing is the activity that students like best.

4. Conclusions and implications

4.1 Conclusions

The previous chapter showed the results of the sitcom-based instruction, based on the reliable data from the extensive analysis of the pre-test, post-test, interviews, survey and class observation that answered fully the research questions of this study:

1. How can the use of sitcoms facilitate the development of student's oral skills?

Sitcoms, which are hilarious and vivid material that kept students interested in either the activities in class or their individual speaking performance, is a great tool to facilitate the development of student's oral skills.

1a. How does using sitcoms increase student's motivation in learning oral skills?

Learner motivation was dramatically improved by 4 factors in sitcom-based classes, "the active classroom interactions", and "entertaining teaching material". These factors were identified clearly to describe and explain the enhancement of learner motivation. Furthermore, according to survey, 75 % of students, which was a magnificent number, found using sitcom "Friends" in class extremely motivated them that was an undeniable evidence of the efficiency of using sitcoms in class.

1b. What aspects of oral skills does the use of sitcoms enhance?

Besides the improvement of students in the ability of becoming aware of the implication of situations that could be seen easily from the pre-pragmatic test and post-pragmatic test results report, “wh/how and yes/no questions intonation”, “sentence stress” were the other 2 factors of oral skill which the use of sitcoms enhanced. The pre-speaking test and post-speaking test were conducted with the great help from the native expert in the progress of recording and analyzing the test that provided the persuasive figures that demonstrated the development of 36 students after 3 sitcom-based classes. 91,7% of students having the better performances in term of questions intonation and 100 % students enhanced their sentence stress even though the improvement were just slightly.

The idea of using sitcoms in speaking class would be one of the best choices for those teachers who may want to refresh the classes’ atmosphere and enhance students ‘oral skills.

4.2 Pedagogical implication

Several suggestions for teachers who consider using sitcoms in their speaking classes, are provided.

Firstly, in this study, both teacher and students acknowledged that sitcom material “ Friends” provided many advantages compared to traditional text books including its fun, rich context, vivid audio and visual aid, simple colloquial language, authentic language that used in teaching speaking.

Secondly, the significance of the finding emphasizes the importance of language comprehension in the development of listening and speaking proficiency. The activities were used in this study such as “only sound, no picture” offered students opportunities to develop their listening. Moreover, learner-centered activities such as “prediction from the snapshots”, “mediated-watching” and “role play” gave students opportunities to develop students’ guessing, thinking and contextualizing gradually. These findings imply that besides students’ centered activities, teacher’s mediation should be considered as a whole when it comes to developing student’s listening and speaking proficiency

Thirdly, this study indicated that there was a significant correlation between listening and speaking performances. Speaking instruction should not be separated from listening instruction. Acquisition of

listening comprehension is foundation for the development of oral proficiency. Thus, in speaking class, opportunities need to be given to learners to practice both skills and integrate them in conversation.

Fourthly, the research suggests that teacher should use sitcoms as a material to help students to use English in right contexts, situations by explaining some scenes in sitcom to increase their ability of becoming aware the implication of situation in speaking.

Finally, sitcoms would be an ideal material for teachers who would want to concentrate on improving students' pronunciation. Using "dubbing" activity in speaking class offered students a golden opportunity to enhance their pronunciation and accent by integrating listening and imitating activity at the same time.

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EXPLORE THE MOTIVATIONS BEHIND STUDYING ENGLISH - A CASE STUDY OF FIRST YEAR TEACHER STUDENTS AT VINH UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: Motivation is crucial factor in the success of language learning. A great deal of research has been done so far to explore proper methods to motivate students to study English effectively. Personally, it is our concern that there are a number of difficulties in motivating students to study, especially for teachers of foreign languages in general and for EFL instructors in particular. The purpose of this article is, therefore, to obtain an overview of Vietnamese students' motivations for learning English and teachers' tasks in relation to motivation, to report on the author's experience in real teaching situations at Vinh university, and to present some pedagogical implications. The results are of significant importance since Vinh University is applying CDIO approach in teaching methods and designing curriculum.

1. Background

The term “motivation” is understood as “some kind of internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action” (Harmer 1994, p.3) and as the “extent to which you make choices about (a) goals to pursue and (b) the effort you will devote to that pursuit”. (Brown 1994, p. 34)

The matter of motivation has received a great deal of interest of a number of theorists. Different people have examined motivation from different aspects, yet all have one thing in common, which is to recognize the importance of motivation in learning achievement. Ur (1996, p.274) believed that “learners’ motivation makes teaching and learning

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immeasurably easier and more pleasant as well, as more productive”. Meanwhile, Cook (1996, p.98) suggested that “teacher may have to go along with the students’ motivation or at least be sufficiently aware of the students’ motivation so that any problem can be smoothed over”.

However, motivation, being so diverse, is not simple as it may sound. Hence, in order to gain thorough understanding of the matter, theorists have attempted to classify motivation into different types. Brown (1994), Wajnryb (1995) and especially Gardner and Lambert (1972) divided motivation into two categories: instrumental and integrative. According to the theorists, instrumental motivation refers to the wish to learn a language because it will be useful for them in their effort to reach certain instrumental and practical goals, for example to get a job, to read materials, to pass exams or to obtain a promotion. On the other hand, integrative motivation, is used to talk about the desire to learn a language so that learners can integrate into the target community.

Another distinction is that between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Harmer (1994) stated that extrinsic motivation is concerned with factors outside classroom, which is subtitled as integrative motivation, instructional motivation and attitude to the language. On the contrary, intrinsic motivation is associated with what takes place inside classrooms including physical conditions, method and the teacher. Meanwhile, intrinsic motivation is defined by Ur (1996, p.276) as “the urge to engage in the learning activity for its own sake” and extrinsic motivation is that “derived from external incentives.”

Since intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are of vital importance in classrooms and can be influenced to some extent by the teacher, this paper would like to examine students’ motivations according to these two categories.

2. Students’ motivations for learning English

In order to analyze Vietnamese students’ motivations for learning English, the subjects are grouped into two types, namely English-specialized students and non-English-specialized students. The reason for the division is that the two groups should have quite different motivations for learning English.

Due to the constraint of time and the scope of the study, the paper is restricted to the information gathered at Vinh University. From the school year 2017-2018 (K58) Vinh University has many changes in

curriculum, for example, introducing CDIO-approach training programs and advanced program to promote creative thinking and teamwork skills, and developing students' capacity and quality. In response to the objectives, subject requirements, teachers must constantly apply appropriate teaching methods and especially to encourage, strengthen students' learning motivation in the way that meet academic requirements so that students can develop their learning capacity.

Motivation of English pedagogical students

This group of learners is in general highly motivated because it is their choice to take English as the major. Usually, these students have strong extrinsic motivations. In fact, as future teachers of English, they understand well that English is an indispensable part of the job. In addition, English is important for them in attempting their instrumental goals such as reading materials, newspapers, magazines or listening to radio in order to collect a wide range of information.

Apart from instrumental motivations, students of English have integrative ones. Their reasons can vary from the desire to gain good understanding of the target culture, the chances to communicate and exchange culture and information with other speakers of English to the ability to integrate into the target community.

Also, naturally, the attitude of this group toward the language is in general positive. This can be explained by the fact that these students have good past experience in connection with English learning or simply because they are attracted by the language.

Non - English - specialized students

A large number of students in other departments learn because this is a compulsory subject at school. To them, the motivation is chiefly to pass exams. However, in recent years, there has been an increasing number of students who begin to take English more seriously due to their recognition of the role of English in their future jobs and career opportunities. The motivations of these students are therefore for instrumental targets.'

3. Teachers' tasks and difficulties

Since motivation has a very important part to play in classroom, teachers need to be comprehensively aware of its existence and try

to make good use of it and promote it during the lessons in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning of English at school. Firstly, it is necessary that they keep records of students' motivations, classify them and design proper strategies to deal with them. Next, they have to act to exploit motivations for students' effective acquisition of the language. Usually, teachers cannot do a lot to help students with extrinsic motivations because these are formed before they take the course. However, teachers can help them by aiding them to reach their instrumental and integrative goals. Intrinsic motivations, however, are more under the control of the teacher. In fact, it is the teacher's choice to carry out activities that in their opinions are motivating. Moreover, their knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm and their students' success or failure contribute greatly to the achievements of their students.

In reality, many teachers realize the importance of motivation and are eager to exploit it in their lessons, yet obstacles might be too great for them to overcome. One of the tough problems is big class size. Actually, with about 40 or more students in one class, it is almost impossible for the teacher to cover all students and to give them enough opportunities and time to take part in activities. What is more, the physical conditions in classrooms are not at all favorable for a language class. The arrangement of tables and the space available cause difficulties when pair work and group work are performed. In addition, facilities in classes remain poor; cassette-players, video-recorders and overhead projectors are not always available for use. Also, since the curriculum is fixed and the syllabus is basically grammar-translation-based, teachers find it extremely difficult or even discouraging to attempt new tries. In addition, time constraints both inside classrooms and at home prevent teachers from having interesting and productive lessons as they wish.

4. The author's experience

In our effort to motivate students in the learning of English, we have tried out different ways. Of course the performance is not always smooth due to the limitation of time and facilities. However, the results are quite rewarding.

First of all, it is our preference to begin my teaching at any class by asking students to write about their strong points and weaknesses, their past experience with the English language, their short-term and long-term goals and needs, their present worries and their expectations from

the coming course. The activity can be informally done either at home or during breaks, in written form or orally, in English or Vietnamese. From the data collected, we understand well what is expected and what can be done to satisfy students' needs. The next stage involves the preparation of activities suggested and tries them out in class. As a result, students have the feeling that their voice is seriously taken into consideration and become more open when asked for evaluation.

The second thing is related to the methodology applied in class. As a supporter of the learner-centered approach, we always encourage students to take an active role in the learning process. My view is "show, not tell". Usually, we spend some amount of time training students learning strategies which they can use to find out grammatical rules for themselves, to analyze their English proficiency levels and their motivations for learning English, we have different requirements for different groups of learners. For students of English, activities tend to be more demanding, which asks them to spend time on research or preparation outside class. As regards students whose major is not English, more emphasis is given on the participation in activities inside class.

Another area of the teaching of English that we pay special attention to is to make each lesson a new experience to students. In order to do this, we usually have to spend a considerable amount of time thinking of original and new warm-ups and varieties of activities to be carried out during the lessons. The warmers can be games, songs or situations right in the class. In addition, when choosing activities, we give priority to those that students show interest in. The topics and situations are usually taken from the textbooks but then edited and re-designed to suit each class.

What we are also concerned about is students' success and failure in language learning. Therefore, we are serious with the feedback activity. We learn from my experience that if students are given proper praise and encouragement when they gain some success, they would be very motivated. As for failure, teachers' subtle care and assistance can really touch students' hearts and give them more courage to go on.

5. Conclusion and implications

Motivation has been recognized as an important factor in the success of language learning. Although motivations are various and

the level of motivation differs from student to student, most students when attending an English class should have some kind of motivation. This can be intrinsic or extrinsic or both. It is the teacher's task to identify students' motivations and exploit them in the teaching process with the consideration of activities in class, their attitude, expertise and knowledge. In order to fulfill the tasks, teachers have to face a variety of difficulties, including the limited time and facilities, the rigid syllabus and curriculum, the crowded classes and the unfavorable teaching environment.

In the light of the analyzing of teachers' tasks and problems and from my own experience, the following implications are made.

First of all, teachers need to have an overview of students' motivations so that they can design proper activities or take suitable measures to help students. This task can be challenging, yet can be made easy by doing a survey, at the beginning of the course and asking for frequent feedback and evaluation during the course.

Secondly, in order to enhance students' intrinsic motivations, teachers can provide students with the materials of their interest such as articles about hot news in Vietnam and in the World, about the culture of the target community; or about their professional areas.

In term of intrinsic motivations, teachers can design activities based on students' interest to stimulate them. In addition, activities need to be diversified and adjusted so that they are not too easy or too difficult to certain students. Also, it is important that teachers be sensitive to the feelings of students and thus have proper attitudes towards their success or failure and offer help in time.

In general, teachers should "be aware of the reservations and preconceptions of their students. What they think of the teachers and what they think of the course heavily affect their success. This is what teachers can influence than the learners' more deep-seated motivations" (Cook 1996, p.99).

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IMPROVING PRONUNCIATION FOR THE SECOND YEAR NON- ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS OF VINH UNIVERSITY THROUGH HOMOPHONE GAMES

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Abstract: This study was an attempt to examine the effects of Homophone Games towards students' pronunciation improvement. The study was conducted among 40 second year non-English- major students of Vinh University who were purposively chosen by considering their poor ability of pronunciation. This research used classroom action research (CAR) which covers research location, research time and two classroom action research cycles. The experiment lasted for eight weeks. Observation and interview were used as the data. Conclusion was drawn with employing descriptive statistics and comparing the scores between cycles. The comparison between the results of the two cycles shows that there is a significant improvement in students' pronunciation after applying Homophone Games to pronunciation classes.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

English has become a global language and it is more and more important in various fields of our life. Learning English in general and learning pronunciation in particular are not an easy task to a large number of learners. Pronunciation is considered as one of the most crucial language elements. Therefore, it is necessary for English learners to have a good pronunciation to support them to be good speakers. Clear

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pronunciation gives us confidence in speaking English to other people especially native speaker and helps us avoid misunderstanding in some situations. Unfortunately, a number of the students in Vinh University either think that pronunciation is not really important, vocabulary mastery and grammar are enough for communication or have difficulties in finding out an appropriate method to resolve this issue. As a result, they are still poor in pronunciation; sometimes they cannot differentiate some word pronunciations which have similar sounds. A homophone is a word that is pronounced the same as another word but differs in meaning. The words may be spelled the same, such as rose (flower) and rose (past tense of “rise”) (Wikipedia, 2019). Homophone in English is not a new term to, however, it is still considered as a challenging part almost all people because the words that have similar pronunciation sometimes have totally different meanings.

In fact, despite being considered as a difficult part in English, homophone is interesting and the activities related to this phenomenon can generate positive attitudes towards students. create a meaningful context for language use.

With the purpose of finding out whether or not there is a significant improvement between the ability of pronunciation of the Second Year English - major Students at Vinh University before and after being taught by using Homophone Game, the writer would like to do a research entitled *“Improving the Pronunciation for the Second Year English - Major Students at Vinh University through Homophones Game”*.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the research questions as follow:

1. How is the improvement of the students’ pronunciation of English through Homophone Games?
2. How is the students’ interest of the students’ pronunciation of English short vowels through Homophone Games?

1.3. Aims of the study

The thesis has been conducted with the aims to:

- find out the improvement of the students’ pronunciation of English long vowels through Homophone Games.

- find out the improvement of students' pronunciation of English short vowels through Homophone Games.

- assist the authors and the readers have in insight about homophones

- create interest in English classes for students

- enable the readers to use homophones effectively in many communicative contexts

1.4. Methods of the study

To conduct this research, the authors apply two main methods: summarizing and analyzing. First, the authors review theories relating to homophone and classify into different types with various uses. Second, theoretical background will be summarized and analyzed to point out main points.

2. Literature review

2.1 Homophones

According to Wikipedia, a homophone is a word that is pronounced the same but differs in meaning. A homophone may also differ in spelling. Akmajian et al. (1995) also defined homophone is the words have identical pronunciation but be different words with different meaning. Homophones are words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings (Rippel, 2010).

The examples of homophones are as follows:

a. pare /peər/ (n): to cut away the outer layer from something, especially a fruit or a vegetable

pair /peər/ (n): two things of the same appearance and size that are intended to be used together, or something that consists of two parts joined.

pear /peər/(n): a sweet fruit, usually with a green skin and a lot of juice, that has a round base and

b. two /tu:/ and too /tu: /

two /tu: / is the number between one and three

too /tu: / is another way of saying as well.

2.2 Game

Games are often designed as structured or semi structured

activities. Games are usually applied with the aim of entertainment and sometimes also used with educational purposes. Homophone games are created by making a sentence or phrase containing a pair or larger set of homophones, substitutes the homophone pair with another pair of words, then reads the newly created sentence out loud. The purpose of the games is for the players to distinguish homophone pairs in different context. (Wikipedia, 2010).

It is obvious that using homophone games in teaching English especially pronunciation make contribution to enhance students' pronunciation. This is because learners can perceive what people are mentioning about when they use homophones so they feel confident to speak up.

2.3 Definition of Pronunciation

Pronunciation is defined by many famous authors. Pronunciation is the way the sound the words of which to give its meaning (Broughton et al., 1980.p.8).

Hay (1970, pp.61-64) states that through teaching pronunciation students are given method of how to pronoun words correctly and are asked to judge every word they say of two different kinds but almost the same in pronunciation namely, the minimal pairs. The students' task is to judge which one of the teaching of pronunciation through this way enables the students to get the difference among several sounds.

2.4 Students' Problems in Pronouncing English Words

It is the fact that there is a difference between Vietnamese and English pronunciation. Therefore, Vietnamese students can have some difficulties in pronunciation. In Vietnamese, there is no difference between its writing and its sound while in English, sometimes what we pronoun is not similar to what we write.

According to Julian Edge on 'Mistakes and Corrections' as quoted by Harmer (2001, p.99) that mistakes can be categorize into three types. The first type is *slips* which students can correct themselves when the mistake can be pointed out to them. The second one is *errors*. This kind of mistakes cannot be corrected by students themselves. Learners need to be explained. The last type of mistake is *attempts*. It means that when a student attempt to say something but they do not know how to express his ideas.

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis suggests that by analyzing

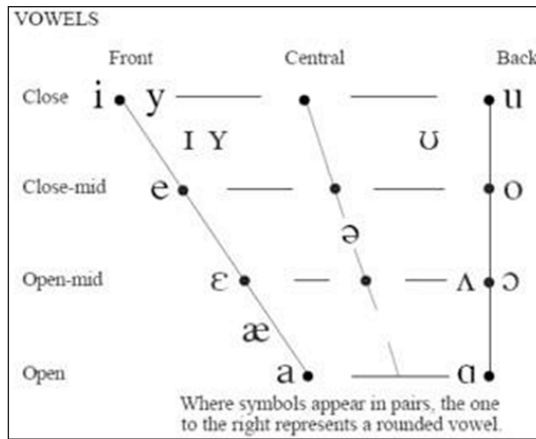
and contrasting the differences of two languages, the challenges that a language learner might encounter can be predicted (Crystal, 2003).

2.5 English Vowels

Vowels are sounds that are produced when the airstream is voiced and is not obstructed but is shaped by the tongue and lips. According to (Roach, 1991, p.20. p.22), English vowels consist of / i: /, / ə: /, / a: /, / u: /, / o: /, / i /, / e /, / æ /, / ə /, / u /, / o /.

Beside English vowels above, there are also diphthongs. Diphthong is a sound consisting of two sounds or slide from a vowel to another (Roach, 1991, p.20. p.22). There are nine English diphthongs, / ei /, / ai /, / oi /, / au /, / oə /, / iə /, / əu /, / uə /, / eə /. The English consonants consist of twenty-four. Those are / p /, / b /, / t /, / d /, / k /, / g /, / f /, / v /, / θ /, / ð /, / s /, / z /, / ʃ /, / ʒ /, / h /, / ʒ /, / ʒ /, / m /, / n /, / ŋ /, / l /, / r /, / w /, / y /.

The following diagram illustrates the differences from one another by the shape of lips and the position of tongue. Close, mid and open describe the distance between tongue and the upper part of the mouth. Front, centre and back describe which part of the tongue is raised. Vowels vary in quality, in loudness and also in quantity (length). They are usually voiced, and are closely involved in prosodic variation such as tone, intonation and stress. Vowel sounds are produced with an open vocal tract.



2.6 Classification of English Vowels

English vowels are divided into long vowels and short vowels.

2.6.1 Long Vowels

According to James Stuart, long vowel sounds require the speaker to

move the mouth from a closed position to an open one or vice-versa. The speaker's tongue glides into position during pronunciation and is often tense. When pronounced, long vowel sounds share the same pronunciation as vowels when they are pronounced as part of the alphabet.

Long vowel is the term used to refer to vowel sounds whose pronunciation is the same as its letter name. Long vowels are homophonous with the names of the single letter vowels, such as /eɪ/ in *baby*, /iː/ in *meter*, /aː/ in *tiny*, /oo/ in *broken*, and /juː/ in *humor*. Long vowels are generally the easiest vowels for non-native English speakers to distinguish and pronounce correctly

2.6.2. Short Vowels

According to Roach (1991.p.15), short vowels are only relatively short, shall see later, vowels can have quite different lengths in different contexts. Short vowels are the five single letter vowels, a, e, i, o, and u when they produce the sounds /æ/ as in *cat*, /ɛ/ as in *bet*, /ɪ/ as in *sit*, /ɒ/ as in *hot*, and /ʌ/ as in *cup*. The term "short vowel" does not really mean that these vowels are pronounced for a particularly short period of time, but they are not diphthongs like the long vowels (Wikipedia, 2010)

3. Research methods

3.1 Research Setting

This research used a classroom action research (CAR). It covers research location, research time and classroom action research cycles as follows:

Research Location: This research was conducted at Vinh University

Research Time: This research was conducted on February-April 2019 academic year.

Research population: 50 non English major students of Vinh University.

3.2 Data Collection

In collecting the data, the researcher use two instruments, they were: observation list and test. The data of this research collected by observation list; the researcher observe the students' activity in following teaching and learning process in the class.

3.3 Data Analysis

The technique of analyzing the data that was used in this research

is applied by using qualitative data. The data is used to describe the situation during teaching learning process. Test, interview result and observation sheet is analyzed.

First, data reduction means reducing the data, summarizing, and choosing the essentials, focusing on what matters. Second, data display can be done in the form of analyzing and brief descriptions. The most frequent form of display data for qualitative research data in the past has been narrative text.

3.4 Research Procedure

This research will conduct in four stages. They are: planning, action, observation and reflection as follows.

CYCLE I

1. The Planning

The activities that had been done in this stage as follow:

- a. Arranged a schedule classroom action research
- b. Made a lesson planning
- c. Prepared some students worksheets
- d. Prepared list sentences for students contain about homophone
- e. Prepared a form assessment

2. Action

a. Before gave the games, the teacher explained to the students that homophones are two words that sound alike, but have different meanings, like “two” (the number between one and three) and “too” (another way of saying as well).

b. Students divided into small group that consist of 3 or 4 members. Every group has a leader who will choose the first player from his/her member.

c. The teacher asked the students or first players to stand on a chair facing the board (about 3 or 4 meters).

d. The teacher wrote the blank sentences and choices of homophone words

E.g. Fill in the blanks with the correct word: *a. new, b. knew, c. two and d. to.*

1. *Are you going _____ the fair?*

2. *There are only _____ places left!*

3. *I _____ you would do that!*

4. *This car is brand _____.*

e. The first player ran up to the board to answer the question by pronouncing.

f. The first player changed by the second player until all the members would get chance.

g. The teacher gave the point for the group who can answer the question truly.

h. The winner is the highest point

3. Observation

a. Situation of teaching learning activity.

b. Students' activeness.

c. Students' ability in discussion group.

4. Reflection

Reflection would be done to see the whole first cycle action process. Reflection would be meant as analyzing, understanding, and making conclusion activity, the researcher analyzed first action cycle as consideration matter whether cycle had been reached success criteria based on test result of first action.

After finishing the cycle I and the result of learning process was not significant to what the researcher expect so the next cycle can be taken again for improvement of the next cycle achievement.

Cycle II

1. Planning

a. Evaluated reflection result, discussing and finding improvement to be applied for the next learning process.

b. Made a lesson planning

c. Prepared some students worksheets

d. Prepared list sentences for students contain about homophone

e. Prepared a form assessment

2. Action

a. Analyzed to overcome the previous problem

b. Before gave the games, the teacher explained to the students that homophones are two words that sound alike, but have different meanings, like “two” (the number between one and three) and “too” (another way of saying as well).

c. Students divided into small group that consist of 3 or 4 members. Every group has a leader who will choose the first player from his/her member.

d. The teacher asked the students or first players to stand on a chair facing the board (about 3 or 4 meters).

e. The teacher wrote the blank sentences and choices of homophone words

E.g. Fill in the blanks with the correct word: *a. blue, b. blew, c. too and d. to.*

1. *There are _____ many people in here.*

2. *Mom, may I go _____ the market*

3. *The wind _____ really hard.*

4. *The pen is _____.*

a. The first player ran up to the board to answer the question by pronouncing.

b. The first player changed by the second player until all the members would get chance.

c. The teacher gave the point for the group who can answer the question truly.

d. The winner is the highest point

3. Observation

a. Situation of teaching learning activity.

b. Students' participation.

4. Reflection

Reflection was done to see the whole second cycle action process. The researcher analyzed second action as consideration matter whether cycle has reached success criteria bases on test result and observation.

In second cycle, the researcher made the conclusion about implementation Homophone Games in improving students'

Pronunciation of the English long and short vowels at the first year non- English major students of Vinh University.

4. Findings and discussion

This chapter explain the research data analysis and finding which explore about the result from data which have been analyzed. All of the data of this research was analyzed by using qualitative data which were taken from the observation sheet, interview, diary notes, and also from documentation.

4.1 Findings

Based on the result of all of the data from qualitative data which were taken from the diary notes, observation sheet, and interview it was showed that the learning process was run well. The students felt enjoy, interested and motivated during the learning process when the teacher applied homophone games in teaching although there were some of the students still failed. From the result of the data which were taken from every cycle it was showed that there was considerable improvement on the students' pronunciation. In the other words, the learning process that aimed at improving the students' pronunciation though homophone games. The process that could be explained from the cycle I to cycle II as follows:

a. At the beginning of the implementation of the cycle I has not been suitable with planning yet. This matter was caused by:

1. Some students did not know to study Homophone Games.
2. Some students showed their hesitation to cooperate with their group.
3. Some students still did not know how to play Homophone Games.

b. At the end of the cycle II could be concluded:

1. Students understood quite well about Homophone Games.
2. All students cooperate voluntarily to play Homophone Games with their groups.
3. Students knew how to play Homophone Games well.

4.2 Discussion

Cycle II had positive impacts on the students' pronunciation because the researcher gave their students more chances to perform

their pronunciation in Homophone Games, as a result, the students can learn English especially English pronunciation without being aware they are studying, thus without stress, they can learn a lot. To sum up, Homophone Game is a good way that can be used to improve the students' pronunciation. Based on the data analysis of all the data in each cycle, the results of the study showed a notable improvement of the students' pronunciation through homophone games.

4.3 Some types of homophone games

Marie (2008, p.25) suggested several types of homophone which can be applied in speaking classes in order to improve students' pronunciation.

4.3.1 Homophone worksheet

Worksheets give students targeted practice with the proper use of homophones. Each fill-in-the-blank worksheet in this section features a single set of homophones

For ease in locating the homophone pairs you want to teach, worksheets are arranged in alphabetical order within each suggested grade level section. All homophones are also cross-referenced with page numbers

At the bottom of each worksheet you will find fun facts, tongue twisters, writing activities, and other nifty features that will help reinforce the homophones learned. In addition, the worksheets offer a jumping-off point for many other creative activities that will get your students thinking, reading, writing, and speaking. Here is an idea you can try for speaking.

- Write the homophone pairs on the board
- Project the worksheets on the wall and call on students individually to provide the correct word.
- Have students recite their original tongue twisters, poems, sentences, and so on.

{ Homophones }

road & rode

Name: _____

Fill in the blanks with the correct word: road or rode.

1. This _____ has twists and turns, so fasten your seatbelt.
2. Ted _____ the roller coaster until he was dizzy.
3. The cowboys _____ their horses to the end of the dirt _____.
4. Sue was lost and didn't know which _____ to take.
5. Alex _____ his bike in the parade.
6. The Roman soldiers _____ on the old stone _____ until the break of dawn.
7. I _____ an elephant at the circus last week!
8. The tribe _____ their camels across the desert.
9. The scarecrow danced down the Yellow Brick _____.
10. There's a moose in the middle of the _____!

Fun Facts!

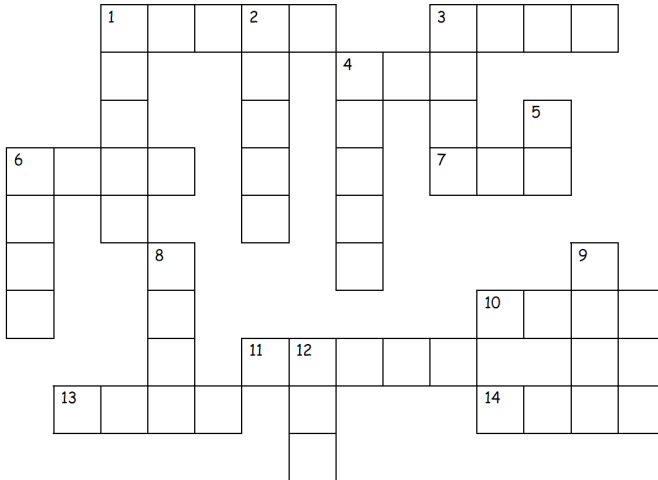
How old is the street you live on? One of the oldest paved roads in the world is in Egypt. Built 4,600 years ago, it is about seven miles long and is located near the Great Pyramids of Giza. In Italy, the Aurelia road was built between ancient Rome and Pisa over 2,000 years ago—and is still used today!

4.3.2 Crossword puzzle

Use this crossword to help your students identify different homophones and their correct meanings. Students will receive one homophones crossword puzzle with clues, vocabulary word bank with homophone pairs. Students can work groups to figure out their answers.

Name _____

Another Homophones Crossword Puzzle



Across

- opposite of here
- chicken, ham, beef
- a female deer
- letters
- the number after one
- to package up a gift
- to create a story, poem, or song
- a male lion's neck hair
- past tense of make

Down

- belonging to them
- opposite of wrong
- get together
- a mix of ingredients for bread or cookies
- opposite of from
- opposite of female
- the most important
- a woman servant who cleans house
- to tap, knock or hit

Word Bank

rap there made right meat to doe mail mane
wrap their maid write meet two dough male main

Homophones Crossword Puzzle
Cherry Carl, 2006

4.3.3 Homophones Memory Game

Website <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Homophones-Memory-Game-2180227> recommends another kind of homophone game is homophone memory game. This set has 36 cards in color and 36 cards in black and white to practice matching Homophones.

- All cards are face down on the table
- Students take turns revealing the cards to find the Homophones words
- The student picks two cards and if they match he keeps the cards and plays again. But If the cards don't match then the next student picks the cards
- The student with most pairs is the winner

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INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS

Researcher: Tran Thi Thu Trang

Dear students,

We are carrying out a study of **“Using the mind mapping technique in teaching vocabulary for the first year non English major students at Vinh University”**. In particular, we are interested in the amount of help that people like you get from different resources. Would you have any objection to our access to interview? This will help us identify the current status of learning vocabulary in Vinh University. Everything from interviewing would be absolutely confidential and the data are stored without your name. None of this would be affect your studying benefits but will help in future planning for community.

As well as interview we will be conducting questionnaires. Besides, documentary analysis will be carried. Again all information collected is confidential.

We would be grateful if you could sign the attached form to say you have no objection to our accessing any kind of collecting data above.

If you have any question concerning the study please phone:

Researcher Tran Thi Thu Trang

Or email to address: thutrangbdhv@gmail.com

With many thanks for your help:

Tran Thi Thu Trang

Foreign Language Department of Vinh University

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Title of research: *Improving Pronunciation for the Second Year Non- English Major Students of Vinh University through Homophone Games*

Name of researcher: *Tran Thi Thu Trang _ Foreign Language Department, Vinh University*

I agree to take part in the above study and I am willing to (please tick those agree to):

Be interviewed

Have my documentary analysis

I understand that my information will be held by Vinh University and agree to its being used for the purposes of the research:

In the production of a written dissertation or critical write-up of the research

On the website of Vinh University, Vietnam

In live or recorded performance or presentation of practical project work to an audience within an education context

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to with draw at any time without giving any reason without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.

Data will surely remain anonymous.

Name of participant Date Signature

Name of researcher Date Signature

Tran Thi Thu Trang

Vinh University 182 Le Duan Street, Vinh city, Nghean Province, Vietnam

Tel: (038)3855452; Fax: (038)3855269

APPENDIX X
INTERVIEW SHEET WITH THE STUDENTS
(BEFORE CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH)

I am Tran Thi Thu Trang. I am conducting my research paper on ***“Improving Pronunciation for the Second Year Non- English Major Students of Vinh University through Homophone Games”***.

Thank you very much for your participating in my research. After the lessons with the use of mind maps, I would like to know your opinion towards the lessons.

The information gathered here will be used for research purposes in human science. Proper names will not be used in order to protect the informants' identities.

Thank you again for your kind cooperation!

- 1. Do you find English pronunciation difficult? Why?*
- 2. Do you like practicing pronunciation? Why?*
- 3. Have you ever heard about homophones? If yes, when and where did you hear about homophones?*
- 4. Do you often misunderstand about two word having the same pronunciation but different meanings?*

APPENDIX X
INTERVIEW SHEET WITH THE STUDENTS
(BEFORE CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH)

I am Tran Thi Thu Trang. I am conducting my research paper on ***“Improving Pronunciation for the Second Year Non- English Major Students of Vinh University through Homophone Games”***.

Thank you very much for your participating in my research. After the lessons with the use of mind maps, I would like to know your opinion towards the lessons.

The information gathered here will be used for research purposes in human science. Proper names will not be used in order to protect the informants' identities.

Thank you again for your kind cooperation!

1. Do you really like learning English homophone games?

If “Yes”, why?

If “No”, why not?

2. Do you like practicing pronunciation? Why?

3. Do you think that using homophone games makes your pronunciation better?

4. Do you often misunderstand about homophone pairs?

5. Do you have any difficulties when playing homophone games?

If “Yes”. What difficulties do you have? Why? What did you do to improve those problems?

OBSERVATION SHEET

CYCLE I

Teacher Name:

Date: 30/2/2019

Observation Activity: Teacher Activities

Note: Give Tick (√) in the Category Column, 4 (Very Good), 3 (Good), 2 (Enough), 1 (Bad)

No	Points will be observed	Category			
		1	2	3	4
1	The teacher comes on time				√
2	Teacher's capability in opening the class (How the teacher greets the students)				√
3	Teacher giving motivation in the teaching and learning process (how the teacher gives the apperception before starting the teaching and learning process)				√
4	The teacher gives warming up activities to the students, such as giving students some questions about the topic that will be discussed in the classroom				√
5	The teacher tells the students the aims of the study				√
6	The teacher introduces about homophone games				√
7	Teacher's mastery (It is about the teacher's capability in mastering the material taught)				√
8	The systematically teaching performance (It is about appropriateness with the lesson plan)				√
9	Teacher's ability in organizing the class (It is about the class management performed by the teacher)				√
10	Teacher teaching material clearly (the clearness of the teacher's teaching)				√
11	The students give attention to teachers' explanation during learning process				√
12	Motivation and enthusiasm of students in teaching learning process. (It is about the curiosity and the enthusiasm of the students during the learning process)				√

13	Teacher asks to the students how far they understand about the materials have taught			√	
14	Interaction and communication between students and teacher in teaching learning process (Good communication between teacher and students to support to students' understanding)				√
15	Teacher ability in closing the class (It is about how the teacher closes the class, gives summary and solve the students' problem)			√	

OBSERVATION SHEET
CYCLE II

Teacher Name:

Date: 30/4/2019

Observation Activity: Teacher Activities

Note: Give Tick (√) in the Category Column, 4 (Very Good), 3 (Good), 2 (Enough), 1 (Bad)

No	Points will be observed	Category			
		1	2	3	4
1	The teacher comes on time				√
2	Teacher's capability in opening the class (How the teacher greets the students)				√
3	Teacher giving motivation in the teaching and learning process (how the teacher gives the apperception before starting the teaching and learning process)				√
4	The teacher gives warming up activities to the students, such as giving students some questions about the topic that will be discussed in the classroom				√
5	The teacher tells the students the aims of the study				√
6	The teacher introduces about homophone games				√
7	Teacher's mastery (It is about the teacher's capability in mastering the material taught)				√
8	The systematically teaching performance (It is about appropriateness with the lesson plan)				√
9	Teacher's ability in organizing the class (It is about the class management performed by the teacher)				√
10	Teacher teaching material clearly (the clearness of the teacher's teaching)				√
11	The students give attention to teachers' explanation during learning process				√
12	Motivation and enthusiasm of students in teaching learning process. (It is about the curiosity and the enthusiasm of the students during the learning process)				√

13	Teacher asks to the students how far they understand about the materials have taught			√	
14	Interaction and communication between students and teacher in teaching learning process (Good communication between teacher and students to support to students' understanding)			√	
15	Teacher ability in closing the class (It is about how the teacher closes the class, gives summary and solve the students' problem)				√

OBSERVATION SHEET
CYCLE I

Teacher Name:

Date: 30/2/2019

Observation Activity: Student Activities

Note: Give Tick (√) in the Category Column, 4 (Very Good), 3 (Good), 2 (Enough), 1 (Bad)

No	Points will be observed	Category			
		1	2	3	4
1	All of the students come on time				√
2	The students pay attention to teacher explanation			√	
3	The students are interest and enthusiast in studying Homophone games			√	
4	The students participate in learning process				√
5	The students do task given				√
6	The students use dictionary to help them knowing the content of the words				√
7	The students mark the difficult words				√
8	The students ask the feedback after doing he activity				√

OBSERVATION SHEET
CYCLE II

Teacher Name:

Date: 30/4/2019

Observation Activity: Student Activities

Note: Give Tick (√) in the Category Column, 4 (Very Good), 3 (Good), 2 (Enough), 1 (Bad)

No	Points will be observed	Category			
		1	2	3	4
1	All of the students come on time				√
2	The students pay attention to teacher explanation			√	
3	The students are interest and enthusiast in studying Homophone games			√	
4	The students participate in learning process				√
5	The students do task given				√
6	The students use dictionary to help them knowing the content of the words				√
7	The students mark the difficult words				√
8	The students ask the feedback after doing he activity				√

SOME SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPROVING STUDENTS' MIDDLE LEVEL READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Cao Thị Phương^[1]

Abstract: This article focuses on finding out which reading strategies are generally employed by the students of Middle Level to read an English text more effectively, which reading strategies are needed to be developed to understand better. Some qualities of a good reader are also mentioned in this paper to help the students whose reading comprehension breaks down find ways to repair their understanding.

1. Introduction

Reading is not merely the decoding of written words into sounds. It is a complex communication process which requires thoughts and individual construction of meaning. Instead of comprehending the text just by understanding the meaning of vocabulary and grammatical structures present in it, it requires the reader to have a highly demanding cognitive and selective process which involves the reader's background knowledge, their linguistic proficiency; their strategies choices and the text (Hedge, 2002).

2. Reading Comprehension

According to Keith Lenz, Ph.D., from the University of Kansas, Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from text. The goal of all reading instruction is ultimately targeted at helping

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a reader comprehend text. Reading comprehension involves at least two people: the reader and the writer. The process of comprehending involves decoding the writer’s words and then using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer’s message.

3. Reading strategies

Reading strategies show how readers tackle a reading task, how they interpret their reading and what they do when they do not comprehend. AS for Brantmeier (2002), “the strategies may involve skimming, scanning, guessing, recognizing cognates and word families, reading for meaning, predicting, activating general knowledge, making inferences, following references, and separating main ideas from supporting ideas.”

The reading strategies also consist of evaluating content, such as agreeing or disagreeing, making an association with prior knowledge or experience, asking and answering questions, looking at the key words, using sentence structure analysis such as determining the subject, verb or object of the sentence, skipping and rereading (Almasi, 2003). Apparently, not all strategies are of equal effectiveness. The reader should be aware of which strategies are suitable for their types of reading texts and tasks.

4. Reading rates

Reader’s reading rates may differ with different reading purposes. Readers of middle levels may have the ability to recognize when to read faster or slower and whether or not to adapt their reading rates basing on their prior knowledge of the topic, the text structure and the language used.

Reading Rate	Use this rate when:
Skimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trying to get the overall general content of the material • determining if more careful reading is necessary
Scanning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • searching for a single piece of specific information (e.g., date, name, term)
Rapid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading for entertainment or enjoyment (e.g., light, fast-moving fiction)

Slow and Careful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading material that contains difficult or unfamiliar concepts and vocabulary (e.g., technical material that requires thorough examination and reflection) • reading to retain detail (e.g., summarizing, studying) • reading to judge or evaluate ideas (e.g., issues article, novel study)
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5. Qualities of a good reader

When learning a language, learners can use different reading styles. Some read and understand a text very quickly while others read slowly and fail to understand what they read. The following are some qualities of good readers, according to Irvin (1990):

Good readers

Before Reading

- Understand that reading is a sense-making process.
- Build up their background knowledge on the subject before they begin to read.

- Use their prior topical and linguistic knowledge as they read

- Know their purpose for reading

During Reading

- Give their complete attention to the reading task

- Keep a constant check on their own understanding

- Adjust their reading rate to match purpose and reading material

- Monitor their reading comprehension and do it so often it becomes automatic

- Can match their reading strategies to a variety of reading materials

- Stop only to use a fix-up strategy when they do not understand

After Reading

- Decide if they have achieved their goal for reading

- Respond personally and critically to what they read

- Evaluate their own comprehension of what was read

- Summarize the major ideas

- Seek additional information from outside sources

6. Strategies for the students of Middle Level to understand texts of different subjects:

- Using Prior Knowledge/Previewing
- Predicting
- Identifying the Main Idea and Summarization
- Questioning
- Making Inferences
- Visualizing

Using Prior Knowledge/Previewing

Activating prior knowledge is something that we do naturally as adult readers, as mature readers. We always relate what we're reading to something we know. As a matter of fact when we read we really have to think about those connections. Sometimes students don't access their background knowledge because they never think that it's important or if they don't have the background knowledge the teacher doesn't have an opportunity to really build that background knowledge.

When students preview text, they tap into what they already know that will help them to understand the text they are about to read. This provides a framework for any new information they read.

Predicting

When students make predictions about the text they are about to read, it sets up expectations based on their prior knowledge about similar topics. As they read, they may mentally revise their prediction as they gain more information.

Whether the predictions are correct or not, they encourage students to read actively and keep them interest. If the predictions are incorrect, it may signal a misunderstanding that needs to be revised.

Teachers should give the students some activities to do such as: Looking at the pictures, tables of contents, chapter headings, diagrams... and ask them what the subjects in the book are; Writing down predictions about the text. During reading, looking for words or phrases from the predictions, while reading, revising the predictions or making new ones.

Identifying the Main Idea and Summarization

Identifying the main idea and summarizing requires students

to determine what is important and then put it in their own words. Implicit in this process is trying to understand the author's purpose in writing the text.

To develop students' understanding and knowledge of how to locate the clues in a text requires explicit teaching of effective reading strategies.

The location and understanding of the main idea of a text requires the reader to generate theories about the content and test this against information found in the text. The understanding of text structures and textual clues assist students in gathering and condensing the information they have read and use this to find and comprehend the main idea.

Questioning

Asking and answering questions about text is another strategy that helps students focus on the meaning of text. Teachers can help by modeling both the process of asking good questions and strategies for finding the answers in the text.

Before students read the text, the teacher can give one or two guiding questions for the student to think about as they read or, asking them to think about the subject based on the titles, chapter heads, and visual information, making notes of anything they are curious about; Looking for answers while reading and writing them down. This strategy is one of the strategies that help the student elicit prior knowledge, build background, and serve to focus attention.

Making inferences

Making an inference involves using what you know to make a guess about what you do not know or reading between the lines. Readers who make inferences use the clues in the text along with their own experiences to help them figure out what is not directly said, making the text personal and memorable.

In order to make inferences about something that is not explicitly stated in the text, students must learn to draw on prior knowledge and recognize clues in the text itself.

Visualizing

Visualizing is the reading strategy that helps your students create a picture in their head of what they're reading. It is almost as if your

students are making videos or movies in their heads, all built from their background knowledge, their imagination, and the content of the text.

Many students can benefit greatly from thinking visually, using shapes, movements, colours...

Teachers can ask them to imagine processes and explanations happening visually, note down the main information from the text in the form of a table or chart.

7. Conclusion

The strategies used by readers when reading play an important part in comprehending the texts. Good readers are the readers who appear to use a wide range of strategies with higher frequency than poor readers do. When considering the reading needs of Middle Level students, it is important to realize that all readers differ considerably in their interests, backgrounds, learning styles... so that the teachers can instruct them use the most useful strategies for reading the texts effectively. It is hoped that the paper will make a small contribution to upgrade the quality of teaching and learning English reading skills for Vietnamese teachers and students.

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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENGLISH LITERATURE COURSE: A STUDY AMONG ENGLISH MAJORED SOPHOMORES AT VINH UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: Past research has established the role of English literature in English language learning. Courses in English literature have been said to provide EFL learners with considerable benefits, not only in terms of literary knowledge and linguistic skills but also in terms of cultural knowledge and personal development. This study aimed to examine the impacts of an English literature course for English majored students' at Vinh University. It looks at the participants' perceptions of the course regarding the content, the difficulties encountered and teaching techniques. The data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, it is affirmed that the role of English literature in English Language Learning is undeniable. It provides students of English language with many profits, not only in terms of literary knowledge but also in terms of linguistics skills, not only regarding cultural experience but also regarding personal development. The study of EFL students' perceptions of the English literature course was carried out to measure the true values and realities of the existing situation of this course and put forward some pedagogic solutions. Our paper aimed to seek the answers for the following research questions:

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1. What are the EFL students' perceptions of the use and place of English literature course in language teaching?
2. What are the difficulties that EFL students encounter when learning English literature?
3. What are the most appropriate techniques of teaching English literature for EFL learners?

2. Literature review

2.1. The role of English literature

The importance of teaching English literature to EFL learners does not go entirely uncontested. There are two positions, namely essentialist and non-essentialist, regarding the role of literature courses in EFL: The non-essentialists deny that studying literature may help the development of language competence and proficiency. However, generally speaking, the essentialists prevail the non-essentialists, the rationale for incorporating literature into EFL program has been well established. Many scholars have been on the same page to affirm the importance of the teaching of English literature in English language teaching.

Howard Sage once wrote: "These teachers continue to find the use of literature in language teaching an interesting and worthy concern." (Sage, 1987, p. 11). These words can demonstrate that while some teachers undervalue the introduction of literary contents in English language classrooms, many are aware of the importance of this discipline. A number of benefits of English literature can explain why we should continue teaching English Literature in English language classrooms. In terms of linguistic knowledge, English literature can provide students with a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Brumfit and Carter considered literature as "an ally of language" (Brumfit J. and Carter A., 1986, p. 1) while Spark argues that "it is in literature that the resources of the language are most fully and skillfully used" (Spack, 1985, p. 705). In reading literary texts, learners can acquire rich vocabulary and useful structures.

Lazar (1993) mentioned three approaches which are language-based model, literature as content and literature as personal enrichment.

- a. *Language-based model*: This model includes integrating language

and literature syllabuses, which emphasizes the use of grammar, lexis, and discourse categories to make the aesthetic judgment of literary texts.

b. *Literature as content*: In this approach, literature is the basic course content. Literary texts are analyzed in terms of their historical and cultural backgrounds, their genre, and rhetorical devices.

c. *Literature for personal enrichment*: This approach gives students a chance to reflect on their personal experiences, opinions, and feelings. Texts are the basic stimuli for classroom activities.

2.2. Techniques for teaching English literature

The techniques for teaching English literature are chosen according to three models (language-based model, culture-based model and personal development model) presented above. The language model allows the teacher to employ techniques used in language teaching to deconstruct literary texts to serve specific linguistic goals. In the cultural model, the teacher focuses on delegating knowledge and information related to English literature to students. The personal development model emphasizes the specific use of language in a text and in a cultural context. The following are some approaches based on these three models:

- Language-Based Approach

The language-based approach involves the use of a detailed analysis of literary text to guide students towards meaningful and personal interpretation. The teacher thus tries to encourage the learners to use their linguistic knowledge to form aesthetic judgments about the reading text. With this approach, the teacher can guide students to infer meanings from clues in the text, to read between lines. S/he can also ask students to make predictions about what will happen next at key points of a story and guide students to express opinion towards a text. Besides, simple language activities can be set and practiced in English literature course.

- Paraphrastic Approach

This approach deals with the surface meaning of the text. Paraphrase, as we know, is a restatement or rewording of a paragraph or text, in order to clarify, or expand on information. This method allows teachers to use simple words, expressions and structures compared to the more complicated ones in the literary texts. This approach is very appropriate for less proficient students. Different activities can be

organized with this approach: Provide a written paraphrased version as a complementary reading text; teach solely using a paraphrased version of the text; guide students to paraphrase the text; explain the figurative and ambiguous language used in simple words, use simple terms to explain what the story is about to students; re-tell the text to students to help them understand.

- Information-Based Approach

According to Carter and Long (1991), this approach involves critical concepts, literary conventions and metalanguage. Students should be able to use such terms and concepts in talking and writing about literature. This approach is a way of teaching knowledge about literature where literature is seen as a medium to offer a source of information to students. Different activities can be organized using this approach: guide students to identify and read informative extracts in the story; provide specific details about the literary elements found in the text; elicit information from students about the text; explain the main content of the text to the class; provide students with background information; ask questions to check students' knowledge based on what they have read.

- Personal-Response Approach

With this approach, the learners shouldn't be considered as passive receivers, but active participants in discovering the meanings (denotations and connotations) of the literary texts. Each reader will contribute to the final learning results depending on their expectations and previous experience. The teacher thus will become an intermediary (facilitator, mediator) who helps learners be in multidirectional interaction with the text, in order to "lead his learners towards an independent ability to read, assimilate and appreciate literary texts." The activities organized with this approach are various: guide students to relate the themes to personal experiences; ask students to compare the text to any text they have read earlier; elicit students' response to a text; encourage students to express feeling towards the issues raised in the text.

- Stylistic Approach.

Stylistic approach plays a vital role in teaching of English literature. It is ideal for developing learners' awareness of language use in literary texts. Its goal is to develop students' interpretative procedures. As Widdowson has stated, "stylistics provides a basis of aesthetic appreciation by bringing it to the level of conscious awareness, features

of the text otherwise will be assessable only to trained individuals” (Widdowson H. G., 1984). In English literature classrooms, students can identify linguistics features in a literary text, discuss different meanings of a literary text, extract examples from a text that describe a setting, identify adjectives that describe a character, etc.

3. Methodology

The study used a descriptive study, a qualitative approach to describe the actual situation of the use of techniques in English literature course. The data analysis only focused on the data that was taken from the interview, observation, questionnaire, etc. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is suitable to analyze the particular phenomenon in English literature classroom. The analytic-synthetic method was also used to analyze and synthesize different documents related to our work.

3.1. Materials

Questionnaire

The participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire which was composed of three sections of twenty for questions. These questions were open-ended or close-ended which require yes-no or frequent options.

Interviews

We conducted interviews with some students before and after the questionnaire to collect a richer source of information about their behavior, attitudes, opinions toward the English literature course they had taken part in.

3.2. Participants

123 students (112 female and 11 male) at Foreign Languages Department at Vinh University participated in the questionnaire. They have been studying English as a foreign language for 5 to 15 years. They have different levels of English language proficiency. They were students of English Language and English Language Teacher Education. They all finished their English literature course last year. Besides, some students participated in our interviews.

3.3. Procedure

First, we gathered information and reviewed the previous research related to the study. Then, we collected the data from the results of the

questionnaire, interviews, observation, etc. After that we interpreted the collected data presented in tables and charts.

4. Results and discussions

4.1. Students' perceptions of English literature course

From the results obtained from the questionnaire, it can be seen that the overwhelming majority of the respondents were aware of the importance of English literature course for their English language acquisition. 40.7% of them found it very important and 46.3% found it important. This is very valuable information for us to confirm their motivation to be involved in English literature course. When interviewed face to face, student Hoang Hieu N. said:

I feel that study English literature opens up a world of inspiration and creativity. It is a chance to discover how literature makes sense of the world through stories, poems, novels and plays. It is also a chance for me to sharpen your own ability to write, read, analyze and persuade in English.

(Hoang Hieu N., Personal communication, date: 24/5/2020)

The vast majority of the respondents (86.2%) stated that English literature course helped them broaden their cultural knowledge. Therefore, it may assume that there is a need among students to widen their background knowledge. The lack of cultural knowledge can be recognized easily among English language learners at the Department of Foreign Languages of Vinh University and it can lead to a lack of motivation in learning English literature.

4.2. Difficulties that EFL students encounter when learning English literature

Table 1: Students' perception of the degree of difficulty of English literature

Level of difficulty	Occurrences	Percent
Very difficult	21	17.1%
Difficult	86	69.9%
Moderate	15	12.2%
Easy	1	0.8%
Very easy	0	0%

Table 1 confirms our hypothesis at the beginning of the research that EFL learners at the Foreign Languages Department usually find the English literature course difficult. 86 students, occupying 69.9% of the respondents stated that the English literature was difficult, 21 students (i.e 17.1%) indicated that it was very difficult. When interviewed, student Nguyen Thi Thu Th. said:

For me, this is a very difficult subject for foreign language students. Before attending it, I have read some famous literary works such as Great Expectations (Charles Dickens, 1861) but I couldn't fully understand the whole story. Everything was really vague. And then, upon closer inspection, I know this is Charles Dickens' most famous work. It's really popular and I find literature not boring at all.

(Nguyen Thi Thu Th., personal communication, date: 24/5/2020)

Table 2: Students' perception of the most difficult parts of English literature course

Content	Occurrences	Percent
The socio-historical characteristics of each period	78	63.4%
Literary features of each period	28	22.8%
The literary works	12	9.8%
The authors' biography	5	4.1%
Total	123	100.0%

Table 2 reveals that 63.4 % of the respondents have difficulties in understanding the socio-historical characteristics of each period. This could be explained by the fact that our students have a limited cultural background, particularly that related to the history of England. To understand English literature, students should understand the socio-historical features of this country. Only 22.8% of the respondents stated that they had difficulties in understanding the literary features of each period.

4.3. Students' perception of the techniques used by the teacher in English literature course

4.3.1. Description of the experimented techniques for teaching English literature

The role play

The role play was experimented to improve students' reception of English literary works. The class was divided into groups of five or six. Each group had to choose one of the two famous plays written by W. Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*. They were asked to write the scenario of it, play it. They had to make a video of their play and send it to the teacher for assessment.

LMS tools

LMS (Learning Management System) is a very important tool allowing teachers to share learning content (E Learning course materials), keep track of students' progress, vary learning activities...

LMS has been used at Vinh University for years. Nevertheless, it was not compulsory in the academic year 2019-2020. Therefore, blended learning (which combines both traditional classroom and online courses) was experimented in English literature course. Students had to participate in different discussions online. It was the opportunity for them to revise their lessons as well as to express their opinions, views and emotion about the literary features of some period or some literary works and authors.

Storytelling

"A story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way, and it takes every word in the story to say what the meaning is." (Flannery O'Connor). Jerome Bruner once said: "It is very likely the case that the most natural and the earliest way in which we organize our experience and our knowledge is in terms of the narrative form". This technique is useful to English literature learning because it helps students map the plot as a memory technique, remember the key events, increase their verbal proficiency, foster their imagination and creativity and the cooperation between them. We experimented this technique in English literature classroom, taking into account the students' English level and time allowed. The goal was to make students grasp the plot, the characters and some important scenes.

Paraphrase

Literary texts are difficult for students to comprehend, particularly

that of the old English literature and poetry. The translation of some literary extracts from English into the target language (Vietnamese language) was used to help students understand literary texts better. The students were asked to work in groups and translate the text assigned by the teacher and then read it to the rest of the class. The teacher could intervene to correct some translation mistakes and propose his translation.

Stylistics

The importance of learning and using literary devices is obvious for students to be able to fit in a world where English is the language of communication. In the classroom, the teacher provided firstly students with the main knowledge about literary features and devices. Then, they were asked to find out some literary features and figures of speech in a poem or prose extract. The analysis was based for instance on the simile, metaphor, alliteration, anaphora, assonance, hyperbole, irony, metonymy, onomatopoeia, personification, etc.

Graphic organizers

A picture is worth a thousand words. The use of graphic organizers is very important in an English literature course because it is a visual representation or frame used to organize information. The purpose of a graphic organizer is to help learners by simplifying information and by stimulating thinking skills. In other words, a graphic organizer helps learners to clarify and organize information into categories (main ideas, setting, plot, characters, scenes, story details, facts, opinions, etc). In English literature classroom for EFL students of the academic year 2019-2020, graphic organizers were used mainly to help learners understand an English novel even though they hadn't read it. They could read the summary or/and some extracts of a novel and complete the graphic organizer provided by the teacher.

4.3.2. Students' opinion about the used techniques

Table 2: Students' perception of the teaching techniques used in English literature course

Activities	Very effective	Effective	Medium	Not effective	Not effective at all
Role play	32.5%	43.9%	20.3%	3.3%	0%
LMS	13.8%	39.8%	35.8%	11.4%	0%

Storytelling	18.7%	47.2%	30.1%	4.1%	0%
Paraphrase	25.2%	49.6%	24.4%	0.8%	0%
Stylistics	23.6%	50.4%	24.4%	1.6%	0%
Graphic organizers	23.6%	49.6%	24.4%	2.4%	0%

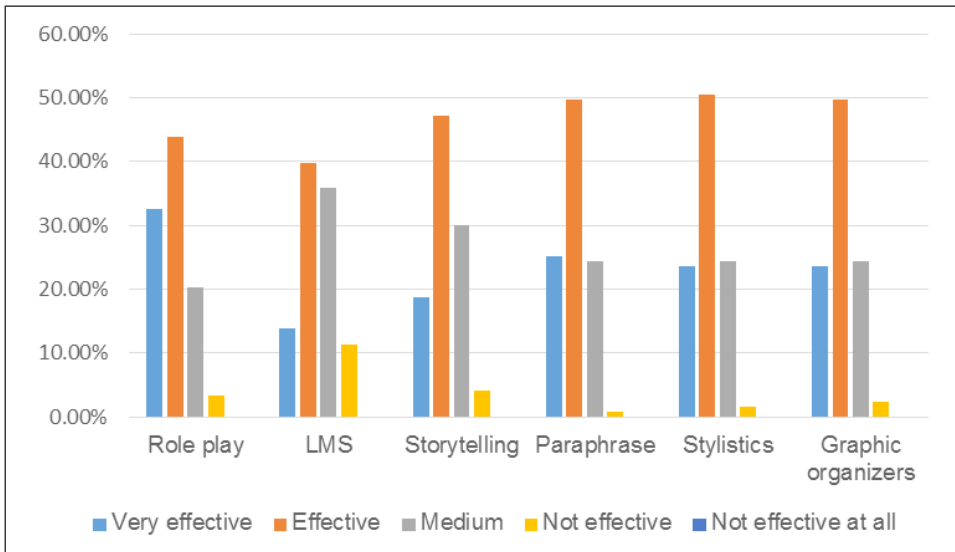


Figure 1: Students' perception of the techniques used by the teacher in English literature course

The results from these experiments suggest, as we can see in Table 2 and Figure 1, that the majority of the respondents had a positive opinion about the teaching techniques used in English literature course. The stylistic-based technique, the paraphrase and the graphics organizers were the most effective: 23.6% stated that the stylistic-based technique is was very effective and 50.4% reported that it was effective; 25.2 % of the asked students indicated that the paraphrastic technique was very effective, 49.9% of them reported that is was effective, only 30% of the respondents indicated that the effectiveness of this activity was just medium; a large majority of the asked students reported that the use of graphic organizers was very effective (23.6&) or effective (49.6%).

These results reinforce the benefits of the facilitating techniques in English literature course for EFL learners as the latter are not very

familiar with this difficult discipline. Because the number of students who have lower English proficiency is important, sometimes, the teacher should simplify language activities by organizing stylistic and paraphrasing activities or using posters or graphic organizers. S/He should choose simple literary materials in the classroom and encourage advanced students to approach more difficult literary texts that offer a wider range of styles.

5. Conclusion

Brandes states that: “Learning what is meaningful and relevant depends partly on what is taught and partly on how it is taught.” (Brandes, D., & Ginnis, P., 1986, p. 12) Teaching English literature is only efficient if the teacher uses appropriate techniques in and outside the classroom. Based on various research methods, our study demonstrated that most participants were motivated to learn English literature. They were aware of the importance of English literature in their linguistic and cultural acquisition. The results showed that they encountered a lot of difficulties related to their language skills, their cultural knowledge as well as their techniques of literary reception. In terms of the techniques used in English literature classroom, the analysis of the obtained results from the questionnaire allowed us to conclude that it is essential to diversify techniques in teaching literary periods, authors and works, whether it can be language-based, content-based or personal-growth-based. Nevertheless, these techniques should be flexible, depending on time, space, learners’ level. Besides, the techniques should be used to facilitate literary reception, ranging from the easy to difficult. The use of frameworks, graphic organizers, posters, worksheets, etc. should be increased. The teacher should sometimes translate literary texts using L1, which is an option for the teacher to help weaker students to understand the text. It was found that the most effective techniques for teaching English literature to EFL students are various: language-based, paraphrastic, information-based, personal-response, stylistic. These techniques are all worthy in accomplishing the objectives of teaching English literature.

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TEACHING PRONUNCIATION STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS AT NGHE AN COLLEGE OF ECONOMICS - AN ACTION RESEARCH

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Abstract: Teaching pronunciation is an integral part of teaching and learning foreign languages. Pronunciation is considered a major factor affecting the success or failure in the process of acquiring and using a foreign language. However, teaching pronunciation hasn't received enough concerns. It is almost neglected or ignored in English lessons in most classrooms in Vietnam today. English lessons at Nghe An College of Economics are not out of this trend. Therefore, this study is conducted to review on the issues relating to the teaching pronunciation in English lessons at Nghe An College of Economics. In this research, I will first state the problem of the study and a theoretical framework into which the problem fits. Then, I will review literature from different sources on what contents should be included in a pronunciation instruction class and specific strategies or techniques on how to teach these components including intonation, stress (word stress and sentence stress) and rhythm, consonants (phonemes) and vowels (phonemes). Interpretation of the results and some recommendations are provided in the research as well.

1. Introduction

A number of famous scholars and linguists have conducted researches on language learning strategies to explore their role in the process of learning another language. The results have showed that, language learning strategies have been used in the field of English as a Second Language (ESL) to help learners autonomously improve

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their English listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, language learning strategies have not been applied to pronunciation learning in a large scale manner. Peterson (2000) has confirmed that *“Only a limited number of studies have requested students to reflect on their pronunciation learning techniques and report the strategies they use”* and *“Although the study of foreign accents has always been a fascination for some researchers, the teaching of pronunciation and oral skills in general in foreign and second language classrooms has often been low on the list of priorities”*. This is an extreme pity since a right language learning process has been proved to begin with speaking in which pronunciation learning is an essential element.

In an ESL setting, the students must not only increase their English comprehension for the classroom, but also need to communicate and interact in English outside the class in various situations. Students need to understand and to be understood. As stated by Abercrombie (1991) *“Being an intelligible speaker is to understand and to be understood”*. It’s obvious that *“To make oneself be understood”* means *“to pronounce correctly”*. In Vietnam, however, pronunciation has not yet received enough attention. There are many English training courses teaching speaking but they do not focus on pronunciation. Consequently, a great number of students have many difficulties in pronunciation. When speaking English, with very little or poorly trained pronunciation skills, they have problems either making themselves understood or understanding others.

As English teaching has now shifted to language functions and communicative competencies, a new urgency for the teaching of pronunciation has arisen (Celce-Murcia, 1987; Morley, 1998; Gilbert, 1994). Being aware of the trend, I have conducted an action research on *“Teaching Pronunciation Strategies For Students At Nghe An College Of Economics”*. This study attempted to bridge the gap by investigating the use of pronunciation learning strategies among adult ESL learners to examine the strategic learning of pronunciation through the use of pronunciation learning strategies that are linked to pronunciation acquisition theory. The study has also recommended effective pronunciation learning strategies that learners should use during their learning process. In short, this research was conducted to address the following research questions:

1. What types of Pronunciation strategies are being used by students at Nghe An College of Economics?

2. What are the most frequently used strategies?

3. Do Pronunciation strategies help improve students' language competence?

2. Literature review

The development in the area of second language acquisition research, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, has turned attention away from a teaching-centred perspective to one which included interest in how the actions of learners might affect their acquisition of language. These researches have contributed some important data on factors that can influence the learning and teaching process. Language teachers, therefore, were motivated to examine what individual learners, especially successful learners, do in their study in order to elicit useful information on the process of language acquisition. Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) are two of the earliest researchers who shifted their focus from teaching methods and materials to a more learner-centred aspect, maintaining that successful language learners employ a variety of learning strategies in their study to facilitate language acquisition.

Most of the literature on pronunciation deals with what and how to teach, while the learners keep silent in the classroom. Morley (1998) suggested focusing on designing new wave instructional programs. According to her, the instructional designs should take into account not only language forms and functions, but also issues of learner self-involvement and learner strategy training. Joan Morley (1998), however, countered these arguments by saying that "more programs in a variety of ESL/EFL settings are revising curricula so that speech in general, and pronunciation in particular, are brought into the mainstream of instruction with a learner goal of oral communicative competence". And Celce-Murcia (1996) expressed the need for pronunciation instruction to become more communicatively oriented. Sharing the same ideas, Dauer (1993) agreed that pronunciation is a very important factor in the speech process (spoken language) when the speaker achieves the goal to communicate effectively by being understood. And Kriedler (1989) has stated that correct and clear pronunciation are considerably important in language learning. Without them, learners may not be

understood and may be poorly perceived by other English speakers. They need to have confidence in their ability to speak. Good pronunciation takes time to build up, as there are many factors involved.

Sharing the same concerns, Vietnamese researchers have conducted a number of studies for the issue. Nguyen (2007) investigated Vietnamese learners and their difficulties in pronouncing English final consonants. Tuan (2011) tried to examine the most problematic English consonants facing Vietnamese students. Tam (2005) focused on finding out the common errors committed when pronouncing English by students in Vietnam. Vu Hai Yen, (2016) shared that “Oral skills seemed to be ignored by both teachers and learners. EP, therefore, became an aspect of language learning that was not important and little time was devoted to it”. Pham (2005) concluded that “Traditional pedagogy, emphasizing the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary rather than communicative competence” These are the reasons why “Vietnamese learners spend many years learning English in school domestically (or overseas), they still find it hard to be understood by foreigners” (Huy, 2006).

Strategic learning and pronunciation learning are both areas of study that have recently received wide-spread attention in second language research (Brown, 2000; Celce-Murcia, Dornyei 2001; Norton & Toohey, 2001). Strategic learning research has sought to advance the understanding of how students tackle difficult language learning tasks using learning strategies (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999). On the other hand, the field of pronunciation learning research has attempted to discover which areas of pronunciation are most beneficial for instructors to teach (Celce-Murcia, Derwing, Munro & Carbonaro, 2000; Florez, 1998; Riney & Flege, 1998; Riney, Takada, & Ota, 2000). Little crossover between these two fields has taken place, so second language researchers have yet to discover how second language learners tackle difficult pronunciation learning tasks through the use of learning strategies.

Language learning strategies vary widely and they are divided into distinct categories. Oxford (1990) distinguishes between direct (memory, cognitive and compensation) and indirect (metacognitive, affective and social) LLSs. Chamot (1999) divides LLSs into three main headings: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies. For the objectives of the study, I applied the classification of Oxford (1990) to conduct my research.

The three groups of direct strategies are as follows:

- *Memory strategies*: - techniques specifically tailored to help the learners store new information in their memory and retrieve it later on, e.g. placing new words in context, using keywords and representing sounds in memory, ect.

- *Cognitive strategies*: - skills that allow learners to better comprehend and produce language in different ways, e.g. note-taking, repetition, summarizing text, etc.

- *Compensation strategies* - behaviors used to compensate and help them to employ the language, e.g. guessing while listening or reading, or using synonyms or paraphrasing while speaking or writing.

As opposed to direct strategies, “Indirect strategies provide indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy, and other means” (Oxford, 1990). The three sets of indirect strategies are as follows:

- *Metacognitive strategies* - behaviors used for arranging, planning and evaluating one’s learning, e.g. overviewing and linking with already known material.

- *Affective strategies* - techniques which regulate emotional behaviors and motivation, e.g. using relaxation techniques, singing songs in a target language to lower one’s anxiety, etc.

- *Social strategies* - actions allowing better learner interaction with other people in the language learning process, e.g. asking questions, cooperating with peers, and developing empathy towards target language speaking people, etc.

3. Research material and methodology

The main focus of this study was on whether students at Nghe An College used any of the pronunciation strategies and on if teaching pronunciation strategies could improve learners’ pronunciation and speaking skill. I wanted to know which strategies learners used to help them and if they developed confidence to speak English after the training. It is hoped that the findings from this study in a classroom context will encourage pronunciation teaching and learning.

To address the research questions mentioned above, I applied a mixture of qualitative method and action research in the classroom.

3.1. Participants

A total of 102 first year students who were non-major in English language, with the domination of female were asked to answer a questionnaire of using pronunciation strategies during learning process. Their ages were from 20 to 22 years old. The participants were in four classes at which I was teaching. The participants were divided into two groups - one is Control group and the other is Experiment group. The groups were divided randomly.

3.2. Procedure of research

To fulfill the aims of the study, I applied a three-step cycle to do the research.

Step 1:

Before conducting an action research in the classroom, the researcher started a pilot study by doing a survey using questionnaires. The survey was accomplished with the aims of collecting the information about Pronunciation Strategies, including types of language learning strategies being used by students; the strategies frequency and the impacts of strategies on students' studying. The questionnaires were designed into two parts. Part I was about some personal information. The personal information was compulsory for the purpose of the study. Part II contained the items related to the pronunciation strategies which were designed basing on Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language learning (SILL). The students' final scores were also taken in to consideration in this step.

Step 2:

Having explored the strategies used by participants, I started my action research in the classroom. The participants in the action research were 55 students in experiment group who were major in accounting. The participants were, of course, non major in English. The experiment group were asked to used some of the pronunciation strategies. Whereas, the control group were taught as usual. The action research design that I chose was "post-test in both control and experiment groups".

Step 3:

Having finished the course, I asked two groups to do the same final test in order to check if the students' proficiency in language was

improved when using pronunciation strategies. The test, of course, oral test so that I could check the students' confidence and pronunciation.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

3.3.1. Data of Language learning strategies

In order to answer two first research questions, the questionnaires were used during the study. The questionnaires employed a five point Likert-type scale and the participants were to choose from always to never. Scores 01, 02, 03, 04, 05 is for never, seldom, sometimes, usually, always respectively. Spearman Brown formulas was adapted to verify the reliability of the data collected in survey through the questionnaire. The formulas was shown as following:

$$rSB = 2 * rhh / (1 + rhh) \tag{1}$$

(rSB: Reliability Spearman-Brown)

(rhh: Coefficient of correlation between odd and even)

$rSB \geq 0,7$	Reliable data	(2)
$rSB < 0,7$	Unreliable data	

Coefficient of correlation between odd and even (rhh) is calculated in EXCEL using following function:

$$rhh = \text{correl}(\text{array1}, \text{array2})$$

(array 1: total even scores, array 2: total odd scores)

A descriptive analysis of the questionnaire items was also performed by calculating Mode, Median, Mean and Standard deviation. These values are calculated in EXCEL using functions below:

VALUES	FOMULAS	(3)
Mode	=mode(number1,number2,...)	
Median	=median(number1,number2,...)	
Mean	=average(number1,number2,...)	
Standard deviation	=stdev(number1,number2,...)	

3.3.2. Data of efficiency in learning ESP

To evaluate how the participants' efficiency in learning ESP improved, the same test was employed in both group, control and experiment. The participants took the test at the end of the course.

Their scores were compared to check and evaluate the improvement of their efficiency in speaking skill.

Firstly, the scores of control group and experiment group were described by Mode, Median, Mean and Standard Deviation using the functions (2) above.

Secondly, the Independent T-test was adapted to compare the difference of the two groups so that I could determine the Probability which helped me verify if the mean value between control group and experiment group was random or meaningful.

Formulas to calculate Probability in EXCEL as following:

$$P = \text{ttest}(\text{array1}, \text{array2}, \text{tail}, \text{type}) \quad (4)$$

(array1: score column of control group, array 2: score column of experiment group, tail=1, type=3), Tail = 1 (Hypothesis was directional), Type = 3 (Unequal variance)

$P \leq 0,05$	The value is meaningful	(5)
$P > 0,05$	The value is not meaningful, it may be random	

Thirdly, I applied Cohen (1998) formulas to calculate effect size (ES) of the value. The ES was used to determine if the action had effect or not. The formulas is shown as follow:

$$\text{SMD} = \frac{\text{Mean value of experiment group} - \text{Mean value of control group}}{\text{Standard deviation of control group}} \quad (6)$$

(SDM: Standard Median Deviation)

This value was used to check if the effect size of the action. If the effect size was above 0,50 (ES>0,50), the action should be used. The effect size was explained in the criteria table of Cohen (1998) as follow:

SMD	Effect size	(7)
>100	Very big	
0,80 - 100	Big	
0,50 - 0,79	Average	
0,20 - 049	Small	
< 0,20	Very small	

4. Finding and discussion

4.1. Research question 1 and 2

What pronunciation strategies are being used by students at Nghe An College of Economics during their process of learning English? And what are their most frequently used strategies?

In order to address the above research questions, I applied a pilot study with a questionnaire designed basing on Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language learning (SILL). Oxford divided learning strategies into two groups, direct and indirect with 6 sub types. The questionnaire consisted 37 items relating to pronunciation strategies.

After collecting the questionnaires, I started to verify the reliability of the data collected using formula (1) and then described the data by Mode, Median, Mean and Standard deviation on EXCEL using the functions in (3)

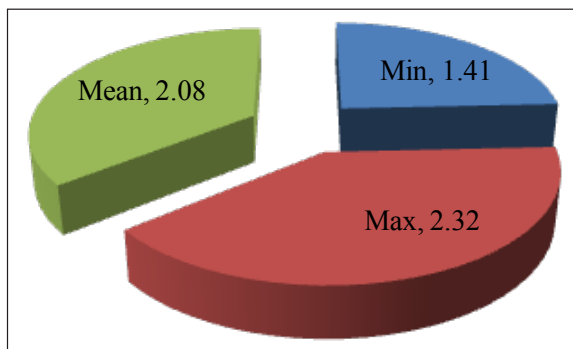
Basing on the criteria of reliability index, the data collected were reliable with rSB reached 0.81. (table 1)

Table 1: The Reliability of The Data Collected

Reliability Spearman-Brown	Value
rSB	0,81

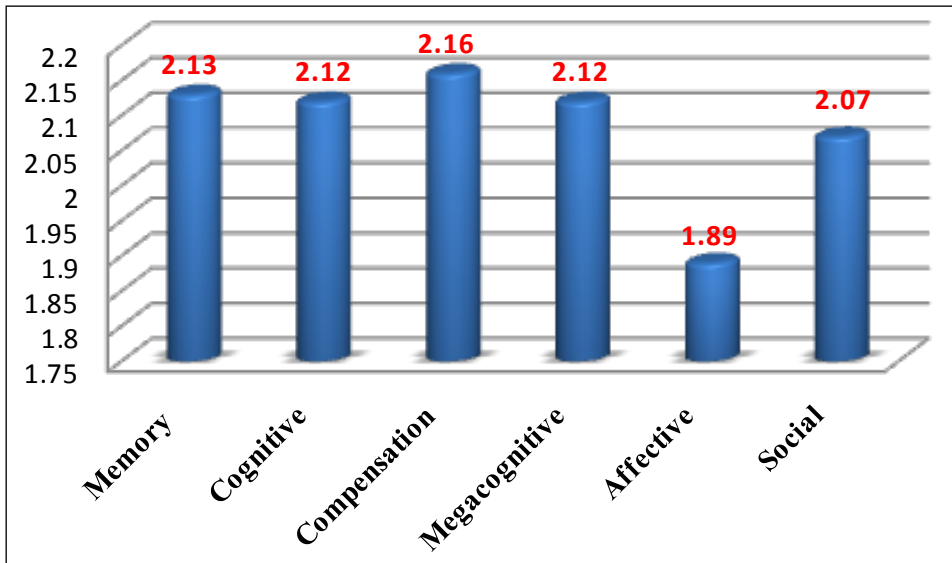
According to the scale of Oxford's (1990) through which the frequency of using strategies were assessed (Mean from 3,5 to 5,0: high frequency, Mean from 2,5 to 3,4: average frequency, Mean from 1,0 to 2,4: low frequency), we could see clearly that the students at Nghe An college of Economics used pronunciation strategies at low level with mean of 2.08 (chart 1)

Chart 1: The statistic values of usage frequency



Looking at the chart 2 below, it was identified that students at Nghe An college of Economics used a variety of strategies belonging to different strategy groups. The strategies which they preferred relating to compensation, memory, cognitive and megacognitive. Among them, compensation strategies were the most frequently used ($M=2.16$), while affective strategies were not paid many concerns by the students. They were the least frequently used with mean of 1,89. This meant that the students at Nghe An College of Economics focused too much on remembering and correcting errors, they haven't used the language in the real life enough.

Chart 2: The most and the least used strategy



In the group of memory strategies (see Table 2), students preferred using a dictionary when learning pronunciation. It is the-most-often-used strategy were with mean of 2.32. Ranking the next was the association of the pronunciation of words or phrases with a sound in their native language (Ex: “*éch xào lãn*” for “*excellent*”; “*kiệp sai lằm*” for “*keep silent*”...) ($M=2.31$). Other tactics used from time to time included repeating the new word several times aloud to memorize its pronunciation ($M=2.26$) and imitating English language speakers and pronunciation tutors ($M=2.01$). The tactics of memorizing the pronunciation of a given word by associating it with words having the same rhyme and tone accounted for the least among the memory strategies.

Table 2: The frequency of using memory strategies

Statements	Mean
1. I use an English-English dictionary to memorize the pronunciation of a new word.	2.32
2 I memorize the pronunciation of a given word by associating it with words having the same rhyme and tone.	1.93
3. I repeat the new word several times aloud to memorize its pronunciation.	2.26
4. I repeat the new word silently to myself to memorize its pronunciation	2.0
5. I associate the new word's sound with a sound in my native language (if there any) So that I do not forget it.	2.31
6. When I find difficult word to pronounce I repeat the difficult word over and over to myself until I memorize it	1.94
7. I review the pronunciation of recently learned word regularly.	2,28
8. I imitate English language speakers and pronunciation tutors	2.01

In the group of cognitive strategies, students liked using tactics relating to listening, such as listening to the recording (by a native speaker) to have native like pronunciation and articulating their organs of speech like-native speakers during sound production to have native like pronunciation. These accounted for the most with M=2.32 and M=2.3 respectively. The details were shown in the table 3 below:

Table 3: The frequency of using cognitive strategies.

Statements	Mean
9. I listen to the recording (by a native speaker) to have native like pronunciation.	2.32
10. I record my voice while producing the new words and listen to my record.	1.92
11. I use the new word in a context to remember it later.	2.26
12. Use English media to learn and practice new English sound	1.99
13. I try to articulate my organs of speech like- native speakers during sound production to have native like pronunciation.	2.3

14. I use a mirror to watch how I articulate my organs when I produce a given sound and compare it with the articulation of the model in the books.	1.92
15. I compare sound articulation in my language with the articulation of the similar sounds in the target language	2.31
16. I often listen to programs that I will learn something from even if they require more time and effort.	1.92

Students at Nghe An College of Economics rarely noticed their own feelings when learning the language. They didn't pay much attention to their anxiety or achievement so that they could control their learning process. The details were shown in table 4 below:

Table 4: The frequency of using cognitive strategies.

Statements	Mean
30. I reward myself if I make progress in pronouncing difficult words or phrases.	2.08
31. I encourage myself work to improve my pronunciation even if others think that my pronunciation is not good.	1.83
32. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using SL	2.2
33. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using SL	1.53
34. I write down my feelings in a language learning dairy	1.41
35. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning SL.	2.3

To address research question 3, I applied the actions in the real classroom. The actions that I applied were pronunciation tasks designed basing on the techniques of metacognitive strategies and social strategies. I also tried to encourage students to use more learning strategies during their process. After applying the actions, the two group were asked to do an oral test. The scores of the tests were analyzed by statistic values (see chart 3). The average scores of the experiment group were higher than those of control group. After analyzing, the Probability was identified with the value below 0,05, which meant that the difference between Control group and Experiment group was significant and the scores were not random. The effect size was above 0,5, which meant

that Pronunciation strategies do help improve English competence. However, the improvement index was not so high. (see table 5).

Chart 3: The statistic values of scores of control and experiment group

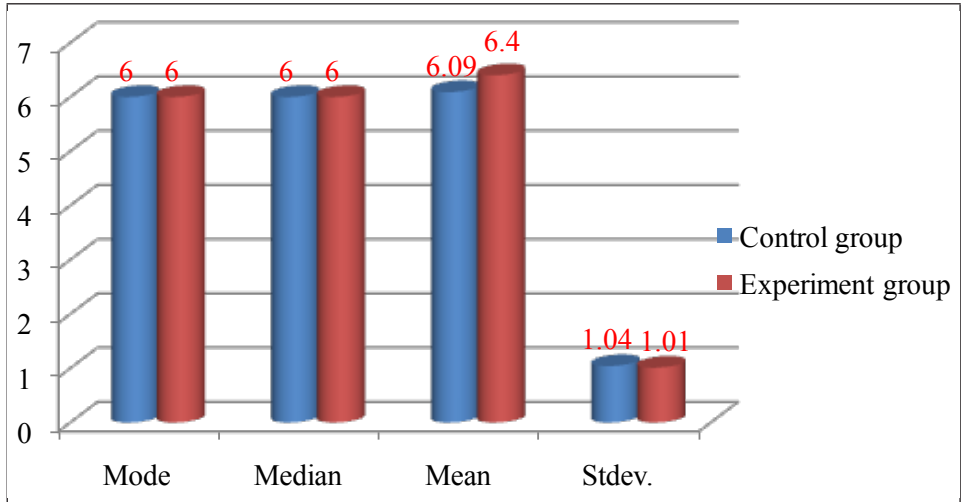


Table 5: The and experiment group

	Control group (a)	Experiment group (b)
Mean	6.09	6.4
Difference value (b-a)		0.31
P		0.02
ES (effect size)		0.53

5. Conclusion and recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study was meant to bridge a gap that currently exists between pronunciation learning theory and language acquisition theory. It used descriptive and inferential statistics to determine pronunciation strategies that learners used to improve their English pronunciation and determine strategies that correlated with spontaneous pronunciation skill. It also sought to determine natural categories of pronunciation strategies. Investigation into these areas of inquiry was done through the use of learner responses to items on a strategic pronunciation learning survey.

The findings on learners' improvement indicate that the study has shown advances overall in the following areas:

- The learner perception was that the training had improved their pronunciation and increased overall their self-confidence in speaking English.

- The positive attitude of the learner (Affective LLS) reflects the beneficial effects of the pronunciation improvement.

- Most importantly learners were able to experience the learning context, and begin to appreciate the meaning of helping each other. Other valuable insights were gained; they learned the value of planning and evaluating (metacognitive strategies), self motivating (affective LLS), practising and accepting responsibility, working with others (social strategies) and how the strategies support themselves in learning.

5.2. Recommendations

- Teachers should be aware of taking the advantages of pronunciation strategies and students' confidence and correct pronunciation ability may benefit from discussions and practice situations in which students learn how to use strategies in a more communicative manner and in a larger variety of settings.

- Teachers should categorize pronunciation learning strategies into a monitoring category that contains both input/practice and noticing/feedback strategies.

- Teacher should design pronunciation tasks basing on techniques relating to social and metacognitive strategies. These techniques can help much in improving students' confidence and students' language competence.

- Teacher should suggest some of the pronunciation softwares or websites which help students to practice pronunciation in their selfstudy process.

- Teacher should apply pronunciation tasks regularly in classroom and encourage students to do the task regardless the occurrence of mistakes or errors.

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THE EFFECT OF YOUTUBE VIDEO WATCHING ON CHILDREN'S LISTENING COMPREHENSION A CASE STUDY: A 6-YEAR-OLD LEARNER IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: This article presents a case study which aims at analyzing the influence that watching English educational videos on YouTube has on children's listening competence. This research was conducted at home and was carried out with a Vietnamese 6- year- old boy during 3 years. In order to conduct this research, theoretical support about audiolingual teaching method and extensive listening were taken into account. The participant was observed while watching chosen inputs on a daily basic and then took a Cambridge English Younger Learners after the 3 year experiment. The findings of this case study suggested that daily extensive listening might have a significant impact on the kid's listening comprehension. Some selected native videos are included in this paper, which might be helpful sources for other children to practice their English listening and speaking.

1. Introduction

The importance of listening in communication has also been well documented (Feyten, 1991; Wolvin, 2010; Wolvin & Coakley, 2000). The fact, however, English has not been used widely in daily life in Vietnam. That is the reason why many kids have good grades in doing grammar exercise cannot understand what a native speaker says or what the content of an English cartoon is. There is a need in helping young learners communicate as soon as possible. Besides, most of parents are

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not affordable to send their kids to centers or schools taught by foreign teachers from English speaking countries.

Jeremy Harmer (2003) has this familiar advice for parents or teachers of English who are really interested in helping their students acquire the language: “Students need to be exposed to the English language if they want to learn it, and one of the best ways of doing this is through listening” (p. 29). The outbreak of Internet, especially You Tube channel, has made educators come up with the idea of immersing children in English Videos on this channel. This paper looks at the effects of listening to native videos on You Tube as a daily habit for about one hour on children’s listening comprehension ability. An experiment was observed on a 6- year- old boy in Vietnam and his listening skill was measured by a set of Cambridge English Young Learners Tests (Starters, Movers and Fliers).

2. Literature review

2.1 Audiolingual

The Audiolingual method (ALM) is an oral language teaching approach which is based on Skinner’s Behaviorism theory. The theory assumed that anyone could acquire a particular language in a short period, using a system of reinforcement. The method is based on two fundamental concepts including the behavioral theory of psychology and the structural view of language. To begin with, the structural view of language in the Audiolingual method focuses on the grammatical system describes the ways in which grammatical elements can be combined. According to the behavioral theory, through reinforcements, habit formation, and associations, the learning of a new language can occur. The behavioral theory is based on the belief that if grammar is correctly used, and positively reinforced, it is more likely that a student would become competent in language use (Mart, 2013).

Sufficient knowledge of vocabulary to use in correct grammar patterns tend to be most focused by instructors who use the Audiolingual method. (Harmer, 2001).

Moreover, the Audiolingual method is based on the belief that oral learning of the English language is far for significant than writing it. Specifically, dialogue plays a critical role in the Audiolingual method. Dialogues provide learners with an opportunity to memorize, mimic, and practice English. According to Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009),

thanks for dialogue, language users can develop their own fluency and agility in language use.

The learners pay attention to how to imitate exactly what teacher utters. Repetition is capitalized on in order to produce precise output and pronunciation. The teacher acts as a model while the students are imitators (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009). By doing drills, a student is required to practice a particular line or construct of grammar repeatedly until they can use it without having to think or pause.

2.2 Extensive listening

Reading specialists have now confirmed the key role that extensive reading plays in the acquisition of reading skills, declaring that the best way to learn to read is by reading (Day & Bamford, 1998). It is undeniable that extensive reading can improve students' word recognition skills; vocabulary, reading comprehension, fluency, and general language proficiency (see *Summaries of Research on the Impacts of Extensive Reading* at www.extensivereading.net). What is amazing is that students obtain all these benefits by simply doing something pleasurable. They just read anything that they find enjoyable. The only condition is that they should choose reading materials that they can understand on their own and that they read a lot of these materials.

A number of writers have recently suggested that the idea behind extensive reading can be applied to listening (e.g., Ridgway, 2000). Therefore, the term "extensive listening" attract many learners. Proponents suggest that students should listen to a great amount and variety of enjoyable texts at appropriate levels to build listening-comprehension skills (Renandya and Farrell 2011; Chang and Millett 2014). While the listening sources do not need to be authentic to be effective, some research indicates the positive effect of using authentic materials in terms of their motivating qualities and success at improving listening (Mousavi and Iravani 2012; Thorn 2009). Authentic sources such as videos can be made more accessible to learners through the use of subtitles and captioning, which also have a positive effect on listening (Woodall 2010; Chang and Millett 2014).

As mentioned earlier, extensive listening is related to any listening programs that give students a lot of opportunities to comprehend a lot of meaningful and enjoyable input. These activities can be teacher directed dictations or read-aloud or self-directed listening for pleasure that students can do outside the classroom by their own as long as

they have the chance to listen in quantity and feel delighted to do it. (Renandya & Farrell, 2010).

2.3. Children's characteristics

It has been widely observed that children learn second languages more easily and more proficiently than adults do. After settling in another language community, children seem to be very efficient in picking up the new language, while their parents often seem to experience great difficulty in acquiring the same level of L2 proficiency as their children. Lacking life and social experience, children have no idea how to relate what they are learning to the life experience. Generally, children are able to learn language more quickly than adults (Brumfit, 1991). They are more susceptible to accept new information and adapt their view to the new environment. They seldom reject new information which may contradict their beliefs.

Children depend on adults (teachers and parents) for material support, spiritual support, psychological support and life management (Lohff, 1997). They are other- directed rather than self-directed. That is the reason why adults have to select useful and relevant source for their needs and purposes.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research questions

Does watching YouTube English videos have effective impacts on children's listening comprehension?

3.2. The case study's background

The boy was born in 2014 in Vietnam and has lived in Vietnam since then. His mother is a lecturer of English at a local University. He has never taken part in any English classes nor been in an English speaking country before. He is talkative and curious. He started watching English videos on YouTube channel in 2017 at the age of 3.

3.3 Materials and procedure

Observation

The boy was allowed to watch Videos chosen by his mother. Although there are a variety of Children programs on TV and internet, the chosen list includes "Dave and Ave", "Maggie and Steve", "Blippy", "Morphle" and "Peppa Pig". Below table describes some features of these channels.

Table 1: Information about Selected Listening Inputs

Name of the video	Total videos (May, 2020)	Internet link	Subscribers
Dave and Ava - Nursery Rhythm and baby songs	501	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6zhI71atP7YLoZyIyCIGNw	10,9 mil
Steve and Maggie	353	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCx1xhxQyzR4TT6PmXO0khhbQ	3,94 mil
Blippi	168	https://www.youtube.com/user/BlippiVideos	8,39 mil
Morphle	658	https://www.youtube.com/user/MagicPetsSongs4Kids	8,04 mil
Peppa Pig	902	https://www.youtube.com/user/theofficialpeppa	16,4 mil

He could pick up any programs to watch every day for 1 hour. This procedure lasted for 3 years as his hobby and habit. The videos were played in turns. Neither instructor nor translator helped him to understand. He is interested animation effects and funny stories with familiar situations such as family members, favorite food, colors, toys,... He watched each episode so many times that he could be able to remember the order of actions in stories. He was very delighted to watch hilarious videos. Sometimes, he asked to see longer but his mother insisted on refusing.

Cambridge English Young Learners Tests (Cambridge EFL tests)

Cambridge EYL tests includes 3 levels for the age 6-11 called Starters, Movers and Flyers. The length, number of tasks and number of items are shown in table 2 as below.

In this paper, only listening part is focused and used in the experiment.

Cambridge English: Starters

The Listening paper has four parts and 20 questions in total. Each part begins with one or two examples. The children will hear each recording twice.

Part 1 has a big picture and pictures of seven small objects. Children listen to five short conversations between a man and a woman. Children listen to information in the conversations and draw a line from each of the objects to the place where it should be on the big picture. Part 1 tests listening for words and prepositions.

Part 2 has a set of questions and a short conversation between a child and an adult. Children listen to information in the conversation to answer each of the questions. The answer will be a name or a number. Part 2 tests listening for numbers and spelling.

Part 3 has five short conversations between different pairs of people. There is a question and three pictures for each conversation. Children listen to each conversation and choose the right picture (A, B or C). Part 3 tests listening for specific information.

Part 4 has a big picture with seven examples of the same object (e.g. seven balls, seven books). Children listen to a conversation between an adult and a child and color in each object using the colour mentioned in the conversation. Part 4 tests listening for words, colors and prepositions.

Table 2: Cambridge EYL tests' descriptor

	Overall length	Number of tasks/ parts	Number of items
STARTERS			
Listening	Approx. 20 mins	4	20
Reading & writing	20 mins	5	25
Speaking	3-5 mins	4	
Total	Approx. 45 mins		
MOVERS			
Listening	Approx. 25 mins	5	25
Reading & writing	30 mins	6	35

Speaking	5-7 mins	4	
Total	Approx. 1 hour 2 minutes		
FLYERS			
Listening	Approx.25 mins	5	25
Reading & writing	40 mins	7	44
Speaking	7-9 mins	4	
Total	Approx. one hour 14mins		

Cambridge English: Movers

The Listening paper has five parts and 25 questions in total. Each part begins with one or two examples. The children will hear each recording twice.

Part 1 has a big picture. The picture shows people doing different things. Above and below the picture are some names. Children listen carefully to a conversation between an adult and a child. They draw a line from each name to the correct person in the big picture. Part 1 tests listening for names and descriptions.

Part 2 has a short conversation between two people. There is a form or notebook page with some missing words (gaps). Children listen to the information in the recording and fill in each gap. The answer might be a word or a number. Part 2 tests listening for names, spellings and other information.

Part 3 has a conversation between an adult and a child. In the conversation the child talks about what they did on different days of the week. Children listen to the information in the recording and draw a line from the day of the week to the picture which shows what the child did on that day. Part 3 tests listening for specific information (past tense).

Part 4 has five short conversations. There is a question and three pictures for each conversation. Children listen to each conversation and choose the right picture (A, B or C). Part 3 tests listening for specific information.

Part 5 has a big picture which shows different objects. Children listen to a conversation between an adult and a child. The adult asks the child to color in different objects in the picture and to write a simple word or draw an object. Children have to follow the instructions given in the recording. Part 5 tests listening for words, colors and specific information.

Cambridge English: Flyers

The Listening paper has five parts and 25 questions in total. Each part begins with one or two examples. The children will hear each recording twice.

Part 1 has a big picture. The picture shows people doing different things. Above and below the picture are some names. Children listen carefully to a conversation between an adult and a child. They draw a line from each name to the correct person in the big picture. Part 1 tests listening for names and descriptions.

Part 2 has a short conversation between two people. There is a form or notebook page with some missing words (gaps). Children listen to the information in the recording and fill in each gap. The answer might be a word or a number. Part 2 tests listening for names, spellings and other information.

Part 3 has two sets of pictures. On the left are pictures of some people and their names (or named places / objects). On the right are pictures with letters, but no words. Children listen to a conversation between two people and match each of the pictures on the right to one of the pictures on the left. Part 3 tests listening for words, names and detailed information.

Part 4 has five short conversations. There is a question and three pictures for each conversation. Children listen to each conversation and choose the right picture (A, B or C). Part 3 tests listening for specific information.

Part 5 has a big picture which shows different objects. Children listen to a conversation between an adult and a child. Children then colour in objects in the picture using the colour they hear in the conversation. Children also have to draw and colour a simple object somewhere on the big picture. Part 5 tests listening for words, colours and specific information.

3.4 Results

Movers listening test takers are allowed to listen twice but the participant only needs once. The results he got are shown as in table 1.

Table 3: The case study performance on Cambridge EYL tests

Test	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Part 5	Total
Starters	5	5	5	5	5	25/25
Movers	5	4	5	5	5	24/25
Flyers	5	4	3	4	4	20/25

4. Disussions

The popularity of selected videos up o Millions subscribers shows that those are reliable educational videos for children. The topics are very familiar with daily life of children such as family members, shopping, gardening, parts of body, jobs, toys, and rooms in house. The story are made up with so humorous and educational situations that the child found them easily to understand.

According to results of Cambridge English Young Learners Tests, the findings answer the research question about the effect of watching videos on children’s listening comprehension. The similarity in topics, vocabulary and simple structures between chosen listening inputs and official tests did not cause any trouble or misunderstanding for the learner. When it comes to recognize sounds, the results showed that it is too easy for the child to accomplish perfectly. He felt very comfortable to choose the best answer. Nobody can deny that power of repetition and habit forming as mentioned in Audiolingual Method. For example, teacher Steve in “Steve and Maggie” keeps saying the same structure “ I have a” to introduce toys for kids. By listening many times, the kid recognized the name of their own toys in English such as car, ball, kite,...Besides, the participant can base on the context to guess the appropriate meaning without asking for help. The pronunciation, structure and meaning of second language items could be used in a right way as native speakers do. That explains why the boy can achieve excellent results for matching and circle best answers. Among 3 tests, Flyers test is the a bit challenging for the boy because it includes some tricky situations which are far more complicated than 6- year-old boy thought. That explains why the result is not as good as 2 others.

Another benefit of extensive listening should be mentioned is the kid's attitude about listening English. The variety of topics, the creativity of animation effect, the hilarity of stories and the friendliness of the speakers/characters decided the success of those videos. The kid is excited to enjoy it every day. However, the role of parents/ adults in choosing English suitable program should be emphasized so that the kid will not be addicted to other bad videos.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to examine the impacts of watching You tube Videos in children listening comprehension. The observation and proficiency listening tests were carried out. The study has identified some benefits. The extensive listening on the Internet do not only increase children's English listening comprehension but also reduce pressure of learning a new language.

An issue that was not addressed in this study was whether the boy's oral performance improved while listening extensively on Youtube Channel every day. It is therefore recommended that in further research, participant's English communication or the target language performance should be recorded and analyzed. Another limitation of this study is that the length of practice for different levels (Starters/ Movers/ Flyers) should be more specific. To answer this question, the research can be divided into 3 smaller stages.

Overall, this study strengthens the idea children can understand native speakers' talk by listening YouTube videos for one hour per day. The findings are consistent with those in previous studies and broaden our view of the relationship between Audiolingualism and extensive listening in language performance. The study's results suggest that those English language teachers or parents who want to help children develop their listening comprehension should create daily English listening environment via videos.

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THE USE OF GROUP WRITING IN IMPROVING THE WRITING SKILL OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AT VINH UNIVERSITY

Vũ Thị Việt Hương^[1]

Abstract: Group writing is an innovative approach to teaching writing in second language in EFL classrooms in Vietnam. This method inspired the students' motivation in learning writing skill at Vinh University. The purpose of this paper is to find out how far group writing can make a significant difference in teaching second language of Vietnamese Universities. We present some crucial views regarding group writing in an effort to highlight the pros and cons of group writing. And we also make some effective suggestions about techniques and procedures in order to help students improve their writing skill.

1. Introduction

Of the four skills namely: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Writing is widely considered as the most difficult and the last skill to be acquired both by non-native and native speakers. Unlike other skills, it requires a great deal of conscious application of rules, patience, knowledge and practice. As a main and compulsory subject at the tertiary level, writing remains to be problematic not only for learners but also for teachers. On the one hand, the learners have to grapple with the distinctive features of English from Vietnamese in discourse, rhetoric, style, grammar and vocabulary; on the other hand the teachers face numerous difficulties such as lack of good methods of teaching writing and lack of motivation of learners.

This study is primarily intended to find out whether group writing

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can be used to improve the writing skills of EFL students at Vinh University. This question includes the issues, namely: Procedure, Correction and Evaluation of Group Writing. The answer to the research paper is sought through the information supplied by teachers and students to the questionnaires and through class observations made in three classes of Intermediate level.

2. Background

Group work in second language teaching and learning has interested a number of methodologists since the late 1960s. In some earlier studies much focus was given to the effect of group work on the learners' communication. Later, group work caught the attention of researchers in using it as a means of developing integrated skill or any particular skill (speaking, listening, writing or reading). The following is the review of the studies, observation concerning making group work an active tool in improving EFL teaching and learning results. It contains the pedagogical argument and psychological rationale for the use of group work, methodological ideas about relevant steps in employing group writing and teachers' experience with group writing.

Long and Porter (1985) make a summary of the pedagogical and psychological rationales for using group work in second language acquisition made by several researchers and methodologists. They emphasize that the aim of employing group work is to provide a more effective alternative to the "teacher-led" or "lockstep mode", which was one popular in EFL classes. According to Long and Porter, there are at least five pedagogical arguments for the use of group work in second language teaching and learning which may be brief stated as potential:

...for increasing the quantity of language practice opportunities, for improving the quantity of students talk, for individualizing instruction, for creating effective climate in the classroom, and for the increasing student motivation.

According to Brookes and Gundy (1990:69), the reasons for employing group writing are that it encourages collaborative writing, enables group to compare their work with that of other groups. In addition, Harmer states that working in groups students have a greater possibility of discussion in which students really use language to communicate with each other (1991:245). However, Brookes and

Gundy make the warning of the failure of this activity if students come from cultures where small group work is not common.

3. Methodology and findings

3.1 Data collection and procedures

The questionnaires were piloted on two small groups of subjects before being distributed to the 120 participants and 10 teachers at FLD, Vinh University to ensure validity. Each questionnaire consists of 10 questions and is a combination of both open and close questions. The data from the teachers' questionnaire revealed the teachers' responses:

- Their problems concerning teaching writing;
- Advantages and disadvantages of using group writing in Vietnamese classroom;
- Ways of correction and assessment of group papers;
- Ineffective students with group writing;

3.2. Teachers' overall ideas about teaching writing

The overall scope of teaching writing at Vinh University has been revealed from the teachers' answers to the second question in the questionnaire the common reasons for their preference for teaching writing and of their refusal of it are as follows:

Most teachers admit that they do not like teaching writing because of the complex nature of this subject. Moreover, it is not easy to teach effectively since Vietnamese and English belong to different language groups and cultures. An investment of much time and energy in a course of writing is a prerequisite for successful teachers. Teachers are also faced with lack of good materials and methodological guidance on teaching writing. On the other hand, a very small number of teachers state that they enjoy teaching writing. Their explanation for this preference is that teaching writing enables a thorough learning of this skill and that frequent correction of students' papers helps teachers consolidate their knowledge of their English language.

3.3 Advantages and disadvantages of using group writing

Table 1 summaries the teachers' opinion about the strong points and weak points of using group writing. It indicates that nearly 100% of the teachers agree on the psychological and pedagogical advantages

of group writing, of which the most the most striking feature is the transformation writing class with individual-based activities into a community-based workshop with various interactive activities.

Table 1: Teachers' ideas about advantages and disadvantages of group writing

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group transforms the condition, expectations and learning opportunities for their group members. • Great motivation, accountability, sense of purpose and confidence could contribute to an increase in student achievement. • Learning opportunities are increased. • Self-assessment and self-critical sense can be developed. • Working in small groups enables students to compare their ability with other group members, thus creating healthy competition and motivation for self-improvement. • Rich activities or steps of group writing procedure offer various ways of improving students' weakness. • Creating intimate and warm setting for students to help and learn from each other. • Interactive, communicative and cooperative atmosphere is assured. • Brainstorming is more productive, thus enabling better ideas and organization for the group paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better results received by weaker students may cause false assumption or incorrect evaluation of their ability. • Students may have bias against group writing, assuming its purpose as reducing the number of papers to be corrected. • Preparation for a lesson using group activities is time-consuming. • Students often have controversial ideas, thus producing reluctant writing. • Lazy students do not write, relying on others. • Students are easy to distract from main points. • Some students may dominate the group, while other remains passive. • Students often use their mother tongue in discussion. • Ideas or suggestions given by weaker students may be neglected. • Teachers have difficulty controlling and supervising the class. • Teachers are not able to evaluate individual writing.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group members offer a variety of words and structures • Self- peer and group correction are more effective. • Quiet and shy students have more chances to take part in group discussion. | |
|--|--|

To the teachers, group writing enables them to deal adequately with various class sizes. Practically, due to staff shortages, Vinh University has to work with several classes which are often of more than 50 students. Accordingly, it is too difficult for the teachers of writing to manage time to correct all students' assignment papers. However, without practice, students can not improve their writing. This common situation seems to be a dilemma for several teachers. With the introduction of group writing, not only is the number of papers to be corrected considerably reduced for teachers but more time can also be spent for individual assistance to each group.

3.4 Stages of using group writing

As with any class activities, the aim and procedure of group writing should be known to students before any practice. As proposed by Pincas (1994:14) a well-organized lesson consists of three stages: *Presentation, Practice and Production*. Hence, when group writing is first utilized in the classroom, its procedure with several steps should be clarified to the students by the teacher, and then demonstrated with the whole class under the teacher's control. When the students' familiarization with this activity is ensured, less control and more practice are given to students. At the final stage, group writing can be done either in class or at home depending on time and topics.

It should be mentioned that the student proficiency is very important in deciding the steps of group writing procedure. In this study, the focus is on intermediate students. For this level the following basic steps are commonly adopted:

1. Teacher preparing information
2. Class brainstorming
3. Class is divided into groups
4. Students doing group writing

5. Teacher evaluating

3.5. Correction, marking and assessment of group writing

It should be mentioned by nature correcting and making group papers are much the same as doing with individual and pair papers. The difference may lie in the potential of the group in contributing more ideas when group members engage in repair work. Much attention should be given to assessment that not only reflects the student ability but also encourages their active involvement in group writing.

Table 2 displays the common ways used by Vinh University teachers to correct and assess group writing. Overall, the majority of Vinh university teachers, about 70%, prefer their students to do some remedial work within their groups or with other groups before they make their correction. They believe that their ability to do error analysis is very important in improving writing skills and group correction is more productive than self- or peer-correction since more opinions are given on the way of treatment.

Table 2: Teachers with correction and assessment of group writing

Correction	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting up mark scale according to students' level.• Teachers pointing out mistakes for each group; teachers providing help only when students can not correct themselves.• Group exchanging papers to correct; then teachers collecting and evaluating.• One student from each group writing his/her group paper on the blackboard or photocopying the paper for more convenience; students from other group correcting; then teachers evaluating.• Teachers' correction made on paper first with mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group writing accounts for 30% of all the writing assessments.• Commenting on the value of group writing and making it a compulsory writing task.• Paying more attention to the role of group leader and the more active members of groups by giving them one more mark.• Lazy and inactive students having lower marks.• Evaluating at the process stage combined with evaluation of the product.• Final assessment based on the combination of individual writing assignment; if students not joining this activity, their

<p>underlined, remarks or symbols written on margin; group members finding and correcting themselves, then common important mistakes and ways of treatments demonstrated on the blackboard by the teacher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers choosing some papers to read aloud in class for other groups to evaluate ideas of these papers. 	<p>final mark reduced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final mark being the average of the marks of group papers, individual papers and examination papers.
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4. Implications for Vietnamese classrooms

4.1 Class management and preparation

4.1.1 Class management

This factor requires an understanding of the need and interest of each class on the part of the teacher. Vietnamese classes of English are often very big. In regular classes, students are often of the same age, female students are the majority; whereas, in in-service classes, students are far more varied in ages and occupations with male students and female students often balanced. The distinctive features of group members, including strength and weaknesses, bring a variety of learning experiences therefore, group formation should be based on the premise that group of regular classes consists of students of both sexes and group of in-service classes are of students of different ages, occupations and sexes.

However, sometimes with certain topics, the groups of the same sexes do not work out. An appropriate principle of group formation is the first step in accelerating the tempo of group work. To make students work with each other teachers should move around the class and attention should be paid to the arrangement of tables and benches; for example, students should sit in U-shape.

4.1.2 Material preparation

Materials chosen for the course should be of students' interest and of high degree of practicality. Students should be encouraged to suggest topics from source of the newspapers, television programs, radio programs; i.e. those which are really real-life and close to their life. They can also supply good models on the pattern they learn.

4.2 Techniques and procedures

The success of group writing can be assured with good methods and techniques not only of writing in general but also group writing in particular. The awareness of methods is essential to English writing and its difference from Vietnamese writing is important to students in acquiring this writing skill. Actually, students' ignorance of methods of English writing is caused partly by the lack of good materials and partly by the inadequacy of syllabus. Therefore, it is necessary to teach students how to make convincing and logical presentation of arguments from the point of view of English logic and rhetoric.

Furthermore, group writing is more productive if students possess thorough understanding and mastery of steps relevant to effective group writing. Depending on students' level and degree of acquaintance with group writing, some steps may be carefully planned or briefed and the control from teachers may be increased or reduced accordingly. Particularly, some techniques of primary importance in promoting the tempo and success of group writing are selecting ideas, proofreading and revising. Though these techniques are the same as with any kind of writing when employed in group writing, their strengths are much intensified thanks to the participation of more individuals in contributing ideas.

In additions, to promote students' success in the product stage, after groups finish writing their first draft, teachers can use "oral writing" process by holding a discussion or exchanging of ideas between groups so that they all can see the right way of writing their final draft.

Due to the differences between the two systems of grammar in English and Vietnamese, much stress is put on grammar in the syllabus, which makes Vietnamese students often obsessed by the fear of making grammatical mistakes and forget that idea is the spirit of a piece of writing. It is observed that when selecting ideas for their group papers, some students consider the ideas suggested by them as the evidence of their contribution, thus insisting on using their ideas though they may be irrelevant. In contrast, when engaging in repair work they seem to be absorbed in finding grammatical mistakes, leaving the content untouched. To deal with this practice, students should understand that only interesting and necessary ideas are chosen and that remedial work is not always identified with looking for grammatical mistakes. Once they have grasped a right sense of critical work, their work writing will run more smoothly and effectively with less interference from teachers.

5. Conclusion

Contrary to the widely held belief that writing is a lonely activity where the writer works at his own pace and suffers to convey meaning with no one to help out, this course has demonstrated that supportive learning environment in the classroom context with the help of peer and teacher could stimulate learners' motivation and develop their confidence in learning. It has also been evidenced that writing whole pieces of communication for intended readers rather than simply producing single correct sentences is likely to encourage students' innovation and interests in second language learning. Finally, teamwork writing has been proved to boost each individual student's talent, stimulating collaboration among learners and promoting creative thinking, which tends to be the determinant factors for them to become academically and socially successful adults.

APPENDIX 1
QUESTIONNAIRES FOR EFL TEACHERS
AT VINH UNIVERSITY

1. How long have you been teaching English?

.....
.....

2. Do you like teaching writing? Why and why not?

.....

3. Have you ever used group work in your class of writing? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this activity?

.....
.....

4. What are the most problem when you teach writing? (please circle)

- a. Spending much time correcting students' papers
- b. Spending much time preparing for the lesson
- c. Students' slow and not easily-seen movement
- d. Others (Please state)

.....
.....

5. What kinds of writing activity do you prefer your students to practise?

- a. Individual
- b. Pair
- c. Group
- d. Others

.....
.....

6. What are the purposes of your use of group work? (Please circle more than one)

- a. Saving your time to correct students' papers
- b. Creating an intimate and warm atmosphere to encourage students to help and learn from each other
- c. Leaving more time for you to observe and guide each group
- d. Others (Please state)

7. The following are three different procedures (a,b,c) of using group work in promoting students to practice in a lesson of writing. Which procedure do you often adopt? Or if you have you own way, please state (d)

a.

1. Teacher preparing information
2. The whole class brainstorming
3. Class divided into groups
4. Students working in groups
5. Group writing
6. Teacher evaluating

b.

1. Teacher preparing information
2. Class divided into groups
3. Group brainstorming and writing
4. Group exchanging papers for correction
5. Teacher evaluating

c.

1. Teacher preparing information
2. Class divided into groups
3. Group brainstorming and working
4. Students writing individual at home
5. Teacher evaluating

d. Other ways (please state)

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....

8. Please state the way of your correction and assessment of students' group papers

.....

9. How exactly do you think group writing helps you to assess students' ability?

- a. 100% b. 75% c. 50% d. Others (Please indicate)

10. Do you agree that group writing really improves the writing skill of ineffective students? Why and why not?

.....
.....

Thank you very much for your cooperation

APPENDIX 2
QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS
AT VINH UNIVERSITY

1. Are you interested in learning writing? Why or why not?

.....
.....

2. What do you expect from a course of writing?

.....
.....

3. How often do you hand in your assigned work? (Please circle)

a. Never b. Sometimes c. Always

4. Which kind of paper stimulates you to work most?

a. Individual b. Pair c. Group

5. Do you agree that your group paper is better than your individual paper?

a. Yes b. No c. No ideas

6. Which of the following features of group work do you like most?

a. You can rely on your friends and do not need to write yourself

b. You can learn and help each other in an cooperative atmosphere

7. Which of the following approaches in using group work do you like?

a. Working in group to find ideas and appropriate grammatical structures, then writing the individual paper yourself at home to hand in to the teacher

b. Working in group to find ideas and appropriate grammatical structures, then writing only one group paper to hand in to the teacher

8. How do you want your paper to be corrected?

a. Group exchange paper and correct, then teachers make final evaluation

b. Students correct each other's papers within group, then teachers make final evaluation

c. Only teachers correct your papers

9. Do you want to work in the same group or different groups during the practice time? To work in the same group

a. To work in different group

10. What suggestions do you want to make if your teachers prefer to use group writing?

.....
.....

Thank you very much for your cooperation

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VSTEP WRITING PART II ASSESSMENT

Lê Thị Thúy Hà^[1]

Abstract: This article mentions VSTEP writing part II assessment. It discusses how the writing part II is assessed based on the band scores from 9 to 0. The paper also presents some sample answers, which used to clarify assessment criteria and the band scores. Detailed explanation of how performances expected for the nine bands are different from each other are provided.

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam has initiated the National Foreign Language 20-25 Project with the goal of the government of our country to build the English capacity of its workforce in order to engage in the global economy and to compete and advance regionally and globally. This mega-project's goals are to thoroughly renovate the teaching and learning foreign languages throughout the country and to implement a new program on teaching and learning foreign languages at every school level and training degree, so that by the year 2025 new policies include introducing English at grade three, mapping outcomes to the Common European Framework of Reference benchmarks, and establishing proficiency and professional standards for English language teachers. Obviously, part II writing assessment is necessarily discussed to meet this national goal.

2. Criteria for assessing VSTEP writing

In writing, there are two separate parts in a writing test: Part I and Part II. The examiners assess each task independently. The

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assessment of Part 2 has more weight in marking than Part I. Marking and assessing seem to be the most challenging work for certificated examiners. As the band descriptors listed, there are four making criteria that examiners use to mark part II. And, scores are achieved based on how candidate responds on the criteria such as: Task Response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy.

Firstly, what do the four criteria mean to assess writing Part II? “Task Response” requires the candidates to formulate and develop a position in relation to a given prompt in the form of a question or statement. Ideas should be supported by evidence, and examples may be drawn from the candidates’ own experience. Whereas, Coherence and Cohesion means how well candidates connect paragraphs and sentences inside paragraphs. This criterion is concerned with the overall clarity and fluency of the message: how the response organizes and links information, ideas and language. Coherence refers to the linking of ideas through logical sequencing. Cohesion refers to the varied and appropriate use of cohesive devices (for example, logical connectors, pronouns and conjunctions) to assist in making the conceptual and referential relationships between and within sentences clear. In term of Lexical Resource, it refers to the range of vocabulary the candidate has used and the accuracy and appropriacy of that use in terms of the specific task. In fact, Grammatical Range and Accuracy mention the range and accurate use of the candidate’s grammatical resource as manifested in the candidate’s writing at the sentence level. More importantly, the four criteria are equally weighted in the response.

Secondly, in assessing the candidate’s writing task, the four grading criteria are classified in 9 different band scores. In order to get the target mark 9, the examiners finds the essay completely satisfactory. “Task Response” fully addresses all parts of the task and presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas. The argument proceeds logically through the text with clear progression of ideas. The answer can use cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention, skillfully manage paragraphing, and use a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features. Rare minor errors occur only as ‘slips’. A wide range of structures is used appropriately and accurately with full flexibility and accuracy.

To achieve mark 8, the candidate's writing sufficiently addresses all parts of the task and presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas. Also, it sequences information and ideas logically and manages all aspects of cohesion well, uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately. A wide range of vocabulary is used fluently and flexibly to convey precise meaning of the task. Uncommon lexical items are skillfully used but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation, rare errors in spelling and/or word formation. For the criteria of Grammatical Range and Accuracy, the candidates' writing uses a wide range of structures and the majority of sentences are error-free. However, some minor errors or inappropriacies are occasionally made.

To get the target mark 7, the candidates at least need to average 7 in each of these sub-criteria. It means that task response addresses all parts of the task, presents a clear position throughout the response, presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to overgeneralize and/or supporting ideas may lack focus. Furthermore, information and ideas are logically organised; there is clear progression throughout the essay. It presents a clear central topic within each paragraph and uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under/overuse. A sufficient range of vocabulary is referred to allow some flexibility and precision. This writing uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation and may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation. Moreover, there are a variety of complex structures and frequent error-free sentences. Grammar and punctuation are controlled but there may be a few errors.

To get the target mark 6 of this writing task, in "Task Response" the candidates address all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others. A relevant position is also presented although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive and relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear. Information and ideas are arranged coherently and there is a clear overall progression throughout the essay. A part from that, cohesive devices are used effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical or may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately. The candidates use paragraphing, but not always logically. In the aspect of Grammatical Range and

Accuracy, an adequate range of vocabulary for the task is necessary to deal with. He/ she attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy and makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication. A mix of simple and complex sentence forms used makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication.

However, to get target mark 5 the essay addresses the task partially; but the format may be inappropriate in places. It expresses a position but the development is not always clear and there may be no conclusions drawn. Some main ideas are presented but these are limited and not sufficiently developed; there may be irrelevant detail and presents information with some organization but there may be a lack of overall progression. The candidate makes inadequate, inaccurate or over use of cohesive devices and may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution. The essay may not be written in paragraphs, or paragraphing may be inadequate. In this writing, there is a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task. Additionally, may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader. Only a limited range of structures is used. The candidate tries to use complex sentences in the essay but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences. The grammatical errors are frequently appeared to cause some difficulty for the examiner and punctuation may be faulty.

An essay graded mark 4 responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate and presents a position but this is unclear and presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant or not-well supported. Information and ideas are mentioned but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response. The candidate uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive and may not write in paragraphs or their use may be confusing. Basic vocabulary may be used repetitively or inappropriate for the task. There has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader. Only a very limited range of structures is used with only rare use of subordinate clauses, some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty.

The answer is only marked mark 3 if the candidate's writing does

not adequately address any part of the task and express a clear position. Only few ideas are largely undeveloped or irrelevant with the topic. It does not organize ideas logically or may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas. Otherwise, this essay uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling and many errors severely distort the message. There may be some errors in grammar and punctuation in sentence forms predominate and distort the meaning.

Mark 2 is used to grade the Task Response that does not express a position and may attempt to present one or two ideas but there is no development of the writing process. Also, the writer uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling and cannot use sentence forms except in memorized phrases. Band 1 is for the writing answer which is completely unrelated to the task and fails to communicate any message of the response. The candidate can only use a few isolated words and even cannot use sentence forms at all. The Task Response in the target band 0 does not attend and attempt the task in any way.

In particular, how to apply the criteria in Part II band descriptors in marking the candidates' answers is quite difficult for examiners. There are two answers for this writing task. Each answer has been assessed a band score and is accompanied by an examiner comment on the candidate's performance.

Part 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.
Write about the following topic.

Everyday traffic seems to get worse on our roads. How can we reduce the number of cars on roads today? What alternatives can we offer car drivers?

Write at least 250 words

Sample script 1

THE SOLUTION OF OVERCROWDED TRAFFIC

Nowaday, there are alot of cars on British road and they have increased day to day. By the year 2000 there may be as many as 29 million vehicles on British roads. In this essay, I intend to examine about the solutions of these problems.

Firstly, the people living in Britain need to think about themselves. If they used the bus and train instead of their car, this problem would resolve a little. Because of this, the British Government should introduce to control car ownership and use. For example, the government can ban to enter the road by car in the someday all family from a house.

Secondly, the buses and trains of government should be free for public population. Thus, the people would use these transport vehicles instead of their own car. After that, the roads in Britain would be ~~more~~ safer and more comfortable.

Lastly, ~~the export~~ the number of cars that are exported from another country should decrease, and the prices of car should increased ~~in case~~ they aren't overcrowded. For example, the prices of cigarettes increased and the consumption of cigarettes went down.

In conclusion, If these measures put into action the problem of traffic can be decreased in the British roads.

According the comment of the examiner, this answer is graded mark 5 because it is short at just over 200 hundred words and thus loses marks for content. In addition, there are some relevant arguments but these are not very well developed and become unclear in places. The organization of the answer is evident through the use of fairly simple

connectives but there are problems for the reader in that there are many missing words and word order is often incorrect. Furthermore, the structures are quite ambitious but often faulty and vocabulary is kept quite simple.

Sample script 2

The transport has been one of the most important problems for the last two centuries. The problems began with the development and the growing of the cities.

Before the eight century the people lived in small villages or towns and did not have necessity to go too far. The people did not worry about the time to arrive in some where.

Nowadays the situation changed. Many cars on the streets and many people need to go to any place. The numbers of car has increased and as a result ^{there are} many problems: pollution, noise, car accident, insufficient car park and petroleum problem.

On the other hand, people use car to go anywhere: to work, to travel, to spend holiday and to amusement. Meanwhile the car is important the cities must have another solution. It is important to organize its using and to meet alternative ways.

In big cities there are some alternatives like undergrounds (metro), coach, train and bicycles. In China and ^{for example} Arab they use a lot of bicycles for substituting the cars and coaches.

It would be better to think about others different kinds of transport. In Brazil the Government has talked about transport on the rivers. In this country there are many rivers where it is possible to go to different places. In general they are flat rivers.

Another kind of transport is car that uses solar energy. Probably they don't have pollution problem and it is cheaper than others car.

In conclusion, the transport is a social problem in big cities but its solution depend on new technologies, others kind of energy and political aspects.

This writing answer is graded mark 6. The introduction is perhaps slightly long and more time could have been devoted to answering the question. The answer is fairly easy to follow and there is good punctuation. Organizational devices are evident although some areas of the answer become unclear and would benefit from more accurate use of connectives. There are some errors in the structures but there is also evidence of the production of complex sentence forms. Grammatical errors interfere slightly with comprehension.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, there are many different criteria, sub-criteria used to evaluate the candidates' answers. In my opinion, considering these detailed writing band descriptors is necessary for examiners to assess the writing Part II.

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