

VINH UNIVERSITY

The 2nd VinhTESOL Conference
on
English Language Education

CONFERENCE BOOK

VINH, 26th Oct 2019

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PREFACE

*Distinguished Scholars and Guests,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me wish you all a warm welcome to Vinh University. Our university has placed great emphasis on English language education for many years. VinhTESOL conference is one of the many academic events to fulfill our goal of providing opportunities for English language practitioners in the area and other parts of the country to share ideas and together explore ways in which we can make English lessons more interesting to our learners.

I believe the 2nd VinhTESOL conference on English Language Education will be of great value to our professional development, and that what you learn from the conference will encourage you to develop innovative classroom approaches that make education more relevant and effective to our students. I would like to thank my colleagues at the Foreign Language Department for their efforts in creating a forum for teachers and learners of English, in or outside the country, to extend their knowledge, and to formulate appropriate and effective strategies in English language education.

I hope you have a professionally satisfying and rewarding experience and a wonderful stay in Vinh. Let's build our profession so we can together build our nation.

Dr. Trần Bá Tiến
Vice-President of Vinh University

Pronunciation Strategies for the English Language Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Instruction on prosodic and suprasegmental features are integral to increasing the overall comprehensibility of English language learners' speaking. In this workshop, participants will learn and practice low-prep strategies to integrate into existing classroom materials in order to increase student awareness and production of such target features.

BIOGRAPHY



Mary Spanarkel is an English Language Fellow assigned to Vinh University and Ha Tinh University for the 2019-2020 cycle. She received her M.A. in TESOL from American University in Washington, D.C. Prior to serving as an English Language Fellow, Mary worked at the Center for Applied Linguistics as a test developer, an academic writing instructor at American University, and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at a community-based ESL school for adult immigrants.

A 21st Century Approach to Test Preparation

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ABSTRACT

The world is constantly changing. Teaching methodology and materials development are evolving to meet our students' needs, but what about assessment? Modern testing demands more than simply recalling language from rote learning. It requires 21st Century skills such as creative and critical thinking. Students must be able to use language to skillfully implement and explain their own ideas as well as inferring information and assessing the ideas of others. In turn, teachers must be able to create and use a variety of testing techniques that will consolidate the language that has been learned. In this workshop we will examine the elements that make up a modern exam and discuss some ideas on effective test preparation according to modern testing requirements. By acknowledging the pivotal role that critical thinking skills play in modern exams, we will argue that the development of critical thinking ought to be an essential component of test preparation. Accordingly, we will provide some tips on how to design and assess 21st century speaking task types. Hereby, we hope to give teachers a variety of tools to successfully support candidates when taking a modern exam, such as IELTS.

BIOGRAPHY



Alessia Rizzo is the Training Specialist at National Geographic Learning, where she is involved with training teachers and educators across Vietnam in both private and public sectors. Her passion is in exploring language use across different cultures and her interests include language learning motivation, informal language learning, self-regulation, autonomous learning and telecollaboration. She holds an M.Sc. in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition from the University of Oxford and has extensive experience teaching learners

from all age groups, from young learners to teenage students. She joins from a teaching position at Apollo English, one of the largest language centers in Vietnam, and recently collaborated with Hanoi University as well as the private La Dante language school, where she facilitated the acquisition of the Italian language for adult and undergraduate students.

A Review on Cultural Parts in 'Life' Textbook for Non-English-Major Students at Vinh University: Challenges and Solutions

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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. The final session of each unit concerning related-topic culture exploration can be seen as one of the noticeable part 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 can not 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 presentation or some kind of games that are adapted from the main tasks of the part. The result of these modifications could encourage students not only practice their English skill cooperatively with their partners but also explore the other countries' traditions in natural and engaging activities.

Key words: culture, challenges, exploration, applied, adapted, modification

BIOGRAPHY



Lưu Ngọc Bảo is a Lecturer at Foreign Language Department at Vinh University. He has a bachelor's degree in both French Pedagogy and English. He received his Master in linguistics from Paris 7 University in 2002. He has taught French at Vinh University, but currently teaches English to non- major students. His research interests are linguistic and language teaching methodology.

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 influences 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 in order 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 the 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.

Key words: sitcoms, teaching speaking, EFL speaking ability, motivation

BIOGRAPHY



Minh Tan Le earned his M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language in 2016. His research interests include speaking and listening skills development in L2 English, application of ICTs in teaching-learning process and sociolinguistics. He has taught English at various levels at many educational institutions and summer programs in Vietnam. Tan is currently working at the department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA.

An Investigation into Assessment for Learning among EFL Teachers in Primary Schools in Nghe An

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ABSTRACT

This survey study attempted to examine the application of different assessment tools in order to ameliorate English teaching process in twenty primary schools in Nghệ An province. To collect the data, survey questionnaires were distributed to thirty teachers and follow-up interviews were conducted. It was found that teachers in those primary schools conduct assessment for learning at low frequency. The three most frequently used assessment types were observations, individual assessment and homework. The study also found that different factors influenced the teachers' assessment activities. These include teacher competence, time limitation and curriculum constraints.

Key words: assessment, tools, observation, homework, teaching quality

BIOGRAPHY



Nguyễn Thị Hiền Lương is a Lecturer in English at Vinh University-Việt Nam. She holds a Master's degree of TESOL and has more than 15 years of experience in English language teaching. Her research interests are Reading Strategies, Testing and Assessment, Using technology in English language teaching.

An Investigation into Teachers' Perceptions of Cultural Elements Represented in Pre-Intermediate Life Textbook at Vinh University

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ABSTRACT

Cultural content plays a crucial role as it helps to raise multicultural awareness among EFL learners. It is essential for EFL teachers to carefully evaluate the cultural content of materials and textbooks they use since these materials may potentially impact students' understanding of foreign cultures and ruin the ideas of communicating cultural content effectively. This paper addresses the teachers' perceptions and their strategies used to teach cultural elements in Pre-intermediate Life textbook. The study was conducted among EFL teachers at Vinh University. Based on the findings, a few implications for teaching aspects of cultures to EFL learners were suggested.

Key words: cultural elements, teacher's perceptions, teaching strategies

BIOGRAPHY



Trần Thị Phương Thảo is a Lecturer in English of the Division of Specialized English, Department of Foreign Languages at Vinh University, Vietnam. She earned her Master in English language teaching years ago and has more than 15 years of experience in English language teaching. Her publications include journal articles and conference papers in TESOL. Her research interests are task-based language teaching, improving reading skill for EFL learners.

An Investigation into the Effects of Teaching Critical Thinking on the Third-Year English Students' Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to investigate how teaching critical thinking influences third-year English students' speaking ability development. In order to determine whether those English language students who are better critical thinkers would perform better in speaking, two groups of 60 third-year English students at the Department of Foreign Languages at Vinh University were randomly selected to be control groups. These two groups' speaking performance was compared with that of a treatment group, which was with critical thinking techniques. The results revealed a significant relationship between these two major variables. Those English learners who received explicit instruction of critical thinking strategies in the English class did better in their oral production.

Keywords: critical thinking, speaking skill, EFL learners, teaching critical thinking skills

BIOGRAPHY



Nguyễn Thị Tô Hằng is a lecturer at Foreign Languages Department, Vinh University. She is also a trainer in courses held by National Language Project 2020 and Vinh University with the aim to improve the quality of teachers at Vietnamese primary, secondary and high schools. Besides, she works as an examiner in Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP). She earned her Master's Degree in English Language Teaching years ago has more than 5 years of experience in English language teaching. Her research interests are developing speaking fluency and accuracy for EFL learners, TESOL and language testing.

An Investigation of the Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies among ESP Students

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ABSTRACT

This survey study examined the use of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) among ESP students majored in electronic communication. The research involved 110 students at Vinh University. Schmitt (1997)'s VLS questionnaire was used to find out the strategies employed by the participants while learning English vocabulary. The findings showed that memory strategies are most frequently used and social strategies, which are used to consolidate new words, are the least used by these participants. From the findings, some recommendations were made.

Key words: vocabulary learning strategies, vocabulary learning, ESP university students

BIOGRAPHY



Nguyễn Thị Lành M.A, is a teacher to English non-majors at Foreign Languages Department, Vinh University. She holds a master's degree of English Applied Linguistics. Her interests include Applied Linguistics, English for specific purposes.

Applying Chants in Teaching Chunks to Young English Learners in a Primary School

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ABSTRACT

This experimental study was conducted to investigate the application of chants to teach English chunks to 4th graders in a primary school in Vinh city. To this end, two classes of 35 students at the same level of English proficiency were involved in the study. The data were collected from different instruments, including pre and post- tests, questionnaire and teacher's diary. After 15 weeks' time, the results indicated that the experimental group were better at memorizing and employing chunks in their talks, compared to the control group. Moreover, students in the control group were less motivated to learn lexical chunks as well as grammatical chunks than their peers in the experimental group. The study puts forward some theoretical and pedagogical implications for teaching English to young learners.

Key words: chants, songs, chunks, young learners, EFL learners

BIOGRAPHY



Hoàng Thị Chung is a Lecturer in English at Vinh University, Vietnam. She earned her Master in English language teaching years ago and has more than 18 years of experience in English language teaching. Her research interest is developing speaking fluency for EFL learners.

Applying Lexical Scaffolding to Improve EFL Students' Speaking Ability

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate the effects of lexical scaffolding on EFL student's speaking ability. The experiment was conducted among 50 students at Vinh University for 5 weeks. The participants were divided into two groups, an experimental group and a control group. A methodological triangulation was used to collect the data, including a speaking pre-test and post-test, teacher's observations and follow-up interviews. The findings show the application of lexical scaffolding has positive impacts on experimental students' oral performances. The independent T-test results show that students in the experimental group have higher scores on the post-test than their peers in the control group. The significant differences were found in terms of fluency and task achievement. Based on the findings, some pedagogical implications were proposed.

Key words: speaking ability, lexical scaffolding, oral performance, teaching speaking

BIOGRAPHY



Nguyễn Lê Hoài Thu is a Lecturer to non-English major students in the Foreign Languages Department at Vinh University. She has a bachelor's degree in both French and English Pedagogy. She has been teaching French at Vinh University since 1999, and started teaching English to non-major students in 2014. Her current interests include vocabulary teaching, finding and exploring new techniques and activities to create a friendly environment for learning.

Assessment of English Writing Skills at Vinh University: Problems and Solutions

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights the problems and suggests solutions regarding the assessment of English writing skills at Vinh University. Assessing writing skills in the form of exact numerical scores is a challenging task for many examiners due to various difficulties, including vague scoring rubrics, comparison of different candidates' writings, and legibility of candidates' handwriting. These factors may negatively affect the scoring reliability. This article provides suggestions to solve the aforementioned challenges such as more detailed scoring rubrics, marked model essays as a reference, cross-marking, and longer deadlines for teachers. This article can therefore be useful for English language test raters who would like to improve the accuracy and efficiency of assessing writing ability.

BIOGRAPHY



Nguyễn Thị Tường has been a lecture of Department of Foreign Languages for 26 years. Her fields of interest are linguistics, and language skills. She earned master degree in Linguistics at Hanoi University. She has done various research projects, which focus on improving students' capacities and assessment.

Common Errors Made by Vietnamese Students of English at Vinh University in Using Norminal Substitution

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ABSTRACT

Since the Vietnamese and English languages have very distinctive grammar systems, Vietnamese students of English tend to encounter a lot of difficulties in their acquiring of the target language. Among these difficulties is the use of substitution in English. As a cohesive device, substitution plays an important role in the making of discourse. It has been found that many students make mistakes in different aspects of substitution, especially in nominal substitution. The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to identify the errors made by Vietnamese students of English at Vinh University; to find out the sources of errors in using nominal substitution; and to make some suggestions for teaching this cohesive device to Vietnamese students.

Key words: cohesive devices, nominal substitution, Vietnamese learners, English language

BIOGRAPHY



Vũ Thị Việt Hương is currently the Senior Lecturer in English at Vinh University, Vietnam. She achieved her Master degree in the English language teaching in Hà Nội University of foreign languages in 2013. She has more than 25 years of experience in the English language teaching. Her research interests are EFL writing, communicative and language learning strategies, education motivation and English teaching methodology. She has also joined in several helpful conferences and projects to obtain new knowledge and experience. TESOL and related fields are always the first priority in her work.

Common Problems Teachers Often Have When Assessing Writing in Language Proficiency Tests

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ABSTRACT

Assessment has an important role in teaching and learning English. Through appropriate assessment, teachers can classify and grade their students, give feedback and structure their teaching accordingly. However, challenges may be encountered in the assessing process. The purpose of this paper is to mention some common problems teachers often have when assessing writing in language proficiency tests, the causes of the problems and how to overcome them.

Key words: assessment, writing ability, proficiency tests, assessing problems

BIOGRAPHY



Cao Thi Phuong is a Lecturer in English at Vinh University, Vietnam. She earned her Master in Applied Linguistics years ago and has more than 20 years of experience in English language teaching. Her research interests are multiple intelligences theory in English language teaching, second language acquisition and contrastive linguistics. She has also presented at several national TESOL conferences.

Context-Based Quizzes: An Alternative Way to Teaching and Learning New Words

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ABSTRACT

This action research was conducted to examine how context-based quizzes independently developed by teacher and students support students to better memorize the new words. For the current study, 75 junior English-major students were required to select and develop their own context-based quizzes for assigned words and then exchanged quizzes among students. Likewise, the teacher developed her own quizzes to test the students' retention level of new words. The data were collected through the quizzes, students' writing and teacher's journals, and surveys. The results indicated that a high frequency of exposure to targeted words significantly enhanced students' vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, the majority of students said the technique gave them more opportunities to recall the new words and they enjoyed learning words better. Such positive feedback allows the consideration of the development of "context-based quizzes" as an effective alternative technique to the traditional way of learning and teaching new words. These findings also call for teachers to evaluate their instructional practices to provide direct instruction combined with offering students ample opportunities to interact with words on a regular basis across a variety of contexts.

Keywords: context-based quizzes, retention of new words, learning words, teaching words, recalling new words

BIOGRAPHY



Trần Thị Khánh Tùng obtained a Bachelor of English Teaching at Vinh University, Vietnam and a Master of Higher Education Administration degree from Baruch College, City University of New York (CUNY), USA. She has taught various English skills to both English-major Vietnamese and Thai students. She has conducted teaching training to high school and secondary teachers in Vietnam and is a national writing examiner. Her research interests include English reading, writing and speaking skills; teaching methodology and curriculum development in language education.

Grammar Translation Method as a Self Study Technique for Third Year English Majored Students at Vinh University

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ABSTRACT

It has been said that Grammar Translation Method is tedious and inefficient in classroom. Surprisingly, it turns out learners can get huge benefits from this method as a self-study technique. In this study, a survey on students' opinions was conducted and 126 third-year students in the Foreign Languages Department, Vinh University were involved in experimental activities. The result showed that the participants' reading and writing abilities were significantly improved. Not to mention, some useful language learning habits were formed and critical thinking, which is one of the most fundamental skills in 21st century, was boosted. In this paper, some suggestions about how to utilise this teaching method for both teachers and learners were included.

Key words: grammar translation method, critical thinking, self-study, reading and writing abilities

BIOGRAPHY



Lê Thị Thanh Bình is a Lecturer in English at Vinh University, Vietnam. She earned her Master in English language teaching years ago and has almost 10 years of experience in English language teaching. Her research interests are methods to improve English listening fluency. She focuses on extensive listening activities in EFL classroom. She has also presented at several national TESOL conferences.

How to Use Reading Texts to Develop Listening, Writing and Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

Having a good command of a foreign language like English takes much time, effort, and motivation as learners need to be proficient in all four language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. As Baruah (1991:160) puts it, listening and reading are the receptive skills that are “comparatively passive, requiring less exertion on the part of the learner”. On the other hand, speaking and writing belong to productive or active skills which require learners to produce language. Theoretically, these four language skills are interrelated and interactive in real communication with powerful impact upon one another. Practically, they should be comprehensively practised at the same time in a language learning process. This paper investigates the situation of imbalanced skill development among non-English major students who find productive skills more challenging than receptive ones. It will also probe into methods to make full use of reading texts in order to facilitate the improvement of the other three English skills (listening, writing and speaking).

Key words: reading texts, language skills, receptive skills, productive skills, communication

BIOGRAPHY



Nguyễn Thị Việt Nga is currently the Dean at Faculty of Foreign Languages, Academy of Journalism and Communication. She has 15 years working as a university lecturer. Her strongest engagement is related to Teaching English as a foreign language, English for Specific Purpose, English as a Medium of Instruction, Computer-assisted language learning.

Improving Pronunciation for the Second Year Non-English-Majors of Vinh University through Homophone Games

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ABSTRACT

This study attempted to examine the effects of homophone games on students' pronunciation improvement. The study was conducted among 20 second year non-English-majored students at Vinh University who were selected for their poor ability of pronunciation. The study was in the form of classroom action research (CAR), which included two classroom action research cycles. The treatment lasted for eight weeks. Observation and the students' test scores were used for data analysis. Comparisons of the scores collected during the two cycles were made. The results show that there is a significant improvement in students' pronunciation thanks to the homophone games.

Key words: homophone, pronunciation, EFL pronunciation, non-English-majored students

BIOGRAPHY



Trần Thị Thu Trang is a Lecturer in English at Vinh University, Vietnam. She earned her Master in English language teaching years ago and has more than 3 years of experience in English language teaching. Her research interests is using peer assessment in oral presentation of the second year major students in Vinh University. She has also presented at several national TESOL conferences.

Improving Students' Pronunciation Through Online Homework

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ABSTRACT

Improving students' pronunciation is a challenging task that a teacher has to face in carrying out his/her job. Pronunciation could be taught explicitly through phonetics and phonology lessons or implicitly through speaking activities. In this study the latter was applied of which the students were asked to perform speaking homework online, the teacher then collected them, using the pronunciation rubric to evaluate students' pronunciation problems, giving feedbacks so that students were aware of their weaknesses in order to beat them. Even though the pronunciation analysis was integrated into the larger marking scheme of the speaking skills, the students benefited from teachers' evaluation and showed positive improvement through the process of 11 weeks.

Key words: pronunciation, EFL learners, speaking activities, online homework

BIOGRAPHY



Nguyễn Thị Quyết is a lecturer at Hong Duc university with 20 years of teaching and training experience. Her academic interests lie in different aspects of language teaching and learning such as teaching English to children, classroom management, blended learning etc. She got her Ph.D. degree at Vietnam National University, Hanoi. She has not only presented several teaching conferences in and outside Vietnam but also trained teachers in the country.

Interference of Mother Tongue on Non-English Majored Students' Pronunciation

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ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to analyze the mother tongue elements interfering Vietnamese students when they learn English pronunciation. The study involved 30 EFL students at Vinh university. The participants' pronunciation was first recorded and then analyzed to find out their pronunciation issues. Then interviews were administered as a follow-up to examine the issues more closely. It was found that ending sounds, nasal sounds and word stress are three main difficulties that students have to face in their pronunciation learning process. The findings also show that the problems may be due to the difference between the two languages' pronunciation systems. Based on the findings, several implications were proposed with the hope to improve the effectiveness of teaching pronunciation to EFL learners at Vinh university.

Key words: interference, pronunciation, EFL learners, mother tongue interference

BIOGRAPHY



Thái Anh Tuấn is a Lecturer of English and French at Vinh University. He earned his master degree in French Pedagogy. His research interests include writing teaching, pragmatics, contrastive linguistics and the ICT in English language teaching.

Listening Assessment at Junior High Schools in Central Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

It is undeniable that listening is a crucial skill in language learning. Nevertheless, how to assess students' listening ability seems to have challenged many wholehearted teachers at junior high schools in Central Vietnam. This paper mentions the documents issued by MOET regarding the issues of assessing EFL learners' listening ability. Some sample tests for junior high school students were closely examined to withdraw findings that may help to raise English language teachers' awareness of language assessment principles. The steps of designing a listening test are also presented in this paper.

Key words: Listening skill, assessment, junior high school, test items, test design

BIOGRAPHY



Lê Thị Thúy Hà is a Lecturer in English at Vinh University, Vietnam. She earned her Master in applied linguistics years ago and has more than 20 years of experience in English language teaching. Her research interests are multiple intelligences theory and extensive listening in English language teaching. She has also presented at several national TESOL conferences.

Portfolios as an Assessment Tool to Improve the Effectiveness of English Teaching to EFL Students

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ABSTRACT

The study was an attempt to examine Vinh University teachers' use of portfolios in their English teaching. Twenty English teachers participated in the study. The study was designed on the qualitative - quantitative survey basis using questionnaires and interviews. The results indicated that all the teachers were aware of the importance of portfolios in their teaching and that it provides evidence of the students' English proficiency, but not evidence for the improvement in their teaching quality. Different reasons for the lack of improvement were found, including teachers' lack of assessment experience, the quality of portfolios and students' commitment to the class. The study recommends some ways to develop portfolios as an assessment tool in order to improve the effectiveness of the English teaching process at Vinh University.

Key words: portfolios, assessment, EFL students, English teaching

BIOGRAPHY



Vũ Thị Hà is a Lecturer in English at Vinh University, Vietnam. She earned her PhD in Philology years ago and has more than 20 years of experience in English language teaching. Her research interests are multiple intelligences theory in English language teaching and language assessment.

Project-Based Learning - A Case Study of the Typical Project Lessons in the New 12th Grade English Textbook in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

The importance of how to implement project-based learning in the new English program for high school students effectively, especially for 12th graders, has stimulated the author to carry out this study. The study looks at typical project lessons in the new English textbook that is currently being used for high school students in Vietnam. The paper mentions the theoretical background and then an analysis of the typical projects in the new 12th grade English textbook is made in order to give an illustrated lesson plan as well as methods of assessment for both teachers and students.

Keywords: project-based learning, project assessment, rubrics, the new 12th grade English textbook

BIOGRAPHY



After graduating with a BA in English Teaching from Vinh University (2016), I started teaching English here as a Foreign Language. I was, however, more fascinated by language, so I did an MA in English Language and Applied Linguistics in the University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom in 2017. It was my interest in Stylistics, which led to my presentation of conceptual metaphors in the University of Huddersfield Linguistics PGR Conference 2018. Since I came back to Vietnam in 2019, attending the training course as a trainer for junior and senior English teachers, I have found the attraction of language testing and assessment, and plan to study in this area.

Pronunciation Problems of English Vowels by Vietnamese Students at Vinh University and Solutions

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ABSTRACT

It has been observed that many English language learners at Vinh University are unable to produce intelligible English pronunciation. This may result in misunderstanding during their communication with native speakers or even to non-native English speakers. As a teacher of English who has had many years of experience in teaching pronunciation, I have realized that the students at Vinh University have many pronunciation difficulties, including sounds, stress and intonation. This article presents some English vowel sounds that are commonly mispronounced by Vietnamese learners of English at Vinh University. It also discusses the causes of these problems and suggests implications for teaching pronunciation. The findings are expected to bring remarkable insights into renovation of English learning and teaching, especially teaching speaking and pronunciation at the university level.

Key words: pronunciation, sound, intonation, pronunciation difficulties, English stress

BIOGRAPHY



Võ Thị Hồng Minh is a senior Lecturer at Foreign Languages Department, Vinh University. She is also a trainer in courses held by National Language Project 2020. She holds a Master's Degree in Linguistics (2005) at University of Languages and International Studies, National University, Hà Nội and has more than 20 years of experience in English Language Teaching. Her research interests are Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching Methodology. She has authored some articles and also presented at several international and national TESOL conferences.

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 syllabus, teaching techniques and linguistic, cultural and communicative aspects. The data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations and online activities on a learning management system.

Key words: English literature, EFL literacy, linguistic skills, cultural knowledge

BIOGRAPHY



Nguyễn Duy Bình is a lecturer of English literature and Translation theory at Vinh University, Vietnam. He earned his PhD degree in Comparative Literature at Aix-Marseille 1 Faculty, France in 2008. He is a literary translator and has translated 12 French novels into Vietnamese. His research interests include the reception of literature, the literary translation, contrastive linguistics and the ICT in foreign languages teaching. He is the author of two research books and several articles published in France as well as in Vietnam.

Suggestions for First-Year English Major Students to Improve Their Listening Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

Listening comprehension is considered the most challenging skill for a great number of learners, particularly English major freshmen at tertiary level. This paper addresses a number of fundamental questions including the reasons for improving listening comprehension, challenges to English-major freshmen in improving listening skills, and things that can be done to help learners improve listening skills. The paper can be of benefit to teachers of English as well as English-major students at college/university level. The practical activities suggested in the paper may help EFL learners who wish to self-study to improve their English listening comprehension.

Key words: listening comprehension, homophones, word stress, sentence stress, intonation,

BIOGRAPHY



Phan Thị Hương is a teacher of English and teacher trainer at Vinh University, Vietnam. Having been teaching English for 25 years, she has gained experiences in handling mixed-level groups of EFL learners. She has attended intensive courses on professional development and teaching methodologies in Vietnam, Canada and the Philippines. She has involved as a presenter, coordinator or a participant in a great number of workshops on teaching and learning EFL, curriculum development, and language testing and assessment by The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, The US Embassy, The British Council, WUSC Canada, and Fulbright Vietnam. Her areas of professional interest are teaching language skills, conceptual metaphor and critical discourse analysis.

Syllabus Development in the Light of CDIO Framework: The Case of the Course 'Introduction to Linguistics'

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ABSTRACT

Over the past 10 years, CDIO approach (Conceive – Design – Implement – Operate) has gained popular interest among academic professionals, industry representatives and leaders, which helps to build up a strong connection between educators and employers, and gradually erase the huge gap between curriculum design and reality needs. Even though the CDIO Initiative was initially developed specifically for educational institutions grounding in engineering, the CDIO network now welcomes members from other majors including social science subjects to implement CDIO programs and share their research results. Vinh University, a multidisciplinary training institution in Vietnam, has been adapting and adopting the CDIO framework for all its majors since 2016. This paper analyzes the relationship between learning outcomes of the course 'Introduction to Linguistics' in the English Linguistics program, and then develops a suitable syllabus and learning activities in order to produce the next generation of students being able to meet the real-world demands.

Key words: CDIO, introduction to linguistics, syllabus, learning outcomes

BIOGRAPHY



Đinh Thị Mai Anh is a lecturer at Foreign Languages Department, Vinh University. She is also a trainer in courses held by National Language Project 2020 and Vinh University with the aim to improve the quality of teachers at Vietnamese primary, secondary and high schools. Besides, she works as an examiner in Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP). She received her Master's Degree (2016) in Linguistics and Bachelor's Degree (2012) in English Language Teaching at University of Languages and International Studies, National University, Hanoi. Her research interests include Cognitive linguistics; ESP; Pedagogy and language testing.

Teachers' Perceptions towards Teacher - Student Interactive Activities in EFL Reading Comprehension Classes: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study aimed to identify the perceptions of five EFL teachers, who specialize in teaching reading, towards teacher-student interactive activities and to investigate the most commonly used types of interaction between the teachers and students in EFL reading comprehension classroom in Quảng Bình University. In-depth interviews and classroom observations were two main instruments to collect data for the research. The findings showed that the teacher participants in the study were highly aware of the importance as well as the benefits of teacher-student interactive activities in reading classes. However, they claimed that they met several difficulties in designing and deploying interactive activities in such a way to attract the students' attention and participation. The study also revealed that the interaction between teacher and the whole class was the most commonly used type of interaction in EFL reading classes. From the findings, pedagogical implications were drawn out for both EFL teachers and EFL students.

Key words: teacher's perception, interactive activities, teacher-student interaction, reading comprehension, EFL students

BIOGRAPHY



Her name is Nguyễn Thị Lệ Hằng. She has been working at Quang Binh University as an English teacher for 15 years. She is currently a TESOL Ph.D student at Hue College of Foreign Language, Hue University. With 15 years of teaching experience, she is in charge of teaching Reading Skill, Speaking Skill, Grammar, Syntax, and Interpretation for English-major Students at Quang Binh University. Her main fields of research are: Interpretation, CEFR, Language Policy, and basic skills of the English language.

Teaching Pronunciation Strategies to Students at Nghe An College of Economics: An Action Research Project

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ABSTRACT

Pronunciation is considered a major factor deciding the success in the process of acquiring and using a foreign language. However, it has been often neglected or ignored in English lessons at Nghe An College of Economics. This paper reviews the issues relating to the teaching pronunciation at the college. First, the problem and the theoretical framework into which the problem fits will be presented. Then, there will be a literature review of what 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 as well.

Key words: English pronunciation, teaching pronunciation, pronunciation instruction, foreign language, language learning strategies

BIOGRAPHY



Nguyễn Văn Thùy received her bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching from Vinh University and is currently a lecturer at Nghe An College of Economics, where she is involved with teaching English for Non-English major students. Her passion is exploring English teaching methods and her professional interests focus on English learning motivation and autonomous learning. She holds an M.Sc. in English Teaching Method from University of Languages and International Studies - VNU. She has extensive experience in teaching adult learners.

In addition, she serves as a head of English Group at Nghe An College of Economics.

Testing and Assessment of Students' Translations at Vinh University

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate how translation teachers at the Foreign Languages Department (FLD), Vinh University, evaluate their students' translations. A questionnaire was firstly delivered to all FLD translation teachers to elicit information on how the teachers assessed their students' work, what assessment criteria they used and how they perceived their assessment. Interviews were also conducted to gain a deeper insight into the topic. The data revealed that the teachers employed different tools of assessment in different testing contexts and that their evaluation was generally based on personal experience rather than a common set of criteria. The teachers, therefore, reckoned that their scoring was rather subjective and inconsistent in many cases. Some suggestions to help improve the quality of testing and assessment in the field of translation teaching were also made based on the findings.

Key words: translation, assessment, testing, assessment criteria, translating exercises

BIOGRAPHY



Nguyễn Thị Tuyết Hồng is a lecturer of English at Foreign Languages Department, Vinh University, with more than 16 years of teaching experience. She holds a master's degree in English Applied Linguistics and shows great research interests in Applied Linguistics, Translation, and Testing and Assessment.

The Benefits of Learning French as a Second Foreign Language: A Case of EFL Students at Vinh University

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ABSTRACT

French language used to be a compulsory subject for English majored students at Vinh University for many years, and still is an important foreign language that is taught to English majors at other universities. Nevertheless, little research has been carried out to investigate the benefits it can bring to English majors. This paper aims to find out English majored students' attitudes towards the French language and examine the advantages of this second foreign language. The research findings indicate that learning the French language is useful for the participants not only in such linguistic terms as vocabulary, grammar, syntax but also in terms of cultural knowledge. The findings suggest that teaching French to English majored students has been a pertinent choice and must be continued and improved.

Key words: French, second foreign language, English majors, the French language

BIOGRAPHY



Trần Giang Nam is a Lecturer in English at Vinh University, Vietnam. His research interests include contrastive linguistics in English language teaching, reading skills and cross-culture for foreign languages learners.

The Effectiveness of Using Short Clips Extracted from Movies in Teaching Vocabulary to Students: A study Conducted at a University in Nghe An Province

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ABSTRACT

Using movies and videos to teach English to students has been a common strategy employed by many teachers. However, how to incorporate this teaching technique in EFL classroom has remained a challenging task. In the meantime, course books and CDs may sometimes seem artificial and not very engaging for students. This paper will present some insights into how vocabulary is gained from cognitive perspective, and offer some solutions to engage students in learning vocabulary activities. The study was conducted on a sample of two groups: an experimental and a control group. The participants in this study were at the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels of English. The results of this study imply that short clips extracted from films attract students' attention, and present language in a more natural way. The activity may also increase students' autonomy and deepen their interest in English culture.

Key words: video clips, movies, EFL learners, teaching vocabulary

BIOGRAPHY



Dương Đức Ánh started teaching English at the Department of Foreign Languages, Vinh University in 2016, after earning dual degrees in Business Administration and English studies from Hanoi University of Science and Technology (HUST) and from Hanoi University (HANU) respectively. He focuses on teaching methodologies to improve students' autonomy and competences. At the Division of Translation and English literature, he helps students to enhance their translating and interpreting skills, by sharing his first-hand experience as a conference interpreter, a professional translator. He is also a champion of triathlon in which he challenges his endurance and persistence.

The Effects of MI-based Speaking Lessons on EFL Learners' Motivation and Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in the light of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory (1983) in teaching speaking skill to EFL learners at a gifted high school in Quang Binh province. The main objectives were to determine the subjects' dominant intelligences and examine their motivation and oral performance, which would help to explore the effects of MI-based teaching on these two aspects. Both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained via such instruments as MI inventory, intrinsic motivation inventory, oral assessment rubric, field notes, and interviews. The results showed that the application of MI-based teaching for speaking skill considerably increased the students' learning motivation and ability to perform orally.

Key words: Multiple Intelligences, MI-based teaching, motivation, oral performance

BIOGRAPHY



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ngô Đình Phương is currently a Senior Lecturer of Foreign Languages Department- Vinh University. As an educator he has involved closely with teaching and training. He was Dean of Foreign Languages Department, Vice-President of Vinh University. His numerous publications and research papers concern linguistics and language education. He has also been a Member of Editorial Board- Journal of Language and Life, Linguistic Society of Vietnam since 2015.



Tạ Nhan Nữ Nguyệt Anh is a teacher of English at Vo Nguyen Giap High School for the gifted- Quang Binh Province. She holds an MA in TESOL from Vinh University.

The Feasibility of Using Kahoot As a Formative Assessment Tool in English Language Classrooms at Hồng Đức University

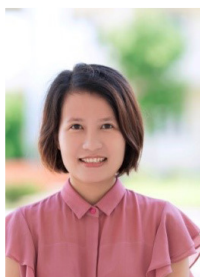
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ABSTRACT

Along with the increasing development of information technology, numerous digital tools for education have been invented to enrich learning and teaching material resource. This research addresses the attitudes of junior students in the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Hong Duc University towards using Kahoot application as a formative assessment tool. The experiment was carried out in a three-month period during which Kahoot was used in British and American culture class in the first semester of 2019-2020 academic year. Semi-structured interviews with five English teachers in the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Hồng Đức University were also conducted to investigate the actual situation of formative assessment in English language teaching. Besides, a questionnaire was administered to 80 English majored junior students in order to identify their attitudes towards using Kahoot in their classroom. The results showed that English majored junior students at Hồng Đức University had a positive and favourable attitudes and perception towards the use of Kahoot in their English class. This suggests that Kahoot is a right tool that can help to improve students' engagement in the classroom. In addition, the some suggestions for the suitable implementation of Kahoot in English class for English majored students at Hồng Đức University were provided.

Key words: Kahoot, digital tools, formative assessment, IT in teaching

BIOGRAPHY



Trịnh Thị Thu Hà is a lecturer at Hong Duc University, where she takes responsibility for teaching English Applied Linguistics and Methodology. She holds a M.A in Applied Linguistics and TESOL from Anglia Ruskin University, the UK. She has five years of experience in teaching English to learners from all age groups, from young to adult learners. She published some articles in several areas of second language teaching. Her research interests include ICT in language teaching, autonomous learning and factors in second language acquisition.

The Impact of ICT Application on Students' Autonomy in English Learning at Vinh University

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the impact of ICT application on EFL students' autonomy at Vinh University. The research involved 91 non-English major students. To collect the data, a questionnaire and online interviews were delivered to the participants after the 10 week treatment. The findings indicated that the application of ICT in learning English helped increase participants' autonomy, in terms of time amount spent on online homework, information researching skills and autonomous control of learning, which may lead to improvement of their learning results. It was also found that the students proved a positive attitude towards ICT application into their English learning process. From the results, several pedagogical suggestions were proposed in order to improve English learning and teaching in EFL contexts.

Key words: ICT application, autonomy, English language learning, non-English major students

BIOGRAPHY



Lê Thái Bình is a lecturer of English. He has a Master degree in English language pedagogy. His fields of interest include ICT in English language teaching, vocabulary teaching and cross-culture. Specialist in Moodle, he has applied several ICT tools in order to improve his English language teaching activities.

The Negative Backwash of High-Stake Tests and Examinations on Secondary Schools and Suggestions for Future Way Out

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ABSTRACT

My previous study (Tran, 2015) suggested a 'teaching to the test' mentality in teachers' cognitions and their classroom practices in the implementation of the English curriculum at the upper-secondary school level due to the negative backwash of the National Examination in Vietnam. In this recent study at both upper- and lower-secondary school levels, more empirical data have illustrated the teachers and students' concerns about high-stake tests and examinations in schools. The data also suggested possible ways out of the current testing and examination regimen, including the use of the Internet-based technology and internationally recognized tests (e.g., IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC). Overall, this study provides an in-depth investigation and implications for a successful implementation of a task-based curriculum in secondary schools concerning the harmony between teaching and testing/assessment.

Key words: testing, language assessment, examinations, teaching to test, backwash



Trần Giang Nam has worked as an English teacher and specialist for more than 20 years. He earned a PhD degree from the University of Wollongong, Australia in 2015. His experience and expertise in English teaching at secondary school level is a strong incentive that encourages him to do research in relation to implementation of the current English curriculum in secondary schools in Vietnam. Nam's research interests are teacher cognition, task-based language teaching and teacher professional development.

The Relationship between EFL Students' English Proficiency and Autonomy Level

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the relationship between EFL students' English proficiency and their autonomous learning. The experiment was conducted at Vinh University, involving 58 non-English majored students. An autonomy test, an English proficiency test and interviews were employed to collect the data. The participants were divided into three groups, according to their English scores: high-medium-low. SPSS package was used to run the correlation. It was found that the high group received the highest score in autonomy test, meanwhile there was no difference between the medium and low groups. Moreover, the most proficient participants seemed more self-controlled in exploiting information sources and monitoring their own learning process than those in the other two groups.

BIOGRAPHY



Phạm Thị Lương Giang is a Lecturer in English at Vinh University, Vietnam. She holds a Master's degree of TESOL and has more than 10 years of experience in English language teaching. Her research interests are Textbook Evaluation, Testing and Assessment, Using technology in English language teaching.

The Relationship between Multiple Intelligences and EFL Learners' English Language Proficiency

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ABSTRACT

Multiple intelligences theory has been an under-researched topic although it has gained attention from various language practitioners around the world. This study set out to determine whether any of the nine types of multiple intelligences are correlated with EFL learners' English language proficiency. A multiple intelligences quiz and a general English language proficiency test were administered among 120 high school students who were from similar backgrounds and had spent approximately equal amounts of time on English learning. The results indicated that high verbal-linguistic intelligence and logical-mathematical intelligence were good predictors of the learners' language achievement. However, the participants in these two categories were not the only people who obtained highest scores on the English proficiency test. This suggests that every learner can potentially succeed in learning English and thus brings hope to those who have been struggling with their foreign language learning.

Key words: multiple intelligences, English language proficiency, logical-mathematical intelligence, EFL learners

BIOGRAPHY



Trần Thị Ngọc Yến is a Lecturer in TESOL and Applied Linguistics at Vinh University, Vietnam. She earned a diploma in TESOL from Carleton University, Canada, and received her Ph.D in Applied Linguistics from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Her research interests are EFL reading fluency development, vocabulary acquisition, multiple intelligences theory in English language teaching, and language memory span. She has published her research in different journals and presented at various national and international TESOL conferences.

University Students' Perceptions toward the Use of Facebook-Based e-Portfolios As an Assessment Tool in EFL Writing: A Case in Vinh University, Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Little research has been conducted on using Facebook as a e-portfolio platform in assessing students' writing abilities, especially in Vietnamese university contexts. The current study aimed at examining Vietnamese tertiary students' perceptions regarding the use of Facebook-based e-portfolios (F-portfolios) in terms of their contributions to academic writing, as well as problems students encountered when applying F-portfolios to the writing assignments. For this purpose, fifty first-year students majoring in English language and English teaching at Vinh University in Nghệ An province, Vietnam took part in the research. A questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were employed to collect the data. During the experiment, the students spent ten weeks writing on Facebook close-typed groups, following detailed instructions from the syllabus. The findings revealed that students highly appreciated the contributions of F-portfolios since this assessment tool helped promote interactions between students through peer-feedback activities, improving their motivation and confidence in writing, which leads to positive involvement in writing class. Students also admitted the benefits of F-portfolios in advancing their writing skills and empowering vocabulary and grammar knowledge. The research also proposes insights to implement Facebook-based e-portfolios as an alternative assessment in improving the quality of teaching EFL writing in tertiary contexts.

Key words: portfolios, EFL writing, facebook-based teaching, F-portfolios

BIOGRAPHY



Lê Diệu Linh is a young lecturer of English at Vinh University, Vietnam. She earned a Bachelor's Honour degree majoring in English Language at University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University. She is currently teaching English skills to first-year students at Foreign Languages Department, Vinh University. Her research interest is primarily in the area of English language teaching and applied linguistics, which has inspired her to complete Master's degree in English Language and Linguistics at University of Westminster, United Kingdom.

Using Mind Maps in Teaching EFL Reading Skill to Freshmen to Develop Other Language Skills

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ABSTRACT

This research aims at finding how using mind maps in teaching ESL reading skill to freshmen at Vinh University can help to develop their speaking and writing skills. An experimental study was carried out with a treatment group of 28 freshmen and a control group of 31 freshmen. The participants in the treatment group were asked to make mind maps in every reading lesson. The data revealed that compared with the control group, the treatment group improved their reading comprehension as well as other language skills to a greater extent. The treatment group also had positive attitudes toward the application of mind maps. Based on the findings, the study offers some pedagogical suggestions and implications for English language practitioners.

Key words: reading skill, reading comprehension, language skills, mind maps

BIOGRAPHY



Nguyễn Thị Lam Giang is a teacher to non-English major students in the Foreign Languages Department at Vinh University. She has a bachelor's degree in both French Pedagogy and English. In October 2014, she obtained a master's degree in TESOL. She has taught French at Vinh University, but currently teaches English to non-major students. Her current interests include cooperative learning, extensive reading, and improving teaching methods to encourage students' success.

Using Peer Assessment to Improve EFL University Students' Speaking Skills

Trần Thị Vân Anh

Vinh University

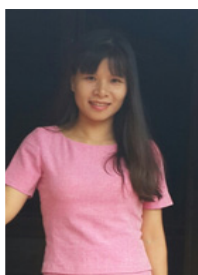
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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to investigate the effects of peer assessment on EFL students' speaking skills. The study was conducted among 30 EFL university students. One of the two groups was randomly assigned to be the control group and the other experimental group. After 10 weeks of treatment, a post-test and a reflection questionnaire were administered to collect the data. The findings showed that peer assessment helped improve experimental students' speaking performance (e.g. increasing the length of their talks). Besides, the students in the experimental group showed greater attitudes towards speaking tasks, compared to their counter partner in the control group. Several recommendations were also suggested for teaching and learning English at the university context.

Key words: peer assessment, speaking skills, language assessment, assessing speaking ability

BIOGRAPHY



Trần Thị Vân Anh has been an English language teacher for 8 years. She is now a lecturer at Foreign Language Department, Vinh University. Before being an English teacher, she taught Chinese to students at Vinh University. She received an M.A in linguistic from Taiwan Tsing Hua University in 2013. Her main areas of research interests are linguistic and language teaching methodology.

Using Reading Logs to Develop Critical Thinking Skills for First-Year Non-English Majors at Vinh University

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ABSTRACT

A few studies have found critical thinking can be taught by creating environments and habits that engage learners in cognitive processes. One of the potentially effective tools to promote this skill is reading logs. This study aims to explore the impacts of reading logs on developing critical thinking skills for first year non-English majors at Vinh University. It describes techniques for implementing reading logs and discusses the benefits that reading logs offer to non-English majors. It was found that keeping a reading log encouraged students to record their personal reactions to the text on several levels and different points of view. Therefore, they could construct their ability of a critical, strategic reader and independent learner through reflections that they express in reading logs.

Key words: Critical thinking skill, reading logs, reflexive activities, non-English majors

BIOGRAPHY



Trương Thị Minh is a teacher of French for students majoring in English at the Foreign Languages Department of Vinh University. She has been teaching English to non-majors for 6 years. She has conducted a few studies about interferences between French and English. Her research interests include contrastive linguistic, and techniques and activities to create an effective environment for the learning of English and French.

Using Technology-Based Activities to Enhance EFL Students' Pronunciation

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ABSTRACT

The study was an attempt to investigate the effects of teaching activities that were designed based on the Elsa speak app on EFL students' pronunciation. The study was conducted among 20 students in an English center. After finding out students' pronunciation profiles, Elsa-based activities were assigned accordingly for each student in order to improve their pronunciation. The experiment lasted 10 weeks. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test results showed that there were significant positive changes in non-systemic pronunciation errors but the systemic errors were slightly ameliorated. Besides, the participants claimed their preference towards these learning activities over teacher-student interaction. Some pedagogical implications were proposed with the hope to help EFL teachers in teaching English pronunciation.

Key words: pronunciation, effectiveness, pedagogical, errors, speech, profiles

BIOGRAPHY



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Using Translation-Based Activities in Reading Lessons to Enhance Non-English Major Students' Lexical Development

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ABSTRACT

The study has made an effort in figuring out the effectiveness of text-translation in terms of new-word volume reinforcement during reading lessons. The experiment was carried out with about 150 non-English major students within three months. The students were asked to translate into Vietnamese all the English passages presented in the reading part. They had to work in pairs to eliminate the individual frustration and take advantage of mutual support. The result indicated that the ability of the long-term vocabulary storage can significantly be strengthened by identifying new-word usage within a specific reading text instead of being remembered out of context, which will likely be less useful because each English word might have various meanings and uses. The speed of reading task fulfillment, accordingly, increased noticeably.

Key words: text-translation, effectiveness, vocabulary, reading tasks, enhance

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An Investigation Into Washback of Multiple Choice Tests On Teaching Process

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the impacts of multiple choice (MCQ) tests on teaching process at Vinh University. The study involved 20 EFL teachers at Vinh University. Surveys and interviews were used to gather teachers' views of the washback of the test. It was found that MCQ test had both negative and positive washback on the teaching process. It was discovered that the use of MCQ tests encouraged teachers to adapt their teaching strategies according to and hence improve the teaching preparation and methodologies. However, the findings also show that there is a mismatch between communicative teaching and MCQ tests, which in turns results in difficulties in the classroom. From the results, some pedagogical implications are suggested for improving the English teaching quality at Vinh University and in EFL contexts.

Key words: washback, EFL teachers, teaching process, MCQ test

BIOGRAPHY



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