



# ICELS 2018

3-4 August 2018

## **Suranaree University of Technology**

- Organized by School of Foreign Languages
  - Edited by Assistant Professor Dr. Issra Pramoolsook and Mr. Kenneth Wingate
-

## Table of Contents

<b>Organizers .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Message from the Head of the Organizing Committee .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Thai Learners' Expressions of English Experiential and Hypothetical Structures : Pornsiri Singhapreecha .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A Study of Students' Ways &amp; Perspectives toward the Use of Google Translate : Reuben H. Esteban, Naruporn Palawatwichai, and Warunee Inpaen .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Learners' Perceived Skills for Twenty-First Century from the Integration of Design Thinking in Seminar in English Class : Supornphan Konchiab and Dechathorn Pojchanaphong .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Learner Autonomy: English Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices in the Context of Myanmar : Aung Myo Hein .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>A CLIL Approach in Thailand University Setting: Teaching Design Thinking Through English : Thammanoon Buphate, Krittika Inta, and Reuben H. Esteban .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>EFL Learners' Perspectives on the Use of Video in a Business Communication Course : Tham M. Duong .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices of Formative Assessment in the Classroom: A Case of High Schools in Vinh Long Province : Ta Thi Thanh Lan, Doan Thị Loan, Thai Cong Dan, and Phan Thi Phuong Lan .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Learning Needs Analysis of General English Course: A Case in a College in Can Tho City, Vietnam : Doan Thi Loan, Thai Cong Dan, Ta Thi Thanh Lan, Phan Thi Phuong Lan .....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Some Vietnamese Cultural Obstacles in Speaking English: A Case at Can Tho University, Vietnam : Thai Cong Dan, Huynh Nguyen Anh Mai, Thach Chanh Da, Phu Thi Hong Chau, and Lam Son Hai, M .....</b>	<b>113</b>

## **ORGANIZERS**

School of Foreign Languages  
Institute of Social Technology  
Suranaree University of Technology  
Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand

*In cooperation with:*

- Department of Western Languages and Literature, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University, Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand
- Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand
- Department of Western Languages and Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mahasarakham University, Maha Sarakham, Thailand

## **MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**

On behalf of the School of Foreign Languages, I am honored and delighted to welcome you to the 2018 International Conference of English Language Studies (ICELS) at Suranaree University of Technology.

The conference highlights the rich diversity of approaches to understanding English and the range of contexts in which it is taught, studied and used across the globe.

We look forward to the participants and attendees sharing their research and practical ideas and hope everyone enjoys an academically and culturally stimulating two days in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

Lastly, to all the presenters, participants, staff, and more importantly, the team of reviewers from our three partner universities, Khon Kaen University (KKU), Ubon Ratchathani (UBU), and Mahasarakham University (MSU), thank you for your kind participation in and contributions to the 2018 ICELS.

**Dr. Sirinthorn Seepho**  
Chair, School of Foreign Languages

# THAI LEARNERS' EXPRESSIONS OF ENGLISH EXPERIENTIAL AND HYPOTHETICAL STRUCTURES

**Pornsiri Singhapreecha**

The Language Institute, Thammasat University

## Abstract

This study investigated Thai learners' knowledge of English experiential and hypothetical structures. English experiential verbs of the *avoid* class select gerundial and nominal complements (i.e. lexical NPs) exclusively, whereas the Thai counterparts can take either nominalized or infinitival complements. Verbs of the *like* class allow both hypothetical and experiential complements across Thai and English. It was hypothesized, based on the L1 and L2 similarities and differences, that Thai learners would be able to produce English constructions of the *like* class with the two options easily, while they would perform less satisfactorily on the *avoid* class. Data obtained from thirty-two essays of Thai undergraduate students revealed that the two classes of verbs were treated independently, i.e. experiential complements were strictly employed with the *avoid* class and hypothetical complements with the *like* class. These findings were accounted for by means of L1/L2 similarities reinforced by input frequency. While the prediction was not entirely supported, the data revealed an interesting and consequential finding, i.e. a substantial number of lexical NPs were found in association with the *avoid* class. When the number of lexical NPs is added to that of gerundial phrases, the data suggest that experiential and hypothetical expressions are equally likely to occur. This finding is crucial as it enables uniformity in viewing L2 knowledge of nominal expressions. In terms of ELT, it is recommended that ESL/EFL teachers deliver explicit instructions on the experiential and hypothetical structures in all allowable contexts along with intensive training, to enhance students' subtle knowledge and variety in their English expressions.

*Keywords:* Gerund, Infinitive, Hypothetical, Experiential, Lexical NP, L2 Written Expression

## 1. Introduction

English gerunds vs. infinitives have been studied extensively with L2 learners. There are two types of studies, as far as the methodology is concerned. The first one involves elicitation as a means to assess L2 learners' knowledge of both structures (Anderson, 1976 and Butoyi, 1978, cited in Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Kitikanan, 2011; Vercellotti and de Jong, 2013; Kaewchaum & Pongpaiboj, 2017). Researchers used several kinds of tools. Anderson (1976) and Butoyi (1978) employed multiple-choice and translation tasks with Spanish, Persian, and Japanese L2 learners; Vercellotti and de Jong (2013) utilized oral production data of L2 learners of various L1 backgrounds (Arabic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Turkish, French, and Slovak). With Thai L2 learners, Kitikanan (2011)

used fill-in-the-blank questions requiring participants to supply the gerund or infinitive forms, while Kaewchaum & Pongpairoj (2017) employed grammaticality judgment tests.<sup>1</sup>

The other type of research is corpus-based (Martinez-Garcia & Wulff, 2012; Yoon, 2016.) Martinez-Garcia & Wulff (2012) checked the dependency between matrix predicates and their infinitival and gerundial complements in the Spanish and German components of *the International Corpus of Learner English*, in comparison with the British component. Yoon (2016) conducted a similar investigation with a corpus of Korean L2 learners' argumentative essays.

The findings of the above studies can be summarized as follows. Firstly, L2 usage of English infinitives is more productive and accurate than that of gerunds.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, given the L2 corpora, verbs that are biased toward infinitives rank higher in the frequency list than matrix verbs that are biased toward gerunds, and the L2 learners' production patterns, albeit grammatical, are relatively non-idiomatic, compared to those of native English speakers. Interestingly, there seems to be no switch between the two structures (Martinez-Garcia & Wulff, 2012; Vercelloti and de Jong, 2013).

The asymmetry between infinitives and gerunds in the L2 English has partly been attributed to pedagogy. According to Martinez-Garcia & Wulff (2012), who examined Spanish ESL instruction materials, the English grammar instructions give unbiased advice regarding the specific verbs to be used with gerundial/infinitival complements; nevertheless, input on frequencies of verbs occurring with gerunds and to-infinitives in the L1 English is largely ignored in the instructions. Pedagogy notwithstanding, L1 has been addressed as playing a role in Kitikanan's (2011) study. According to her participants' answers to open-ended questions, certain correct tokens were initially translated to phrases introduced by *thîi cà?* and *kaan and khwaam*, respectively. As *thîi cà?* and *kaan and khwaam* are markers for hypothetical and experiential nominals in Thai, Kitikanan construed this translation strategy as positive L1 transfer.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Given the literature review in the introduction, the majority of the findings reveal the ease of to-infinitives and difficulty of gerunds. Methodologically, most research established specific verbs with gerundial and infinitival complements by means of dictionaries and/or English reference grammars. Although corpus-based studies (e.g. Martinez-Garcia & Wulff, 2012 and Yoon, 2016), employed L2 learner corpora, only frequently occurring verbs were examined. This causes certain auxiliaries and adjectives that take to-infinitives as well to be missing from the data. Semantically, to-infinitives and gerunds are forms of nominals that serve as complements of hypothetical and experiential verbs. Nominals are not restricted to these two structures; noun phrases can also occur in

---

<sup>1</sup> Matrix verbs in the stimuli in both studies were obtained from English reference grammar resources; those in the study by Kaewchaum & Pongpairoj were initially produced by means of concordance-lines.

<sup>2</sup> An exception is evident in Kitikanan's (2011) study, in which gerunds were more accurately produced than to-infinitives.

<sup>3</sup> Negative L1 transfer was also evident. In Kitikanan (2011), some tokens that required gerunds (e.g. *consider* and *avoid*) were mistakenly filled by to-infinitives due to the presence of *thîi cà?* in the Thai counterparts.

alternation with gerunds. The fact revealed by semantics that noun phrases can be another form of complement has not been addressed in this area of research. In addition, the role of L1, as suggested by Kitikanan, has rarely been investigated.

The current study is a small scaled, data-oriented investigation, based on Thai EFL students' essays. Despite its small dataset, the study attempts to resolve the methodological issue by extending the data to instances of auxiliaries and adjectives with to-infinitives, which were virtually absent from the prior studies. To augment the semantics of nominal structures, noun phrases that are complements of experiential predicates were added. In terms of L1, I made predictions on the basis of L1 and L2 similarities and differences (to be presented in section 3.3) to determine if these would facilitate or impede their English written expressions. Thus, a unified view of hypothetical and experiential complements enabled this study to examine a broader range of data. In addition, results based on considerations of L1/L2 comparisons will be helpful for our understanding of the grammatical system of the L2.

At this point, it is necessary to identify structural and semantic properties of English experiential and hypothetical structures, for clarity of the upcoming discussion on their Thai counterparts. The experiential term cannot be mutually exclusive of *fact*; therefore, I will define it as a clause employed to express some known fact that the speaker and hearer can associate their experience with. See (1) below for an experiential instance.

- (1) a. Tan avoids trans fats.
- b. Tan avoids eating fast food.

In (1) above, presumably, the speaker asserted this statement as he/she had some information about adverse effects of trans fats and knew that Tan habitually did not eat fast food as he was aware of its effects. The statements were transmitted to the hearer, who was assumed to be familiar with the same kind of information. Therefore, an experiential sense has been established when the speaker and the hearer are able to associate their knowledge or experience with the statement or part of it. In terms of the experiential form, the matrix verb *avoids* can take either a lexical NP *trans fats* as in (1a) or the gerundial phrase *eating fast food* as in (1b).

In respect of the hypothetical type, the term can be defined as a clause employed to express unreal and desirable events. See (2) below for a hypothetical instance.

- (2) a. Tan wants a research grant.
- b. Tan wants to get a research grant.

In (2a), *a research grant*, a lexical NP, serves as a desirable entity, following the matrix verb *wants*. In (2b), the meaning associated with the infinitival clause is that of desirable as well, i.e. Tan's acquisition of a research grant has not happened, but is expected. In terms of form, the matrix verb *wants* takes the infinitival clause *to get a research grant* as its complement. There is no other alternative, e.g. a gerundial phrase cannot occur with *want*.

In addition, as experiential and hypothetical constructions have structural similarities and differences across L1 and L2, it is important that L1 corresponding structures to L2 be taken into account, in predicting how L2 expressions might appear.

The structure of this paper is as follows. In section 3, I will provide a description of Thai experiential and hypothetical structures, in comparison with their English counterparts, along with the relevant hypothesis. Sections 4, 5, and 6 present methodology, results and discussions, and conclusion and recommendations.

### 3. Thai and English Experiential and Hypothetical Constructions

In this section, I will illustrate Thai and English examples of the two construction types and present a relevant hypothesis. I will also narrow the scope of my discussion to two classes of verbs across Thai and English, i.e. *avoid* and *like*, which are relevant to the data to be reported in section 5. Note that as experiential and hypothetical contexts are allowed in their Thai counterparts, I will demonstrate these verbs in all allowable contexts.

#### 3.1. English and Thai Experiential Constructions

As noted earlier in section 2, the English experiential sense can be instantiated by a matrix verb such as *avoid* along with a lexical NP or a gerundial phrase. In Thai, the counterpart of English *avoid*, i.e. *lìiklîaŋ* can appear with either constituent as well. In addition to that, *lìiklîaŋ* can take an infinitival clause. See (3) for English, repeated from (1), and (4) for Thai examples.

(3) a. Tan avoids trans fats.

b. Tan avoids eating fast food.

- (4) a. Tan      lìiklîaŋ      khăjman      trans  
          Tan      avoid      fat      trans  
      b. Tan      lìiklîaŋ      *kaan*      kin      aahăan fast food  
                  avoid      Nominalizer      eat      food  
      c. Tan      lìiklîaŋ      *thîi cà?*      kin      aahăan fast food  
                  avoid      inf. Marker  
      “\*Tan avoids to eat fast food.”

Sentences (3a) and (4a) are parallel in structure and identical in meaning. In (4b), *kaan* is a nominalizer, turning a verb phrase into a nominal phrase, which can be considered an option compatible with the way a gerundial phrase *eating fast food* is formed in English, such as (3b). Both (3b) and (4b) convey an experiential sense. Sentence (4c) is particularly interesting. In (4c), the matrix verb *lìiklîaŋ* takes a clause introduced by an infinitive marker *thîi cà?* as its complement. That *thîi cà?* bears the status of an infinitive marker, compatible with the English infinitive marker *to*, has been established in Diller (2001), Jenks (2006), Singhapreecha (2010). Notably, according to Singhapreecha (2010), *thîi* marks factive



clauses when it appears by itself.<sup>4</sup> When *thîi* forms a compound with *cà?*, as she further remarks, *thîi cà?* assumes a new role; it becomes an infinitive marker introducing a clause with a hypothetical tense.<sup>5</sup> The reading of (4c), according to a Thai informant, incorporates the sense of a gradual decline of Tan's consumption of fast food, suggesting a slight hypothetical mood.

To recapitulate, in terms of structural similarities and differences, while Thai *lîiklîaŋ* and English *avoid* can similarly take experiential complements, only *lîiklîaŋ* can select the infinitival option, not *avoid*.

### 3.2. English and Thai Hypothetical Constructions

As noted briefly in section 2, a hypothetical structure is employed when one wants to express an unreal or a desirable event. I chose *like* to illustrate this structure across English and Thai, although the verb *like* is not restricted to hypothetical complements. In the literature, it is found to be biased toward infinitives in L2 German, L1 English, and L2 Korean speakers (Martinez-Garcia and Wulff, 2012; Yoon, 2016).

Consider (5) below.

- (5) a. Tan likes the mountains.  
       b. Tan likes camping in the mountains. (*It's so peaceful here.*)  
       c. Tan likes to camp in the mountains. (*It's so peaceful there.*)

- (6) a. Tan        chôoŋ        phuukhaăw  
       Tan        like        mountains  
       b. Tan        chôoŋ    *kaan*        phákrēm    naj    camp    bon    khăw  
       Tan        like        Nominalizer stay        in    camp    on    mountains  
       c. Tan        chôoŋ    phákrēm        naj    camp    bon    khăw  
       like        stay        in    camp    on    mountains  
       d. Tan        chôoŋ    *thîi cà?*        phákrēm    naj    camp    bon    khăw  
       like        inf.marker    stay        in    camp    on    mountains

Under certain circumstances such as the contexts in (5b) and (5c), the hypothetical sense can be generalized to immediacy and the experiential sense remoteness, as claimed by Bolinger (1968). Sentences (5b) and (5c), reproduced from So's (1973) relevant examples, illustrate these effects. Sentences (5a) and (6a) are parallel in structure and identical in meaning. In (6b), an analogous counterpart of (5b), *kaan* turns *phákrēm naj camp bon khăw*

<sup>4</sup> Sentence (i), reproduced from Singhapreecha' (11), below illustrates an instance where *thîi* marks a factive clause. The complementizer *thîi* introduces fact, i.e. Somsak's not attending the speaker's party, an event that has happened and is assumed to be shared by the speaker and the hearer of this sentence. (i) Somsak

siadaaj    thîi        khăw        mājđāj    paj        ŋaanwankəət        chán  
       Somsak        regret    Comp    he        not        go        birthday party        I  
       'Somsak regretted that he did not attend my birthday party.'

<sup>5</sup> Singhapreecha's (2010) supporting evidence is largely concerned with a ban on co-occurrences of tense elements (marking finiteness) such as perfective and progressive markers with *thîi cà?*.

into a derived nominal phrase, compatible with English “*camping in the mountains*.” In (6c), the matrix verb *chôo* and the verb *phákree* form a serial verb construction.<sup>6</sup> According to Thai informants, (6b) and (6c) convey the same reading; a slight difference involves a degree of formality, available only in (6b). Since both are identical in meaning, it follows that the experiential sense arises in (6c) as well. As for (6d), *to camp in the mountain* is a specific activity that Tan would like to carry out. According to Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999), a generic event is a property typical of gerundial phrases, while a specific event is associated with infinitival clauses. Since specificity is involved in (6d), this suggests another type of hypothetical reading, enabled by the presence of *thûi cà?*. In the next section, I will summarize properties of Thai and English experiential and hypothetical expressions.

### 3.3. L1 and L2 Summary and Hypothesis

Similarities and differences between Thai and English with respect to complement types of the *avoid* and *like* classes are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Thai and English Matrix Verbs and Complement Types

	English		Thai	
Matrix Verb	EXP	HYP	EXP	HYP
<i>lîklîaŋ</i> /avoid	x	Ø	x	x
<i>chôo</i> /like	x	x	x	x

#### Notes

1. EXP and HYP represent experiential and hypothetical complements, respectively.
2. Experiential complements in English include both lexical NPs and gerunds; those in Thai include lexical NPs and nominalized constituents, comparable to English gerunds. Thai experiential complements can appear as verbal bare forms or can be marked by a nominalizer.
3. Hypothetical complements in English refer to non-finite clauses introduced by *to* and those in Thai refer to non-finite clauses introduced by *thûi cà?*.

Based on Table 1, there are two types of matrix verbs. The first type involves the *avoid* class, which selects experiential complements exclusively in English, whereas its Thai counterpart *lîklîaŋ* can take either experiential or hypothetical complements. The second type is concerned with the class of *like*, which allows either experiential or hypothetical complements in both languages.

Given the similarities and differences between the L1 and the L2 above, I predicted that Thai learners would be able to produce English constructions of the *like* class with the

<sup>6</sup> Serial verb constructions contain a series of verbs arranged successively with the same subject. Typically, the verb whose action happens first comes first in a serial verb construction. This property of serial verb constructions is generally known as *iconicity* in semiotic systems. According to Crystal (1997), iconicity refers to “signals whose physical form closely corresponds to characteristics of entities to which they refer,” parallel to the onomatopoeia notion in language.

two options easily, whereas they would perform less satisfactorily on the *avoid* class. Specifically, it was expected that they would produce both *like* and *avoid* instances with both hypothetical and experiential complements, e.g. to-infinitives and gerunds in their English expressions. The prediction about *like* would yield correct output, while the prediction about *avoid* would yield both correct and incorrect output. It is noteworthy that, in reporting results, I will generalize these two classes of verbs to other verbs and adjectives which behave similarly, based on the Thai learners' data obtained in this study.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Writing Task

My data were obtained from thirty-two essays of a group of first-year undergraduate students who were attending a fundamental English course in the second semester of 2016, at a public university in Thailand. They received a range of scores between 40 and 44 on the university's standardized test, equivalent to the range of 70-79 of TOEFL-IBT, which can be considered the intermediate level.

Before writing the essays, the instructor gave a lesson on a unit featuring a reading passage and a BBC program related to the topic of misuse of antibiotics around the world and how this issue would lead to adverse effects. The students in small groups were prompted to answer vocabulary and comprehension questions based on the reading passage and the BBC program. In terms of input on experiential and hypothetical structures, the vocabulary review exercise and the reading passage had a small number of related instances, e.g. one gerundial subject, two gerundial complements, one instance of a lexical NP with a prepositional phrase, and three infinitival complements. This kind of natural input would presumably not suffice to enable the students to pay special attention to hypothetical and experiential structures.

With respect to writing, they were taught concepts and elements of a cause-and-effect essay; e.g., the organization of the essay, logical order, and the related conjunctions. They then participated in an activity to promote logical thinking. The instructor employed the communicative approach, in which no instructions on the grammar of English constructions were given. At the end of the unit, each student wrote an essay of about 250 words on the topic "Why is there currently a problem with the use of antibiotics throughout the world?" The students received guidance on the contents they could discuss in the individual paragraphs, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Guidance on essay outline and contents

Paragraph 1	Introduce antibiotics; useful but problematic when misused
Paragraph 2	Discuss different situations that lead to misuse of antibiotics
Paragraph 3	Propose solutions to the situations presented
Paragraph 4	Emphasize the danger of the world without antibiotics

They were also encouraged to use vocabulary and expressions appearing in the unit. The students' essays were submitted as email attachments to the instructor.

## 4.2. Data Identification

Usable tokens consist of matrix verbs of the *like* and *avoid* classes along with their complements. In this study, the *avoid* class represents the group of matrix verbs taking lexical NPs and gerundial phrases. This class included *prevent*, *protect*, *stop*, *choose*, and *keep*. I extended the data to *prevent* and *protect*, although they do not take gerunds exclusively. In addition to lexical NPs, *prevent* and *protect* can take NPs and PPs embedding gerunds as their complements. As Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) remark, the gerund is a structurally necessary part of the prepositional phrase (PP), and neither the preposition nor the gerund can be deleted without a change in meaning. In this respect, the fact that the gerund is part of a complex PP complement selected by *prevent* and *protect* entitles them to be members of the *avoid* class.

The other class, called the *like* class, includes certain matrix auxiliaries, verbs, and adjectives which take infinitival clauses as their complements in the data. This group consisted of seven categories, based on their high to low frequencies (to be illustrated in section 4.2). Three notes are in order here, with regard to certain members. The first one involves *have/has* followed by to-infinitives. Although *have to* has a modal interpretation equivalent to *must*, it is not necessarily the case that *to* forms a unit with *have*. Syntactically, it is plausible that *have* is a raising predicate, in line with *seem/appear*. According to a standard generative assumption, in the underlying structure, the matrix clause subject of this instance of *have* is an empty category, which is assigned Case, but not a theta role, due to the inability of *have*, a meaningless element, for theta role assignment. As a consequence, the subject of the infinitival clause, with a theta role, raises into it, enabling a thematic chain and Case satisfaction. In the derived structure, the to-infinitive becomes the remnant of the moved subject, which, in turn, does not form a unit with *have*. The resulting word order *have to* is associated with a constructional meaning, which is not derived by a lexical means.<sup>7</sup> In light of the above discussion, this instance of *to* remains in the same position, as a marker for infinitival clauses, after the derivation.

Secondly, while it is customarily held that to-infinitives following *go* are purpose clauses which can be introduced by *in order to*, or serve as fragment answers to *why* questions, the to-infinitives following *go* tokens in this study behave differently; they form a constituent with *go*. The constituency status is suggested by a diagnostic *do-so* substitution test, applying to the *goes to see the doctor*, analogous to the relevant data, as shown in (7) below.

- (7) a. Lee goes to see the doctor once a month, and so does Jane.  
       b. \*Lee goes to see the doctor once a month, and so does Jane to visit her client.

In (7a), *so does Jane* reads *Jane goes to see the doctor*, enabling grammaticality. In (7b), *so does Jane* reads *Jane goes to see the doctor to visit her client*, which is ungrammatical. Consequently, the ungrammaticality of (7b) suggests that *to see the doctor*

---

<sup>7</sup> I thank Marcel den Dikken (p.c.) for this helpful information.

is part of the constituent headed by *go*, and this to-infinitive cannot be independent of its head. This follows that *to see the doctor* is a complement of *go*, not a modifying clause.

Finally, *order* in this study is construed as a verb taking infinitival complements. To justify their complement status, one can apply the same *do-so* diagnostics to (8), an example analogous to the actual expression (in (15))

(8) a. Jim ordered Mary to check stocks, and so did Frank.

b. \*Jim ordered Mary to check stocks, and so did Frank to clean the bathroom.

In (8a), *so did Frank* reads *Frank ordered Mary to check stocks*, resulting in grammaticality. Sentence (8b) is ungrammatical because *so did Frank* reads *Frank ordered Mary to check stocks to clean the bathroom*. The ungrammaticality of (8b) arises because *to check stocks* is part of *Mary to check stocks*. In other words, *to check stocks* cannot be independent of *Mary*; in this respect, *Mary* is the subject of the infinitival complement.

As the complement status of to-infinitives following *have/has*, *go*, and *order* has been established, they are entitled to membership of the *like* class in this study.

## 5. Results and Discussions

I manually extracted from the thirty-two essays thirty-three lexical NPs and gerundial complements, and thirty-two infinitival complements. As noted earlier, the lexical NP and gerundial tokens were introduced by *prevent*, *avoid*, *protect*, *stop*, *choose*, and *keep*.

As for the infinitival tokens, they were introduced by *have/has*; *important*, *necessary*, *easy*, *impossible*, *difficult*, *hard/harder*, *unable*; *want*, *order*, *like*, *love*, *continue*; *try*; *go*; *sure*, *afraid*; and *likely*, *need*.

The results are reported on a structure-by-structure basis. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 discuss the experiential tokens and hypothetical tokens. Section 4.3 reports a summary of results from both structures.

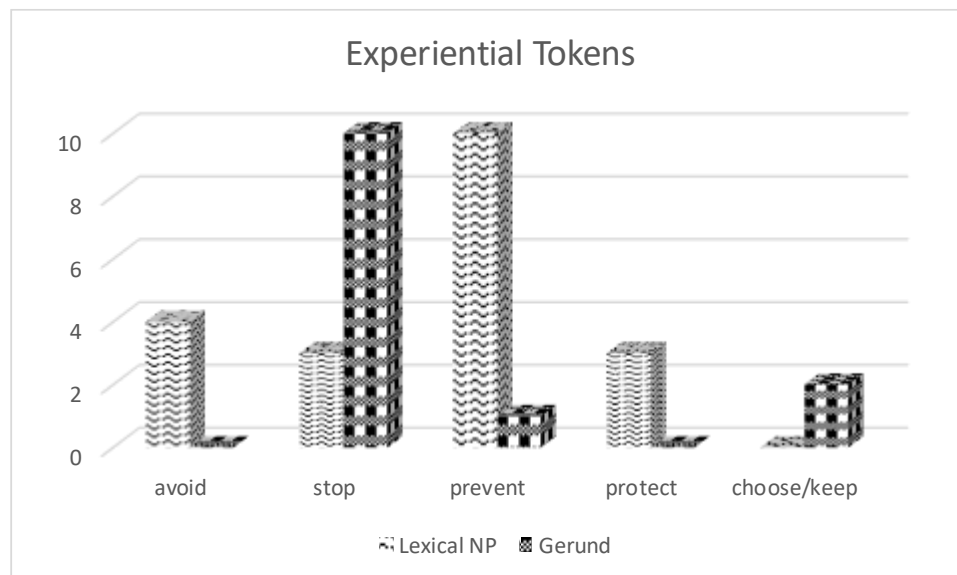
### 5.1. Experiential Data

Tables 3 displays the numbers of occurrences of experiential tokens by individual verbs in the *avoid* class.

**Table 3:** Experiential Tokens by Individual Verbs in *Avoid* Class

	Types of Experiential Complements			Total
Verb	Lexical NPs	Gerundial Complements		
		V-ing	NP-from-V-ing	
prevent	10	-	1	11
avoid	4	-	-	4
protect	3	-	-	3
stop	3	8	2	13
choose	-	1	-	1
keep	-	1	-	1
Total	20	10	3	33

See Figure 1, for a bar graph featuring the distributions of lexical NPs and gerundial phrases of this group of verbs. Note that the V-ing and NP-from-V-ing are combined as Gerund in Figure 1, for simpler exposition.

**Figure 1:** Experiential Tokens by Individual Verbs in *Avoid* Class

Based on the data in Table 3 (graphically represented in Figure 1), 20 lexical NPs, accounting for 60% of the total number of this dataset, appeared with *prevent*, *avoid*, *stop*, and *protect*. Within this group, *prevent* and *stop* appeared most commonly with experiential

complements; *prevent* was favored by lexical NPs while *stop* was preferred by V-ing.<sup>8</sup> *Avoid* and *protect* occurred only with lexical NPs.<sup>9</sup> *Choose* and *keep* formed another class, selecting only the V-ing type. Examples of lexical NP and gerundial tokens, with omission of sentential subjects and subject-verb agreement, are shown in (9) – (12) below.

(9) avoid the danger of using antibiotics/problems/errors/antibiotics

(10) stop bacterial growth/using unnecessary antibiotics/them  
from multiplying

(11) prevent the spread of the germs/the expansion of antibiotic resistance

(12) protect themselves from antibiotics

The options favored by the Thai L2 learners here are available in the input; however, there are other common options that were absent from the data. These include *avoid*, which also takes the V-ing complement; and the class of *prevent* and *protect*, which allow both V-ing and NP-from-V-ing complements. Evidently, these learners have achieved mastery of the experiential sense, as they were able to produce experiential complements and did not employ infinitival complements. These notwithstanding, their usage was quite limited; they did not exhaust all the allowable options.

## 5.2. Hypothetical Data

Table 4 below displays the numbers of occurrences of hypothetical/infinitival complements by seven categories of verbs/adjectives, arranged from high to low frequently occurring tokens.

---

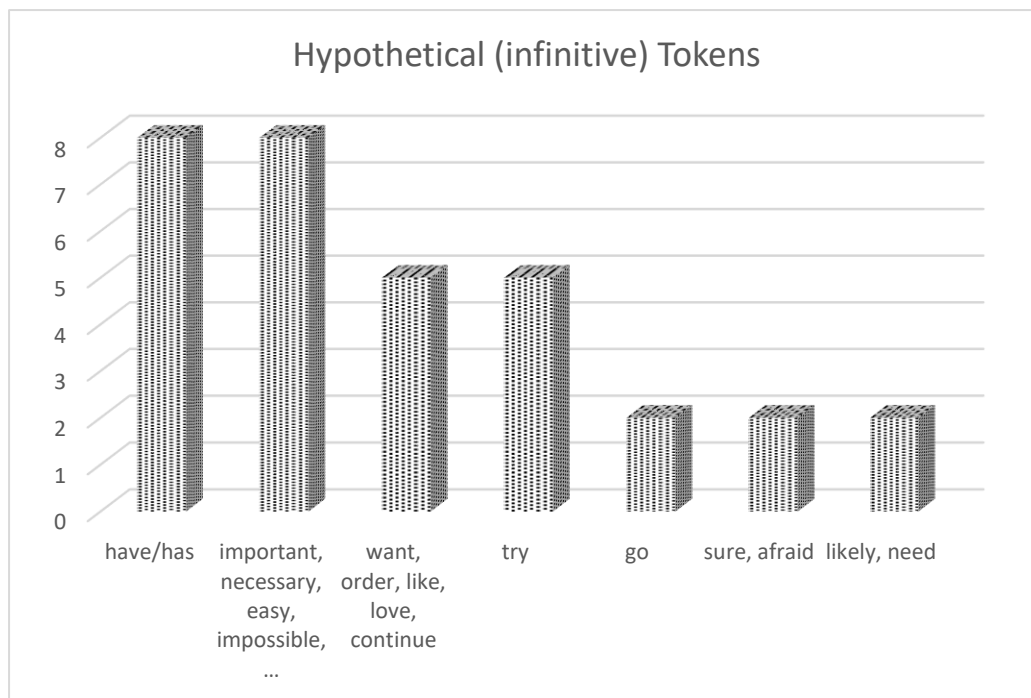
<sup>8</sup> Within the eight V-ing complements of *stop*, there were six tokens introduced by *using*. This suggests the learners' limited vocabulary, or their dependence on formulaic expressions such as *stop using antibiotics*.

<sup>9</sup> I generalized the lexical NP category to NP-from-NP, as shown in (10), for simplicity's sake.

**Table 4:** Hypothetical Tokens by Verb/Adjective Categories in *Like* Class

Verb/Adjective	Number of Infinitival Complements	Note
have/has	8	
important, necessary, easy, impossible, difficult, hard, harder, unable	8	1 token each
want, order, like, love, continue	5	1 token each
try	5	
go	2	
sure, afraid	2	1 token each
likely, need	2	1 token each
Total	32	

Table 4 is illustrated by a bar graph in Figure 2.

**Figure 2:** Hypothetical Tokens by Seven Categories of Verbs/Adjectives in *Like* Class



Based on the data in Table 4 (graphically represented in Figure 2), infinitival complements occurred most frequently with *have/has* and the class of *important* (8 tokens each). The frequency of occurrences was moderate with *want* and *try* (5 tokens each), and quite minimal with the remaining verbs and adjectives. Examples of infinitival tokens along with the matrix predicates (verbs/adjectives) are shown in (13) - (19) below.

(13) Pharmaceutical companies have to identify the use of antibiotics.

(14) a. It is important to finish your medicine.  
b. Some illnesses are difficult to treat.

(15) Doctors order patients to buy medicines correctly.

(16) Many patients try to buy and take it by themselves.

(17) Patients go to see a doctor/to buy antibiotics from a drug store.

(18) All of that made me afraid to say that apocalypse is coming soon.

(19) People will be likely to take the right amounts of drugs.

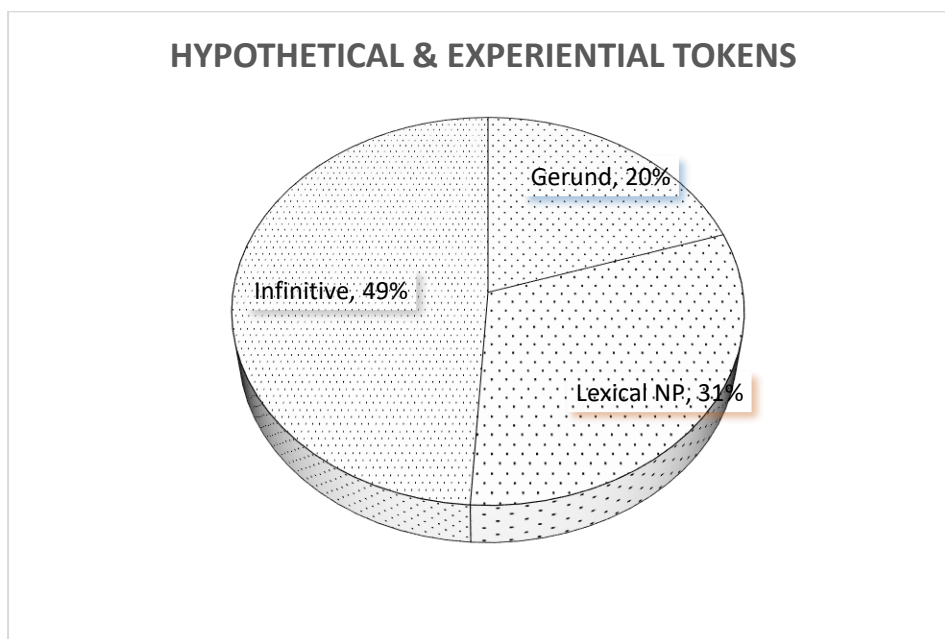
Overall, the learners were able to use a wide variety of verbs and adjectives with infinitival complements accurately. *Have/has*, *likely*, *try*, *go*, *want*, *order*, *like*, *love*, and *continue* occurred with infinitival clauses. *Important*, *necessary*, *easy*, and *impossible* were preceded by the pronoun *it*. *Difficult*, *hard*, *harder* and *unable* occurred with explicit subjects; e.g., *new antibiotics are hard to discover*; whereas the subjects of *sure* and *afraid* were the preceding pronouns; e.g., *they need to be sure* and *all of that made me afraid to say*.

The data here suggest that the learners performed accurately; however, similar to my observation above, they did not exhibit the knowledge about the class of *like* which allows both infinitival and gerundial complements.

In the next section, I will illustrate a unified picture of the learners' usage of hypothetical and experiential complements.

### 5.3. Experiential and Hypothetical Results

To reiterate, the total numbers of hypothetical and experiential data presented in 5.2 and 5.1 are 32 and 33, respectively. In particular, infinitival, lexical NP, and gerundial complements account for 32, 20, and 13 tokens, corresponding to 49%, 31%, and 20%, in respective order. Percent distributions are illustrated in a pie chart in Figure 3.

**Figure 3:** Hypothetical and Experiential Tokens

That infinitives are predominantly used by the Thai student participants compared to gerunds was commonly found in prior studies (e.g. Martinez-Garcia and Wulff, 2012; Vercellotti and de Jong, 2013; Yoon, 2016). In respect of Thai learners, this part of the results was in line with Kaewchaum and Pongpaioj's (2017) finding, despite different tools. While the current study lends support to prior studies, it is interesting that the data in the present study unfold the lexical NP option, which accounts for 31% of the total number of tokens. The percentage of lexical NPs is quite substantial, and consequently, warrants the status of another variable.

One can take a step further by approaching the three structures as representing nominal constituents. That the three structures are nominal are straightforward in this study; lexical NPs are readily nominal; infinitival and gerundial complements have properties of nominal as they can serve as complements of verbs or adjectives, comparable to lexical NPs, as suggested by (4)-(6). With this broad perspective, a new and unified finding can be revealed. The data tell us that experiential and hypothetical structures have almost the same degree of occurrences (49 and 51%), suggesting that neither structure is more predominant than the other.

Consider the results in terms of hypothesis tests. Recall that, based on L1/L2 similarities and differences, it was predicted that the student participants would produce both the *like* and *avoid* classes with both hypothetical and experiential complements. See Table 5 below for a summary of the relevant results.

**Table 5:** Thai Students' Expressions of English Predicates and Complement Types

Matrix Predicate	Complement Types		
	HYP	EXP	
	To-Infinitive	Gerund	Lexical NP
<i>Avoid Class</i>	-	x	x
<i>Like Class</i>	x	-	-

As shown in Table 5, the student participants used the *like* class with infinitival complements and the *avoid* class with lexical NPs and gerunds accurately.<sup>10</sup> Since the participants produced one option (either hypothetical or experiential) and not both, the hypothesis was not entirely confirmed. If L1 transfer played a crucial role, gerundial and lexical NPs would have occurred with the *like* class; so would to-infinitives with the *avoid* class. These phenomena actually did not happen. The result from the *avoid* class is inconsistent with Kitikanan's (2011). In her study, to-infinitives were found with the verb *avoid*, which was attributed to the translation strategy, as reported by her participants. It is noteworthy that the participants in her study were second and third year undergraduate students whose English proficiency levels were not established; in addition, they made 55% errors on both types of complements in combination. The student participants' proficiency in this study was identically intermediate; they did not make any errors on the target items. It is likely that the students' English proficiency level in Kitikanan's study was lower than that of the current study's participants, who, presumably, did not use the translation strategy. This suggests the absence of negative L1 transfer with L2 learners of upper proficiency levels. Thus, in light of the current study's findings, the role of L1 is likely to be limited. Similarities might be helpful; differences may not be an issue.

Interestingly, corpus-based research may offer part of the account, complementary with the role of L1. *Stop* and *try*, which were frequently and moderately produced in this study, were ranked between the first and the third positions in the lists of most frequently used verbs with gerundial and infinitival constructions, respectively, by Spanish, German L2 learners and native English speakers (cf. Table 2, p. 233 in Martinez-Garcia and Wulff, 2012). If one generalized these tendencies to the *avoid* and *like* classes, one would have the impression that the option that is at play in a given predicate context corresponds to the frequency pattern in the input. This suggests that an L1/L2 similar property needs to be reinforced by input frequency of the corresponding type, to enhance L2 performance of a particular structure.

Another noteworthy point is that the learners in this study did not alternate between the two options, similar to the results in Martinez-Garcia & Wulff's (2012), and Vercellotti and de Jonge's (2013) studies. In fact, across L2 learners of different L1 backgrounds (e.g. Arabic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Turkish, French, Slovak, Spanish, and Thai) a switch between the two structures was not found; this finding could be influenced by their exposure

<sup>10</sup> This statement is a generalization applying to the entire class of *avoid*. The actual *avoid* tokens appeared with lexical NPs exclusively; no gerundial complements were found, as shown in Table 3.

to native English speakers' input, which is biased towards frequently occurring expressions, as the data in the study by Martinez-Garcia & Wulff (2012) suggest.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 6.1. Conclusion

This study examined a database of 65 tokens of English experiential (lexical NPs and gerunds) and hypothetical (infinitival) tokens, extracted from essays written by Thai L2 learners. Based on semantic similarities and differences arising from the comparisons of English and Thai experiential and hypothetical structures, it was predicted that they would produce instances related to the classes of *like* and *avoid* with both hypothetical and experiential complements, e.g. to-infinitives and gerunds. The *like* related tokens would be on target, while the *avoid* related tokens would be either correct or incorrect.

Experiential data, comprising 33 tokens, reveal two choices, i.e. lexical NPs and gerunds, opted for by the learners. Lexical NPs occurred remarkably with *avoid*, *prevent*, and *protect*, while gerunds occurred exclusively with *stop*. Hypothetical data, comprising 32 tokens, reveal that infinitival clauses occurred most frequently with *have/has* and adjectives of the *important* class. Viewed from the hypothesis formulation, the L1 role is quite limited; however, when L1/L2 similarity coincides with high input frequency, such as the case of *like* with to-infinitives, L2 performance is considerably productive and accurate.

While the hypothesis was not entirely supported, hypothesis formulation comparing L1/L2 grammatical properties adopted in this study revealed a new insight, the lexical NP choice. This option is crucial to the interpretation of the results. When it is excluded, the results can be interpreted as supporting L2 learners' preference of infinitives to gerunds. When it is included, the results suggest a unified view, i.e. L2 learners can use hypothetical and experiential structures of the L2 equally well, despite their limited options.

### 6.2. Recommendations

Two relevant issues are noteworthy. First, the writing task was not controlled in such a way as to elicit the actual knowledge of the learners. It is possible that the learners employed familiar patterns and avoided unfamiliar ones. Second, the learners' level of proficiency suggests that their English was adequate to cope with hypothetical and gerundial constructions. Therefore, controlled experiments involving learners with different levels of proficiency would be suitable, particularly if one queries the role of proficiency on L1 transfer.

With respect to ELT, as shown in the data, the student participants in this study produced hypothetical and experiential structures independently. This could partly result from native speakers' input which is biased, e.g. *stop* and *try* occur most frequently with gerundial and infinitival complements, respectively. As Martinez-Garcia & Wulff (2012) pointed out, EFL instruction materials are already unbiased toward hypothetical and experiential structures. Therefore, it is desirable that EFL teachers take advantage of these materials by teaching all allowable options explicitly and reinforce their lessons with

intensive practice. This will enhance students' subtle knowledge and variety in their expressions.

### Acknowledgments

I thank student volunteers for contributing their essays, which enabled a new insight into this research area. A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the International Conference on English Language Studies (ICELS) on August 3, 2018 at Suranaree University of Technology, Nakhon Ratchasima. Special thanks go to the ICELS organizer, especially Issra Pramoolsook, and the audience for their questions and comments. I would also like to thank anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions, which benefited my revisions considerably. Finally, I am grateful for James Powell for his care in checking the language presentation of the earlier version of this paper.

### References

- Anderson, J. (1976). **A comparison of the order of difficulty of English sentential complements between native speakers of Spanish and native speakers of Persian**. Paper presented at the Los Angeles Second Language Research Forum. UCLA, February 1976.
- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., and Finegan, E. (1999). **Longman grammar of spoken and written English**. Harlow, England: Longman.
- Bolinger, D. (1968). **Entailment and the meaning of structures**. *Glossa* 2(2), 119-127.
- Butoyi, C. (1977). A frequency and usage study of gerunds, infinitives, and Thai clauses as sentential complements, unpublished English 215 paper, UCLA, Fall, 1977.
- Celce-Murcia, M. and Larsen-Freeman, D. (1983). **The grammar book: An ESL/EFL Teacher's course**. Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.
- Crystal, D. (1997). **A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics (4th ed.,)**. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Diller, A. (2001). **Grammaticalization and Tai syntactic change**. In M.R. K. Tingsabadh, and A.S. Abramson (Eds.), *Essays in Tai linguistics*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 139-175.
- Jenks, P. (2006). **Control in Thai**. Variation in control structures project, University of California, San Diego. Available from [http://accent.ucsd.edu/pdf/Thai\\_Jenks\\_UCSD\\_06.pdf](http://accent.ucsd.edu/pdf/Thai_Jenks_UCSD_06.pdf) (accessed 12.08.07).
- Kaewchaum, R. and Pongpaairo (2017). **The role of frequency on the acquisition of L2 English infinitive and gerund complements by L1 Thai Learners**. *PASAA*, 54 (July-December), 29-57.
- Kitikanan, P. (2011). **The Thai EFL students' ability to use the gerund and to-infinitive**. *The International Journal of Humanities*, (9)2, 279-260.
- Martinez-Garcia, M. and Wulff, S. (2012). **Not wrong, yet not quite right: Spanish ESL students' use of gerundial and infinitival complementation**. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 22(2), 225-244.

- Singhapreecha, P. (2010). **Modals and control infinitives: A view of *thôi***. *Lingua*, 120 (5), 1288-1312.
- So, Nguyen Van (1973). **The semantic interpretation of infinitives and gerunds as sentential complements**. Unpublished M.A. thesis in TESL, UCLA.
- Vercellotti, M. L. and de Jong, N. (2013). **Use and accuracy of verb complements in English L2 speech**. *Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics*. 2(2), 243-250.
- Yoon, C. (2016). **Korean EFL Learners' Use of to-infinitival and gerundial verb complementation: a constructionist approach**. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14384/kals.2016.23.2.193> (accessed 27.07.18).

# A STUDY OF STUDENTS' WAYS & PERSPECTIVES TOWARD THE USE OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE

**Reuben H. Esteban**

Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna Phitsanulok  
52 Moo 7, Ban Krang Sub-District, Muang District, Phitsanulok 65000, Thailand

**Naruporn Palawatwichai**

Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna Phitsanulok  
52 Moo 7, Ban Krang Sub-District, Muang District, Phitsanulok 65000, Thailand

**Warunee Inpaen**

Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna Phitsanulok  
52 Moo 7, Ban Krang Sub-District, Muang District, Phitsanulok 65000

## Abstract

Machine translations have been and still being used for a long time among language learners. As a tool for translation purposes, Google Translate (GT) has become widely used by students even though it has some perceived errors and limitations. Hence, this study examined the purposes, ways, perspectives, problems, and solutions towards the use of Google Translate among Thai students taking Bachelor of Arts in English for International Communication (EIC), Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts at RMUTL Phitsanulok. A set of questionnaires which included a checklist, a three-point rating scale, and open-ended-questions was used as a research instrument. The gathered data were analyzed for mean, standard deviation, percentage, frequency, and content analysis. Results showed that all students have been using GT. Students mostly used GT for communicating on social media applications more than doing English activities in university. When the students use GT, they mostly edit the output after using GT, read a sentence or a text before using GT, and click on difficult words to get the possible meaning and choose the most appropriate ones. Students seem to have positive perspectives toward GT even if they think that GT presumably has errors in grammar, wrong outcomes for bulky data, and wrong word meanings.

**Keywords:** *translation, Google Translate, perspective, social media*

## 1. Introduction

In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, computer applications have been successively enhanced and they also provide advantages in study, work, and life to users. Machine Translation (MT) is one of the evident evolutions of computer software which offers users to translate texts from one language to other languages. Since a set of ability skills in 21<sup>st</sup> century has been categorized, communication becomes one of important skills that students need to develop. In order to achieve this in this information age, a lot of students tend to use MT for making their lives easy.

Sukkhwan (2014, p.1) noted that there are many usable MT services such as Bing Translator, Yahoo Babelfish, and Google Translate as of the date of writing. Also, she quoted, "Among the most popular MT services, GT is well accepted and placed in the top ranking. GT is also the most familiar and frequently used among students." According to Korošec (2011), a large number of students were using GT always or frequently during their translations classes.

Although GT can help translators to finish their task quickly, GT also puts the user in trouble at the same time. Since doing a translation is still difficult in some aspects, new users of the translations services may easily face with many drawbacks especially from using GT. Due to the fact that a lot of students' demand to use GT at present, the problem from GT service has not been improved well. Nowadays, there are students who are using GT having both without knowledge and with the knowledge that GT is an incomplete help. In addition, it is questionable why students who know that using GT can cause some problems have been working with it even until now. This study aims to investigate students' ways and perspectives towards the use of Google Translate from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> year students, majoring in English for International Communication at Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL) Phitsanulok to find out some answers to the following questions:

- 1) What are the purposes and ways toward the use of Google Translate among the students?
- 2) What are the perspectives of students toward using Google Translate?

## **2. Related Literature**

At present, machine translation has made an excellent accomplishment, but the outcomes are still unsatisfactory (Zhang, 2007). Many machine translation systems are advanced and they are accessible for people or learners nowadays. Most students tend to use GT for translation purposes even though problems may arise from doing it. In order to find out and achieve great results, this study had reviewed some papers that are related in its field.

Machine Translation is one of many software types that is used for translating source language to a certain target language. In the 1940's, MT researchers started similarly to the creation of computers with first try of automatic translation (Hays, 1967). In 1950's, a collaborative work between Georgetown University in USA and IBM found that sentences in Russian were translated to English with 250 words and 6 grammar rules. In that very early stage, it was believed that human languages could be translated by machine, because natural languages combine nothing more than a lexicon database and some set of rules. Google Translate has become one of MT services which used a Statistical Machine Translation (SMT) system when working. Furthermore, GT is well and highly accepted by many users around the world because GT has given much fewer errors in one of the research outcomes of Gomes and Anatasίου (2011) comparing GT system with SYSTARAN system, a hybrid system (RB/SMT). Also, a study about a comparison of several machine translation tools among Systran's Babel Fish, Google Translate, PROMT and Microsoft's Bing Translator and found Google Translate emerged as the best one among the others (Barré, 2011).

According to Sukkhwan, learners worked with GT most often for reaching meanings of word, writing tasks or lessons in English courses, reading English texts, translating idioms, and mottos, ranged in order. Similarly, Kate-Phan and Sripetpun (2016) found that 100% of respondents use GT for searching word meaning level rather than sentence, paragraph or essay level. As for Sukkhwan, she also quoted, "Students had positive attitudes towards GT even though it had some drawbacks."

Many researchers found that although GT provided users to translate language quickly, it still has great space in errors. In addition, the errors of GT translation were often occurred in translations among Asian languages than translations among Western languages (Aiken and Balan, 2011). In Kate-Phan and Sripetpun (2016) study, these are some of the problems that have happened: (1) insufficient lexical data (English-to-Thai),



(2) GT's inability to be precise in situation of language structures, grammar, and cultural differences, (3) word choices, word-for-word translation, and translation omission.

In order to achieve accurate results, students should be aware of these problems and obtain the proper ways in the use of GT. Moreover, students have to have competence and performance in language when doing the translation (Hutchins, 1995).

While Google Translate has been extensively used among students who have to face with learning second language while it has shown many errors in translation outcomes, there are only a few studies about the use of GT and its advantages at present. In order to gain more information, this study aims to examine students' ways and perspectives toward the use of GT among students taking Bachelor of Arts in English for International Communication at RMUTL Phitsanulok, and also to investigate GT's problems, benefits, and solutions from the views of the said students.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **Participants**

The participants of this study were Thai students taking Bachelor of Arts in English for International Communication, RMUTL Phitsanulok in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of Academic Year 2017. At the time gathering the data, 33 of students were selected from first to fourth year to participate in the study. This study used the purposive sampling technique.

#### **Research Instrument**

In order to respond to all the independent study questions, the study used a questionnaire which contained a checklist, a rating scale, and a set of open-ended-questions. The questionnaire was distributed in Thai version which later interpreted into English. The details of instrument were divided with four parts outlined as follows:

##### **1. General information**

A check- list was used to investigate students' general information about gender, college year level, and experience in using GT. There were only 3 items.

##### **2. Student's purpose and ways in using GT**

A rating scale was used to investigate students' purposes of GT use for English learning and ways in using GT. Most of the questionnaire items in this study were adapted from Sukkhwan's (2014) which was parallel to the objectives of this study. Questionnaire items stating student's purpose and ways in using GT were to be ticked (✓) for identifying how students use GT in their translation. In this part, there were 22 items.

##### **3. Students' perspectives in using GT**

A rating scale was used to investigate students' perspectives in using GT. Some of the questionnaire items were adapted from Sukkhwan's (2014) items and also obtained based on comment of general GT users posted on weblogs in both Thai and English language, and from personal experiences in using GT. Questionnaire items stating perspectives on the use of GT were to be ticked (✓) for identifying how students think about GT. In this part, there were 13 items.

##### **4. Students' general comments about GT's use**

The open-ended-questions were used to investigate students' general comments about GT's advantages, disadvantages, problems, and solution in using GT. Sukkhwan's (2014) questionnaire was adapted including advantages and disadvantages and problem and solution patterns.

## Data Collection

The data collecting procedure was done between July and August 2017. The 33 respondents were given a questionnaire during the 1—10 of August 2017. Thirty minutes was given to students for completing all of items in the questionnaire. The procedures were included in data analyses.

## Data Analyses

Firstly, the data obtained from students' general information about gender, college year level, and experience in using GT were analyzed using frequency and percentage. Secondly, the data gained from learners' responses in the purpose and ways in using GT were analyzed using means & standard deviations. Thirdly, the data obtained in the students' perspectives in using GT were analyzed for frequency and percentage. Finally, the data collected from the open-ended-questions of possible students' general comments about GT use were analyzed by using frequency and also content analysis. Content analysis approaches were done mostly by counting and comparisons. Also, both qualitative and quantitative studies were employed in this study.

Moreover, in the interpretation section of scores gained from the questionnaire, a 3-point rating scale (Warmbrod, 2014) was used since the study would only to determine the frequency of their use, ways, perspectives, and comments of the subject matter.

Table 1: Mean Score and their Levels of Interpretation

Mean	Level of Interpretation
2.50 - 3.00	Always
1.50 - 2.49	Sometimes
1.00 - 1.49	Never

## 4. Results, Analyses, and Discussions

### 1. Student's General Information

Table 2: Student's General Information

Student's Year level	Gender		N (Male+Female)	Experience in using GT	
	Male (n)	Female (n)		Use (%)	Never use (%)
First year	3	3	6	100	-
Second year	3	4	7	100	-
Third year	2	4	6	100	-
Fourth year	2	12	14	100	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>

Table 2 shows that there were six students in first year level, followed by seven students were a second year student, six students were third year student, and fourteen students were in fourth year student level. The results revealed that all of the students from first to fourth year students have used GT (N=33,100%).

## 2. Student's Purpose and Ways in Using GT

Table 3: Student's Purpose in Using GT

A. Purpose	Mean	SD	Levels
I use GT when I want to translate English word or messages or comments on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other personal social media applications.	2.33	0.65	Sometimes
I use GT when I want to translate English sentences and texts in English.	2.27	0.52	Sometimes
I use GT when I want to translate abstracts of academic articles.	2.18	0.58	Sometimes
I use GT when I want to translate English news.	2.12	0.70	Sometimes
I use GT when I want to translate external reading books.	2.0	0.61	Sometimes
I use GT when I want to translate official documents.	1.97	0.64	Sometimes
I use GT when I want to translate proverbs.	1.94	0.66	Sometimes
I use GT when I want to translate emails.	1.88	0.60	Sometimes
I use GT when I want to translate advertisements.	1.76	0.50	Sometimes
I use GT when I want to translate product labels.	1.70	0.53	Sometimes
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.02</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>

As seen in Table 3, the results showed that all EIC students (N=33,100%) have used GT. The purposes for which students mostly used GT in their translations include: (1) they use GT when they want to translate English words or messages or comments on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other personal social media applications (Mean = 2.33, S.D. = 0.65), (2) they translate in English sentences and texts from Thai (Mean = 2.27, S.D. = 0.52), abstracts of academic articles (Mean = 2.18, S.D. = 0.58), English news (Mean = 2.12, S.D. = 0.70), translation in external reading books (Mean = 2, S.D. = 0.61), translation in official documents (Mean = 1.97, S.D. = 0.64), translation in proverbs (Mean = 1.94, S.D. = 0.66), translation of emails (Mean = 1.88, S.D. = 0.60), translation in advertisements (Mean = 1.76, S.D. = 0.50), and translation in product labels (Mean = 1.70, S.D. = 0.53), ranged in order.

According to the results of student's purpose in using GT, most of students said they sometimes use GT to help themselves understand English words or messages or comments in social media applications more than other purposes. These findings conflicted with the results of Kate – Phan and Sripetpun (2016) which explained that student's purpose in using GT were mostly for educational purposes among students from Prince Songkhla University in Thailand.

Table 4: Student's Ways in Using GT

B. Ways	Mean	SD	Levels
I edit the GT output when I finish my translation.	2.58	0.56	Always
I read a sentence or a text before using GT.	2.45	0.56	Sometimes
When I am unsure the word meanings translated by GT, I click on those words to see other meaning and choose appropriate ones.	2.45	0.56	Sometimes
I use GT only for meaning of unknown words and translate the rest by myself.	2.42	0.56	Sometimes

I put a sentence in GT box when I do a translation at a time.	2.27	0.57	Sometimes
I put a phrase in GT box when I do a translation at a time.	2.27	0.45	Sometimes
I put a word in GT box when I do a translation at a time.	2.24	0.61	Sometimes
I put a paragraph in GT box when I do a translation at a time.	2.18	0.53	Sometimes
I compare my task with other students' before submitting to a teacher.	2.06	0.75	Sometimes
I put whole article in GT box when I do a translation.	1.94	0.61	Sometimes
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.29</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>

The results in the fourth table presented that when it comes to student's ways in using GT, they mostly edit the GT output after finishing their translation (Mean = 2.58, S.D. = 0.56), followed by reading a sentence or a text before using GT and when they are unsure of the word meanings translated by GT, they would click on those words to see other meaning and choose appropriate ones (Mean = 2.45, S.D. = 0.56), using GT only for meaning of unknown words and translate the rest by themselves (Mean = 2.42, S.D. = 0.56). Besides, the study presented that students most likely put a sentence in GT box (Mean = 2.27, S.D. = 0.57), a phrase (Mean = 2.27, S.D. = 0.45), a word (Mean = 2.24, S.D. = 0.61), and a paragraph, respectively, in GT box when doing a translation at a time (Mean = 2.18, S.D. = 0.53). Moreover, this study found that students compare their task with other students' before submitting to a teacher (Mean = 2.06, S.D. = 0.75). This study also revealed that there were some students who put a whole article in GT box when doing a translation (Mean = 1.94, S.D. = 0.61).

Therefore, most students said they always edit the GT output after finishing their translation. These finding is in line with Kate – Phan and Sripetpun (2016) stating that in students' behaviors towards GT use, students frequently adjust the result gained from GT before submitting to the teacher done in Prince Songkhla University in Thailand.

### 3. Student's Perspectives in Using GT

Table 5: Student's Perspectives in Using GT

Perspectives	Agree %	Disagree %
GT is easy to use.	100	0
GT can translate texts quickly.	93.94	6.06
GT is equally helpful for both students with low and high English competency.	87.88	12.12
GT is more helpful and effective for students with low English competency than those with high English competency.	78.79	21.21
I obtain a lot of vocabulary knowledge when I use GT.	72.73	27.27
When I use GT I do not need to remember any new vocabulary words or guess meaning of words.	51.52	48.48
GT makes me lazy to think and to use my effort in translating.	51.52	48.48
I gain translation skill from using GT.	51.52	48.48
I feel confident in my translation tasks when using GT.	45.45	54.55
GT is believable about the accuracy of texts translated.	24.24	75.76

I can learn English grammar and structure from using GT.	24.24	75.76
I understand an English passage better when I used GT.	21.21	78.79

The results in Table 5 indicated that in student's perspectives in using GT, all students agreed that GT was easy to use (100%). Also, students believed that GT can translate texts quickly (93.94%). Moreover, the students told that GT is equally helpful for both students with low and high English competency (87.88%). In addition, more than half of students thought that GT is more helpful and effective for students with low English competency than those with high English competency (78.79%). Students said that they obtained a lot of vocabulary knowledge while using GT (72.73%) and half of them also agreed that when they use GT, they can remember new vocabulary words or guess meaning of words (51.52%). The results also told that even if there were about half of students thought GT is good for them in terms of decreasing times for remembering words, it has made them to be lazy to think or use their effort in translating at the same time (51.52%). However, students still posed a positive perspective on using GT. Student reported that they gained translation skill from using GT (51.52%). Besides, some of students stated that GT made them confident in their translation tasks (45.45%). Less than half of all the students who participated in the study said that GT was believable concerning the accuracy of texts translated (24.24%), in the same way, they answered that they could learn English grammar and structure from using GT (24.24 %), and in the least result, they pointed out that they could understand an English passage better when using GT (21.21%).

It can be summed up from the results that most students had positive perspectives toward the use of GT because it is easy to use and it can translate fast and also it has a lot of benefits for both students with low and high English competency. These findings were in line with Sukkhwan (2014) reporting that students had positive attitudes when using GT as it was convenient to use and it was helpful for all students in studying English language at Prince Songkhla University in Thailand. However, this study is somehow different from Gianetti (2016) stating that the students and teachers' insufficient instructions on how to use Google Translate and students' lack of familiarity of the source and target languages led to obstacles in their full understanding of the value of GT.

#### 4. Student's General Comments about GT's Use

Table 6: Student's Comments about GT's Advantages

A. Advantages	Frequency N=33
GT is easy to use and can translate fast.	33
GT can help students to know more vocabulary words.	7
GT can be accessed using laptop, computer, and smart phone	4
GT can help students save time	4
GT can translate a single word with accuracy and gives the right part of speech.	2
GT can offer more words to choose from when doing a translation.	2
Using GT, students do not need much skill in translation.	1
GT can help students to pronounce words.	1
GT can help student translate proverbs and proper names.	1
GT can translate various languages.	1

By investigating student's general comments about GT's use from 33 of students' views, the results from Table 6 showed that in the advantages part, all students thought that

GT was easy to use and could translate fast, followed by GT can help them to know more vocabulary terms. In addition, students answered that GT could be used by means of laptop, computer, and smart phone and helped them save time. A few students said that GT can translate a single word with accuracy and gave them the right part of speech and GT could offer more words to choose from when doing a translation task. Furthermore, there were students who thought that using GT does not need much translation skill, GT could help them to pronounce words, GT could translate proverbs and proper names, and GT could translate in many languages.

In summary, students agreed that GT is a fast means of getting translations from Thai-to-English, and vice versa.

Table 7: Students' Comments about GT's Disadvantages

<b>B. Disadvantages</b>	<b>Frequency N=33</b>
GT translates with wrong grammar	14
GT gives wrong results when there are a lot of data in GT's translation box	13
There are some inaccuracies in the results when using GT	13
GT could not translate all of the words the students want to translate	7
GT can cause students to be lazy to think about word translations	5
GT is unable to translate proverbs	4
GT needs internet access	1
There are dummy subjects when doing a translation from Thai-to-English	1

In the part of disadvantages, the results in Table 7 stated that for most of the students, GT gave wrong grammar when doing a translation, followed by GT gave them wrong results when putting a lot of data in GT's translation box. Almost half of the whole population of students who participated in this study also reported that there was no accuracy of the result when using GT. Moreover, less than half of the whole population of students who participated in this study said that GT was not able to translate all of the words that needed to be translated and GT might cause them to be lazy to translate words in their own understanding. However, a low number of students wrote that GT was useless when translating proverbs and only one of the students expressed that there were dummy subjects when doing a translation from English-to-Thai and GT was incompetent in giving good results for translations. Lastly, one student added that GT needs internet connection.

It can be said that GT has many issues with grammar. Furthermore, bulky texts could not be translated appropriately in GT portal.

Table 8: Student's Comments about GT's Problems and Solutions

<b>C. Problems and Solutions</b>	<b>Frequency N=33</b>
GT is always incorrect in grammar so I have to edit the results later.	12
GT gives wrong meaning in translation so I use dictionaries to fix it.	8
GT is unable to translate all words so I have to have knowledge about cultural differences or competence and performance in language when doing a translation.	6

GT gives wrong meaning in translation so I use other translation programs to fix it.	5
GT can cause students to be poor in translation skill so I must think and write the sentences down in a note when using GT or I should frequently practice translating.	5
GT is unable to translate proverb so I use other translating applications	3
GT gives wrong meanings in translation so I look only for word meaning.	3
GT gives wrong results so I copy the recent gained result from English-to-Thai translation box then put it into Thai-to-English translation box or vice versa	2
When there are too much data in GT box, GT is unable to translate it very well so I put only a short sentence at a time in GT box before performing the translation.	1
There are dummy subjects when doing a translation from Thai-to-English so I translate one sentence at a time and check it carefully.	1

In the part of problems and solutions, as shown in Table 8, almost half of the participant's number reported that GT is always incorrect in grammar so they would edit the results later, followed by the wrong meaning of translation so they would use dictionaries to fix the gained results. GT was incapable to translate all words, in order to get the best task, students reported that they had to have knowledge about cultural differences or competence and performance in language when doing a translation task. Moreover, students also stated that GT gives wrong meaning in translation so they would use other translation programs to fix it, and GT could cause them not being able to translate so they had to think and write the sentences down in notes while using GT or they should frequently practice translating. In addition, a few number of students said that GT was incapable of translating proverbs so they could use other translating applications or search on Google website, and three of the students also told that GT gives wrong meanings in translation so they would look only for word meanings. At times that GT gives wrong results, two students recommended that they could fix it by copying the recent gained result from English-to-Thai translation box then put it into Thai-to- English translation box or vice versa. Also, when there is too much data in GT box, GT is unable to translate the data very well. One student wrote that he or she would put only a short sentence at a time to get better results. Furthermore, when doing a translation from Thai-to-English, one of the students also said that he or she always found a dummy subject then he or she would translate the task only one sentence at a time and check it carefully.

In conclusion, students mostly knew that GT could help them save time or helped them in English learning. Students commented that GT is a good tool for students learning languages even though it could give some of the results of translation with wrong grammar. These findings also correspond to Sukkhwana (2014) who reported that learners have realized that GT could help their English learning and she continuously said that students in Prince Songkhla University in Thailand viewed that GT is a good MT service for learning, but it could be problematic at times in their study. In addition, Vidhayasai, Keyuvarong, and Bunsom (2015) also found that most errors in GT were in lexical level. They explained that the desired translation from one language to another was mostly troublesome. In order to achieve good results, students said they have to edit the results from GT which was also the advice of the said previous researchers.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study appears that all of EIC students have used GT and they seem to have been using it for translating English words or messages or comments on social media applications rather than for translating for their English studies or doing university activities, such as, translating English sentences and texts in English, or abstracts of academic articles. In the ways of using GT students, the students always edit the output after using GT which is likely the same in reading a sentence or a text before using it and when the word meanings translated are too difficult to understand. Students tend to click on those words to see other possible meaning and choose the most appropriate. The students are likely to have positive perspectives toward the use of GT because it is easy to use and quick to translate. GT also provides benefits for both students with low and high English competency. As a result, students realize that there are both advantages and disadvantages when using GT. For the advantages: GT helps them to know more vocabulary words; GT is convenient because it can be accessed through laptop, computer, or smart phone; and GT can help them save time apart from GT was easy to use and it works fast. Due to the gained results, GT still has disadvantages because it gives students wrong results in word, grammar, or wrong translation, especially, when there is a lot of data in GT's translation box. Also, students share some solutions that when GT is incorrect in grammar, meaning, or words, they could possibly use an available dictionary to help them check and edit the results. Lastly, students recommend that students doing the translations have to have knowledge of different cultures or competence and performance in language before doing a translation.

This study must be noted to English lecturers that students need to have at least a good grasp of grammar skill and appropriate given time before starting doing translation in order to achieve the highest quality translations.

Nevertheless, this study has some drawbacks which could be improved and investigated in further studies. Firstly, this study focused on student's GT use in the purpose which is based on translation only, so further studies might be explored more on other purposes, such as in writing or pronunciation. Next, this study only investigated students majoring in English for International Communication so further study could be more explored on other majors or non-English majoring students. Lastly, this study only targeted on the purposes of translation, ways, perspectives, advantages, and disadvantages in using GT but not on how often students use GT in a day or in a week so this limitation could be explored and improved in further studies.

## References

- Aiken, M. , & Balan, S. (2011). **An analysis of Google Translate accuracy** [On-line]. Available: from <http://translationjournal.net/journal/56google.htm>
- Barré, J. (2011, October 31). **Prompt, Systran, Google, Bing – has the age of machine translation finally arrived?** [Blog post]. [On-line]. Available: <http://blog.bab.la/sprache/prompt-systran-google-bing-%e2%80%93-has-the-age-of-machine-translation-finally-arrived/>
- Gianetti, T. R.. (2016). **Google Translate as a Resource for Writing** (Master Thesis, St. John Fisher College, New York, 2016) [On-line]. Available: [https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1358&context=education\\_ETD\\_masters](https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1358&context=education_ETD_masters)
- (Gomes, R. & Anastasiou, D. (2011). **Comparison of Systran and Google Translate for English→ Portuguese** (Doctoral dissertation, University of Bremen, Germany).



- [On-line]. Available:  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267231580\\_Comparison\\_of\\_SYSTRAN\\_and\\_Google\\_Translate\\_for\\_English\\_Portuguese](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267231580_Comparison_of_SYSTRAN_and_Google_Translate_for_English_Portuguese)
- Hays, D.G. (1967). **Introduction to computational linguistics**. *American Elsevier*, 206-207.
- Hutchins, J. (1995). Preface. In Ala K. Melby, **The possibility of language**, Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Kate - Phan, K. , & Sripetpun, W. (2016). **Attitudes, behaviors and problems of English major students in using “Google Translate”** (Master's thesis, Prince of Songkla University, Songkla,Thailand). [On-line]. Available: <http://www.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/journal-la/article/view/61858>
- Korošec, M. K. (2011). **The internet, Google Translate and Google translator toolkit** [On-line]. Available: <http://lodel.irevues.inist.fr/tralogy/index.php?id=113>
- Sukkhwan, A. (2014). **Students’ attitudes and behaviors towards the use of Google Ttranslate** (Unpublished master's thesis). Prince of Songkla University, Songkla, Thailand.
- Vidhayasai, T., Keyuvarong, S. & Bunsom, T. (2015). **Investigating the use of Google Translate in “Terms and Conditions” in an airline official website: errors and implications** [On-line]. Available:  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1077919.pdf>
- Warmbrod, J.R. (2014). **Reporting and interpreting scores derived from Likert-type scales**. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 55(5), 30-47.
- Zhang, X. J. (2007). **A general review of studies on quantized translation quality assessment**. *Foreign Languages Research*, 104(4), 80-84.

# **LEARNERS' PERCEIVED SKILLS FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY FROM THE INTEGRATION OF DESIGN THINKING IN SEMINAR IN ENGLISH CLASS**

**Supornphan Konchiab and Dechathorn Pojchanaphong\***

English for International Communication Program, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna

## **Abstract**

Twenty-first-century skills and the English language, which are necessary for students' career success, can be developed through the design thinking process. This study, therefore, aimed at comparing the perceived learning skills before and after the integration of the design thinking process in an English classroom with 36 English major students as the participants. These students enrolled in the Seminar in English course in the second semester, the academic year 2017 at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna. The researchers collected data from self-assessment questionnaires on five key learning skills which are class engagement, communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving, as well as creativity. These key learning skills are employed in the course through various class activities of the design thinking process. Upon completion of the course, the students reported that they had developed all the five skills at the high level ( $\bar{x} = 4.16$ ), with a significant increase, particularly on critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, and communication. This study suggests implementing design thinking process into English language teaching and learning activities since there is still room for communication improvement. Moreover, the researchers encourage integrating other skills, such as critical thinking and creative thinking, into English language learning to help enhance the students' language skill development.

**Keywords:** Perceived skills, Twenty-first-century skills, Design thinking process, English classroom

## **1. Introduction**

The world is changing so rapidly regarding technology and the economy. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, specific skills are required for the workforce. Notably, an individual today needs to develop and use a different set of skills from what essential in the past (Shute & Becker, 2010). According to P21 Framework (2009), learning and innovation skills are becoming more significant to equip students with necessary skills for coping with a rapid change of life and work environment. These skills include creativity, communication, collaboration, as well as critical thinking and problem-solving. Creativity and innovation involve thinking and work creatively with others, and implementing innovation. Communication skills involve active listening, the verbal and nonverbal expression of thoughts and ideas, and appropriate communication in different situations. Collaboration comprises working in a team with respect, willingness, flexibility, and shared responsibility. Lastly, critical thinking and problem-solving such as giving reasons effectively, thinking systematically, and solving different kinds of unforeseen problems enable students to deal with the real, uncertain changing world.

Therefore, education today needs to prepare students for the changing world. The core subjects taught in educational institutions should help students to acquire life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, information and media skills, as well as technology skills. The traits of today's learners are also changing as Chen (2010) suggested that they are a digital native, well equipped with powerful devices. Thus, these skills can be achieved by supporting systems which are standards and assessments, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and learning environments along with compulsory school subjects (P21, 2009).

The question of how these skills are learned and practiced then arises. Educators need to change their pedagogies which can support students' future careers. They should spend less time explaining and lecturing, but more time on experiments, allowing students to make mistakes, which are essential for the learning process (Ng, 2008). Leong (2015) from the Policy and Leadership Studies Academic Group claims that possessing the knowledge and the ability to use such knowledge is no longer sufficient for success in the twenty-first century. Instead of being assigned to work alone in a traditional classroom and compete with others for teacher approvals, students should be able to work together to solve problems and create innovation, which can be developed by an integration of a new approach such as design thinking (Koh, Chai, Wong, & Hong, 2015).

Design thinking may be defined as a problem-solving process where a multidisciplinary team of designers creates a practical solution for the real-world problems to meet the need of the users. According to Koh et al. (2015) design thinking is considered essential in education for the twenty-first century for many reasons. Firstly, design thinking is human-centeredness that emphasizes perspectives and insights of users. Design thinkers tend to focus more on co-creation with users than design for them, leading to creating practical knowledge and innovation. Secondly, design thinking focuses on solving real-world problems with a team from multidiscipline. Such approach could help equip young learners to cope with complex challenges caused by unpredictable and rapid development of economic and technology. Thirdly, design thinking promotes active learning activities as it involves cycles of knowledge creation through reflections and higher order thinking process. These learning experiences allow students to be engaged in their learning actively.

Also, design thinking has potential to enhance students' 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills. For example, engaging in the users' contexts and working together with a multidisciplinary team allow students to practice communication, interpersonal skills, and collaboration. Dealing with real-world problems and creating ideas for solutions can also lead to the development of critical thinking and problem-solving. Working on a prototype helps develop students' creativity (Konchiab, 2016).

With the significance of the design thinking process in improving students' 21-century-skills, the researchers are interested in implementing the process in the core subject courses taught in English for International Communication Program, Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna. Seminar in English is a chosen course, in which students are required to research, collect, analyze, and synthesize data in their topics of interest, as well as presenting and discussing the results in a seminar. The aim was to examine the students' improvement in their 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills after the end of the course which was empowered by design thinking.

**Research Objectives:**

1. To investigate learning skills developed from the implementation of the design thinking process into an English language class
2. To find out to what extent the implementation helps increase the 21<sup>st</sup> century-skills of the students

**Research Questions:**

1. Do the levels of perceived skills students learned to improve after the implementation of the design thinking process into an English language class?
2. To what extent are their perceived skills improved?

**2. Literature Review****Definition of Design Thinking**

Design thinking is regarded as an intentional search of something new. Design is involved with people's lives in that it helps create things which can improve their living and social relations. It is suggested that good design is a key to a well living (Koh et al., 2015). According to Koh et al. (2015), design thinking deals with both lower-order cognition (e.g., remembering, understanding, and applying) and higher-order cognition (e.g., analyzing, evaluating, and creating) in creating practical knowledge and innovation to meet emerging human needs and desire. Design thinking involves social processes to generate, clarify, and improve understanding through the iterative cycles of reflections.

Razzouk and Shute (2012) define design thinking as an analytic and creative process consisting of experimenting, creating and prototyping models, gathering feedback, and redesigning while Rowland (2004) claims that design thinking is an intentional act. Singapore's Economic Strategies Committee also adds that design thinking uses a choice of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills to identify deep needs of users and to seek for practical solutions to meet the demand (Singapore Polytechnic International, 2011). It is a learning approach which helps develop learner's creativity through projects.

Not only has it been recognized as the center of engineering (Simon, 1996), design as a thinking process has gained increasing attention in business because a product or service design is a significant element for business competition. Many well-known companies have even considered themselves as design leaders (Dunne & Martin, 2006). Moreover, many economically developed countries are exploring the advantages of design thinking to solve their problems; for example, the Danish government supports an organization which apply design thinking to social science approaches in finding novel solutions for society (Kimbell, 2011) whilst China, South Korea, and India have supported design thinking in their tertiary education (Kurokawa, 2013). Moreover, in Singapore, design thinking is viewed as a potential link between education and industry.

Even though design thinking has been integrated into the design, engineering, and business, it can have an impact on 21<sup>st</sup>-century education in many fields because it is related to creative thinking and generating solutions for problems. In an academic setting, students should be encouraged to read critically, reason, and be able to solve complicated issues (Rotherham & Willingham, 2009). To help the young succeed in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, educators should help them develop their skills, including design thinking, system thinking, and

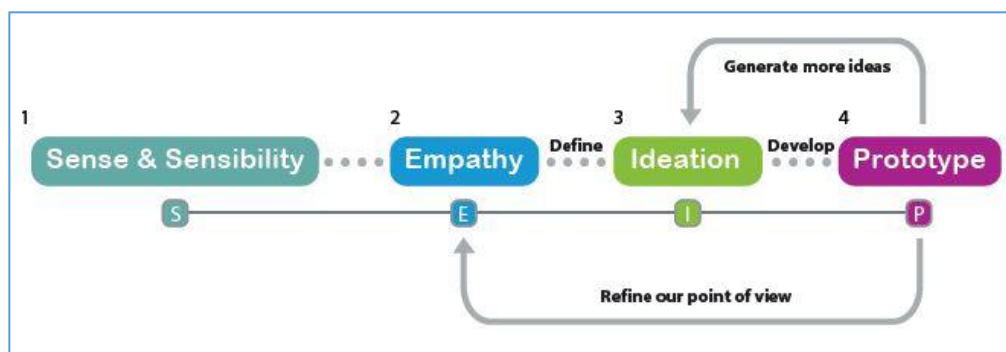
collaboration. These will eventually help enhance their problem-solving skills for colleges and workplaces (Rotherham & Willingham, 2009; Shute & Torres, 20120).

### The Process of Design Thinking

There are many frameworks of design thinking. For instance, Hays and Hays (2012) suggest that the process of design thinking is cyclical of need finding, understanding, creating, thinking, and doing. Design thinking comprises five common phases which are Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test. Firstly, Empathize involves observation, interaction, and immersing oneself in user experiences to fully understand them. Secondly, Define involves address user's needs based on the finding from the first phase. Thirdly, Ideate is concerned with exploring a range of ideas to generate various possible solutions. Fourthly, Prototype is concerned with the transformation of ideas into a physical form (e.g., model). Lastly, Test involves trying out and making observations and opening for feedback to refine prototypes and initial ideas.

Among many educational institutions which implement the process of design thinking in their curriculum, Singapore Polytechnic (SP) has successfully implemented design thinking into their selected curriculum for several years. Here, the design thinking process enables learners to conceive innovative solutions based on real user needs. Based on the CDIO (Conceive, Design, Implement, and operation) framework, SP develops its design thinking framework which consists of four phases which are 1) Sense and Sensibility, 2) Empathy, 3) Ideation, and 4) Prototype. The frame work of Design Thinking in this study was adapted from Singapore Polytechnic International, Singapore as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** SP Design Thinking Framework



The process, as shown in Figure 1, starts from Sense and Sensibility which aims to prepare learner's mind, mainly to open the eyes and the minds of those who are new to the process. This phase helps activate the process of seeing and thinking, including physical sentences and aesthetic sensibility of users. Next, Empathy involves activities to gain an understanding of uses and their contexts at a deep and personal level as well as develop their trust. Ethnography researches in this phase help generate insights and define profound need statement. Following this phase is Ideation which learners create ideas from the findings, develop and organize ideas to a concept, and design an idea concept. In the last phase, Prototype, learners develop a prototype, get users' feedback, evaluate, and improve. As it is a flexible, iteration, and on-going process for improvement, learners may

revisit the Empathy phase to refine the needs statement or Ideation to generate new ideas (Singapore Polytechnic).

### **Previous Research**

Research into design thinking education as a means of developing twenty-first-century skills was conducted in both international and Thai contexts. For example, Kwek (2011) led a qualitative research project with school leaders and teachers from a public middle school in the San Francisco Bay area to explore how the design thinking is implemented in classroom learning. Classroom observations and interviews were used to understand the motivations that drive teachers to adopt design thinking into their classroom and their consideration when applying it in teaching and learning core contents. It was found that, when using design thinking, teachers were not passive recipients. Instead, they tried to suit it with various particular methods for different purposes, learning contexts, and subjects. Also, mastery of academic core contents was said to be essential and dominated how design thinking should be integrated with classroom learning. This study suggested combining academic content knowledge and the 21<sup>st</sup> century-skills as equally essential students' outcomes.

When considering classroom management, it is interesting that collaboration becomes significant for the design thinking process. Goldman, Kabayadondo, Royalty, Carroll, and Roth (2014) explored students' team working of two design thinking classes in Stanford. The two approaches used in this study were team members' reflections on their working sessions and interaction analysis. The result showed that they struggled for sustained and focused talk and activity relating to their assigned tasks. However, they tended to establish their communication in appropriate ways and achieved the tasks. This research suggested that managing design thinking course needed to focus on team process and communication.

Notably, in the Thai context, Konchiab (2016) investigated the key 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills that 25 Thai students developed through the design thinking process when taking part in the international academic camp. She also identified the relationship between these skills and the activities provided during the four phases of design thinking. Students' journals were used as a research method. This study revealed that common skills developed through the process were English communication, problem-solving, teamwork, interpersonal, creative thinking, and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the Empathy process tended to help develop communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and interpersonal skills. The activities in the Ideation process were likely to promote creative thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills. Thus, integrating the design thinking process into English language teaching and learning activities to improve students' communication skills along with other crucial 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills should be taken into account.

It has been proven that design thinking could help enhance communication, which is said to be one of the most important modes for 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills. It is thus challenging for educators to take deep insights into implementing the process in English communication classrooms.

### 3. Methodology

#### Participants

This research was conducted with 36 third-year students in English for International Communication Program who enrolled the course *Seminar in English* in semester 1, the academic year 2017. This course was taught in English mainly. These students had their TOEIC scores ranging from the primary user level (CEFR A2) to the independent user level (CEFR B1). One-third of these students scored 550 and above whereas the others scored lower than 550.

#### Research Instrument

The research instrument was a five-rating scale self-assessment questionnaire comprising 30 items of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills. It was used to measure students' perception of communication skills, collaboration skills, creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving, as well as class engagement before and after the course. Adapted from P21's framework (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009), four key elements of learning and innovation skills or a so-called 4 Cs were the focus. Firstly, communication skills consisted of 10 items that required students to report on language learning and communication strategies. The former included their experience on practice listening and speaking, vocabulary, pronunciation, and presentation skills. The latter comprised uses of approximation, circumlocution, appeals for help, repetition, comprehension check, and lexicalized fillers.

Secondly, collaboration skills included the ability to lead a team, work with a team, listen and respect team members, and share responsibilities, as well as being a good member. Thirdly, critical thinking and problem-solving skills required students to report on their ability to make an argument, making a decision, thinking systematically, ideating solutions, and dealing with unforeseen problems. Fourthly, creativity included five items regarding an ability to brainstorm, create and share ideas, monitor ideas, and be open for new ideas.

In addition to these critical elements of twenty-first-century skills, class engagement was also included in the self-assessment. According to Koh et al. (2015), design thinking promotes students' participation in their learning and with the team to create knowledge and ideas, identify the problem, decide on a solution, and reflect on their learning process. In the self-assessment questionnaire, class engagement comprises five items asking about class participation, idea and opinion exchange, question posting and providing answers, as well as task completion. The self-assessment questionnaire was used to collect the data before and after the 15-week course of *Seminar in English*.

#### Seminar in English Course with the Design Thinking Process

The Seminar in English Course was designed by integrating the design thinking process to help students achieved the course objectives which involve research skills, presentation skills, and discussion. During the session, the design thinking process was adopted and implemented through classroom activities. Groups of students were encouraged to work together with the local community, under the project statement "How to improve English language communication in the particular community". These activities were divided into four phases including Sense and Sensibility, Empathy, Ideation, and Prototype.

The Sense and Sensibility phase focused on exploring the target community using five senses: feeling, hearing, seeing, smelling, and tasting. Students were assigned to explore Changkien, the local community where many foreigners like to visit and stay long term. Each group chose different target areas, including Changkien primary school, market, food stalls, hotel, minimart, and food court. Then, they took the picture and describe the area in English, using language expressions for five senses.

The Empathy phase promoted students' engagement in the community to gain more understandings the users' context and needs through observations and interviews. Firstly, students learned two frameworks for observations: POEMS (Peoples, Objects, Environments, Messages, and Services) and AEIOU (Activities, Environments, Interactions, Objects, and Users). Then, they went to observe the target areas, using the frameworks and shared their observation to class. Secondly, students formed interview questions, conducted a mock interview, and interviewed users in the community. After interviewing users, students clustered the data and generated insights to identify the deep needs of the users. Finally, students created a persona that is the representative of users' characters, motivations, pain points, and needs. The examples of the persona included the female English language teacher who needed to improve English language environment to the young kids at Changkien primary school, the male minimart staff who needed to improve listening skill when communicating with tourists, and the food seller who needed to be facilitated to communicate with the international customers.

The Ideation phase encouraged students to create ideas for solutions to meet the user needs. Students reviewed the persona, brainstormed for ideas, clustered ideas, and selected ideas to form the design concept. Then, the best solution was selected based on the criteria students agreed to set together in each group. Lastly, in the Prototype phase, students were asked to design a representation of their solution. Then, they were required to present to the class about the process and the solution, as well as reviewing related literature to make arguments to support their solutions. The example of the prototype for teachers in Chiangkien primary school was the English language center; a room decorated with English vocabulary and signs on the wall, friendly seat arrangement, and bookshelves with reading materials. This room was specifically designed for teachers and students who wanted to do activities in English together outside a regular class. The other interesting prototype was for sellers in the food court which was the food ordering machine with price, menu, and description in English, Thai, and Chinese.

### **Data Analysis**

A dependent t-test was analyzed to compare means scores of students' perceived learning skills in the pre- and post-self-assessments in correlation with the interpretation of a Likert scale range of learning skills as follows:

1. The average of 4.51-5.00 means that the students developed learning skills at the highest level.
2. The average of 3.51-4.50 means that the students developed learning skills at a high level.
3. The average of 2.51-3.50 means that the students developed learning skills at a moderate level.



4. The average of 1.51-2.50 means that the students developed learning skills at a lower level.
5. The average of 1.00-1.50 means that the students developed learning skills at the lowest level.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

Overall learning skills increased significantly after the course. Table 1 shows the average self-assessment scores of learning skills before and after the session. The levels of perceived learning skills were high either before or after the course. Before the class started, students ranked their existing learning skills at 3.98. After the session, their rank of learning skill level increased to 4.16.

**Table 1:** Mean scores of all learning skills before and after the course

Levels of learning skills	n	X	S.D.	t	p
Pre-self-assessment	36	3.98	0.86	5.89	0.000*
Post-self-assessment	36	4.16	0.80		

\* p  $\leq$  .05

Table 2 compares the average scores of individual learning skills before and after the course. The levels of the four skill sets increased significantly, including critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity, and communication respectively. However, there was not a significant improvement of levels of collaboration and class engagement. Students assessed their collaboration skills at a high level ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.42 in pre-self-assessment and  $\bar{x}$  = 4.46 in post-self-assessment), and such rates were the highest, compared with other skill sets.

**Table 2:** Mean score of individual learning skills before and after the course

Learning skills		n	X	S.D.	t	p
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Pre	36	3.98	0.86	13.40	0.000*
	Post	36	4.16	0.80		
Creativity	Pre	36	4.00	0.77	4.81	0.004*
	Post	36	4.21	0.78		
Communication	Pre	36	3.91	0.95	2.82	0.010*
	Post	36	4.04	0.82		
Collaboration	Pre	36	4.42	0.76	1.20	0.150
	Post	36	4.46	0.63		
Class Engagement	Pre	36	3.93	0.93	2.04	0.055
	Post	36	4.10	0.92		

\* p  $\leq$  .05

Table 3 shows the most common sub-skills in each set after the course. Students viewed that their most common critical thinking and problem-solving skills were giving reasons to support ideas ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.50), thinking systematically ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.11), and decision making based on the gathered information ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.11). The most common creative thinking skills included being open to learning new ideas ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.64), brainstorming ideas ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.31), and evaluating their ideas ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.14). Regarding communication skills, students were most likely

to practice presentation skills ( $\bar{x}=4.61$ ), followed by vocabulary ( $\bar{x}=4.50$ ) as well as listening and speaking skills ( $\bar{x} = 4.47$ ). Being a good listener and respect others, willing to share responsibility, and being a good team member was the most common sub-skill of collaboration ( $\bar{x} = 4.61, 4.61$ , and  $4.42$  respectively). Regarding class engagement, students were most likely to participate in the class activities fully, complete the task within the allocated time and sharing ideas to class ( $\bar{x} = 4.64, 4.56$ , and  $4.11$  respectively).

**Table 3:** Mean scores of three most common sub-skills after completion of the course

Learning skills	Sub-skills	$\bar{x}$
Critical thinking and problem solving	giving reasons to support ideas	4.50
	thinking systematically	4.11
	decision making based on the gathered information	4.11
Creative thinking	being open to learning new ideas	4.64
	brainstorming ideas	4.31
	evaluating one's ideas	4.14
Communication	practicing presentation skills	4.61
	learning vocabulary	4.50
	listening and speaking skills	4.47
Collaboration	being a good listener and respect for others	4.61
	being willing to share responsibility	4.61
	being a good team member	4.42
Class engagement	participating in the class activities	4.64
	completing the task within the allocated time	4.56
	sharing ideas to the class	4.11

**Research Question 1:** *Do the levels of perceived skills students learned to improve after the course?*

The students viewed that they developed the overall skills at a high level. Their self-assessment scores of overall skills also increased significantly after the course. Mainly, increases in critical thinking and problem-solving, as well as creativity and communication might be the result of learning activities by the design thinking process. This result supports many researchers and educators in regards to the significance of design thinking in developing 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills. As Koh et.al (2015) noted that involved in the design thinking process, students are required to think critically and creatively to collect, revise, and design prototype, and to monitor progress from ongoing team corporation. Similarly, Konchiab (2016) pointed out that design thinking process can support learning and innovation skills, including English language communication, interpersonal communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, as well as creative thinking.

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent are their perceived skills improved?*

The most improved skill was critical thinking and problem solving, followed by creativity and communication. Firstly, improvement in critical thinking and problem solving, particularly giving reasons to support ideas, thinking systematically, and decision

making based on the gathered information. These improvements tended to link to the activities in each phase of the design thinking. In the sense and sensibility phase, students explored the community and discussed with team members for mutual agreement to decide on the target users. In the empathy phase, students are required to think critically about the questions to be asked, and they may inevitably deal with the unforeseen problems when interviewing users. Also, in the empathy phase, synthesizing the data points and organizing ideas could possibly encourage them to think in a systematically way. In addition, students were required to think critically to reflect and interpret the data to gain more understanding about the users. Besides, students' ability to make arguments and give reasons to support their ideas may associate with activities in the ideation and prototype phase, including brainstorming ideas for solutions, discussing with team to agree on the criteria for evaluating and selecting the best ideas, as well as agreeing on what worked and what does not about the prototype. This finding is supported by Razzouk and Shute (2012) who highlighted that critical thinking and problem solving as critical characters of a design thinker, including generation, exploration, comparison, and selection. Generation and exploration help broaden a problem as well as create and evaluate the solutions. Comparison and selection help narrow a problem space and solution.

The second most improved skill was creativity, especially being open to learning new ideas, brainstorming ideas, and evaluating one's ideas. Such improvement could link to the ideation and prototype phases as brainstorming session encouraged students to create as many ideas as possible and think out of the box to create ideas to solve the real-world problems. They were also convinced to share their ideas to team members and class so they tended to be more open for the new ideas. In addition, reflecting on their own learning may possibly help them evaluate students' own ideas. Creativity can also be fostered by design thinking when students selected the best approaches to form the design concept when building the prototype. As Koh et al. (2015) state, creativity is significant when encountering with complex problems. They need to apply content knowledge critically and creatively to create ideas for solving problems.

Students were also likely to improve their communication skills, particularly presentation skills, vocabulary, and listening and speaking. According to Koh et al. (2015), design thinking promotes communication skills which emphasis on oral and written linguistic competencies, as well as the interaction skill. Every phase of the design thinking, students were required to discuss and present to the class or in the group. Thus, they were more confident that they have improved their presentation skills, as well as class discussions. They also learned about vocabulary, including adjectives for describing senses, nouns and verbs for describing their observation, translations of questions and answers, writing data point in English, creating English and Thai Persona, as well as using language expressions for explaining the process. This study supports Razzouk and Shute (2012) statement that the ability to use language as a means to communicate is a key element of design thinking, particularly explaining the process.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study showed the positive effect of integrating design thinking process to English class. There were particularly increases in critical thinking and problem-solving, as well as creativity and communication. It can be said that English language learning, as part

of communication skills can be developed along with other essential skills (e.g., critical thinking and creativity). Both vital and creative nature of thought will encourage students to be a good language learner.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Due to time restraint, this research investigated the development of 21st-century skills based solely on students' perspectives. Thus, the findings from this study may not yet reflect the whole learning process, lacking aspects from other sources such as lecturers. Despite time constraint, students' learning skills should also be evaluated by the lecturer before and after this course. The data from lecturer's perspectives can be triangulated with students' perspectives on their learning. Adding evidence from students' work in the course could also be used to support the findings.

### **Implication for Teaching**

Due to time restraint, this research investigated the development of 21st-century skills based solely on students' perspectives. Thus, the findings from this study may not yet reflect the whole learning process, lacking aspects from other sources such as lecturers. Despite time constraint, students' learning skills should also be evaluated by the lecturer before and after this course. The data from lecturer's perspectives can be triangulated with students' perspectives on their learning. Adding evidence from students' work in the course could also be used to support the findings.

### **Recommendation for Future Research**

Based only on the students' daily journals and pre-post questionnaires, this study then leaves some room for further research which might investigate the use of design thinking in an English classroom more thoroughly. To gain more understanding, future research should be conducted in, at least, a triangular fashion with other data sources such as facilitator's observation and performance evaluation. Moreover, it is essential to include other 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as information, media, and technology skills, flexibility and adaptability, and initiative and self-direction, which are important skills for life and career.

### **References**

- Chen, M. (2010). **Education Nation: Six Leading Edges of Innovation in our Schools**. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Dunne, D., & Martin. R. (2006). **Design thinking and how it will change management education: An interview and discussion**. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 5, 512-523. doi:10.5465/AMLE.2006.23473212
- Goldman, S., Kabayadondo, Z., Royalty, A., Carroll, M. & B. Roth. (2014). **Student Teams in Search of Design Thinking**. In C. Meinel, H. Plattner & L. Leiffer (eds.). *Design Thinking Research: Building Innovation Eco-Systems*. Springer International, 11-34
- Hays, C.S. & Hays, J.P. (2012). **The Design Thinking Process**. ReDESIGNING THEARTER. Retrieved from <http://web.stanford.edu/group/cilab/cgi-bin/redesigningtheater/the-design-thinking-process/>

- Khonchiab Supornphan. (2016). **Twenty-first Century Skill Development Through the Design Thinking Process: A Case Study of the Learning Express Project, Chiang Mai.** Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Chiang Mai, Thailand.
- Kimbell, L. (2011). **Rethinking design thinking: Part I.** *Design and Culture*, 3(3), 285-306.
- Koh, J. H. L., Chai, C. S., Wong, B., & Hong, H. Y. (2015). **Design Thinking for Education: Conceptions and Applications in Teaching and Learning.** Singapore: Springer.
- Kurokawa, T. (2013). **Design thinking education at universities and graduate schools.** *Science & Technology Trends Quarterly Review*, 46, 50-62. Retrieved December 2014, from <http://www.nistep.go.jp/en/wp-content/uploads/Science-Technology-Trends-Quarterly-Review-No.46%EF%BC%8Dreport4.pdf>
- Kwek, S.H. (2011). **Innovation in the Classroom: Design Thinking for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning.** (Master's thesis). Retrived from [http://www.stanford.edu/group/redlab/cgi-bin/publications\\_resources.php](http://www.stanford.edu/group/redlab/cgi-bin/publications_resources.php)
- Leong, W. Y. (2011). **Design Thinking for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.** *Research within Reach*, 31, 5-7. Retrieved from [http://www.singteach.nie.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/SingTeach\\_Issue31.pdf](http://www.singteach.nie.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/SingTeach_Issue31.pdf).
- Ng, P. T. (2008). **Teach less, learn more: Seeking curricular and pedagogical innovation.** *Thinking Schools, Learning nation: Contemporary Issues and Challenges*, 61-71.
- Razzouk, R., & Shute, V. (2012). **What is design thinking and why is it important?** *Review of Educational Research*, 82 (3), 330-348. DOI: 10.3102/0034654312457429
- Rotherham, A. J., & Willingham, D. (2009). **To work, the 21st century skills movement will require keen attention to curriculum, teacher quality, and assessment.** *Educational Leadership*, 9, 15-20.
- Rowland, G. (2004). **Shall we dance? A design epistemology for organizational learning and performance.** *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 52(1), 33-48.
- Shute, V. J., & Becker, B. J. (2010). **Innovative Assessment for the 21st Century.** New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.
- Shute, V. J., & Torres, R. (2012). **Where streams converge: Using evidence-centered design to assess Quest to Learn.** In M. Mayrath, J. Clarke-Midura, & D. H.

Robinson (Eds.), *Technology-based Assessments for 21st Century Skills: Theoretical and Practical Implications from Modern Research* (pp. 91–124). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Simon, H. A. (1996). **The Sciences of the Artificial** (3rd ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Singapore Polytechnic International (n.d.). **What is Learning Express**. Retrieved from <https://www.spi.edu.sg/programmes/global-learning-programme-overview/learning-express/what-is-learning-express/>

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (2009b). **21st Century Skills, Education & Competitiveness: A Resource and Policy Guide**. Retrieved from <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>.

# LEARNER AUTONOMY: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF MYANMAR

**Aung Myo Hein**

Department of English, Yangon University of Foreign Languages

## Abstract

Learner autonomy - the ability and willingness of learners to take charge of their own learning - has been a major area of interest in language teaching. To the development of Learner Autonomy, teachers play an important role. This research focuses on what Learner Autonomy means to English Language Teachers. The beliefs regarding learner autonomy of 28 English Language Teachers from 9 different universities in Myanmar were studied through the questionnaire conducted by Borg & Busaidi (2012). They were also interviewed to explore how teachers practice Learner Autonomy, to investigate their attitude towards Learner Autonomy and to find out the challenges they are facing while they are helping their students to become autonomous. It is found that 86% of the teachers use some activities and resources to help their students become autonomous learners. Moreover, over half the teachers shows interest in Learner Autonomy. This collaborative study addresses the gap by examining what 'learner autonomy' means to language teachers in Myanmar. Finally, the teacher's view on the factors such as examination system and education system of our country are the challenges that hinder the development of Learner Autonomy. The findings of this work will be of wide practical interest in ELT for promoting learner autonomy, particularly in contexts where encouraging learners to be autonomous is often perceived as a particular challenge.

*Keywords: Learner Autonomy, Beliefs, Practices, English Language Teachers*

## 1. Introduction

Over the last three decades, autonomy in language learning has taken on a growing importance in the field of language education. Much has been written about the importance of Learner Autonomy. However, not much has been written about English Language Teachers' beliefs and practices in Myanmar. This study addressed this gap by examining what 'Learner Autonomy' means to English Language Teachers from 9 different universities in Upper Myanmar. Additionally, English Language Teachers' views on Learner Autonomy and the challenges they face are also addressed in helping their students to become autonomous.

Holec (1981; p.3) defined autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning". He has been a major influence in the debate about autonomy in language learning. Definitions of autonomy have varied. Dickinson (1987; p.11) accepts the definition of autonomy as "situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his or her learning and the implementation of those decisions". Pemberton (1996; p.3) defined as "the techniques in order to direct one's own learning". It refers to "learning in which the learners themselves take responsibility for their own learning" (Thomson, 1996, p.78). This implies that an autonomous learner is capable of setting goals and objectives, choosing material, methods and tasks, carrying out and evaluating his/her work/learning. Learners are able to make significant decisions about what is to be learned, as well as how and when to learn it.

## Aim and Objectives

This paper aims at investigating the beliefs and practices of English language teachers regarding Learner Autonomy. Thus, the objectives are

- i. To explore English language teachers' attitude towards “Learner Autonomy” and
- ii. To find out the challenges teachers have faced in helping their students to become independent learners.

## 2. Materials and Method

Twenty eight English language teachers, who are from 9 different universities participated in this study as informants. There were 8 English language teachers from Department of English, Mandalay University of Foreign Languages, 7 from Mandalay University, 7 from Mandalay University of Distance Education and 1 from Mandalay Technological University, University of Computer Studies, Medical Technology, University of Medicine, University of Pharmacy and Yadanabon University participated in this study as volunteers. They have different teaching experiences ranged from 2 to over 25 years. Six of them are male teachers and 22 are female teachers. Borg and Al-Busaidi's questionnaires were grounded in a thorough review of the academic literature on autonomy, which means that they are well suited for international use. The questionnaire included no right or wrong answers and they primarily focused on the teachers' perspectives and opinions about learners' autonomy. Furthermore, the questionnaire included 37 items with five Likert-type responses ranging from 1 to 5 (i.e. from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree').

### Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaires were distributed to over 60 English language teachers from Department of English from different universities in Upper Myanmar; however, only 28 English language teachers participated in this study as volunteers. The closed questionnaire data were analysed statistically. Descriptive statistics (i.e. frequency counts and percentages) were calculated for all questions. The open questionnaire responses and the interview data were categorised through a process of qualitative thematic analysis. This process involves reading the data carefully, identifying key issues of English language teachers, and then organising these issues into a set of broader categories.

Given the mixed methods nature of this study, data analysis also involved a comparison of the questionnaire and interview data to illustrate quantitative findings with qualitative examples, and to obtain a more meaningful understanding of why teachers answered particular questionnaire items in the ways they did.

The data in table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the belief of English language teachers on Learner Autonomy.

**Table 1: The belief of English Language Teachers on Learner Autonomy**

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy.	7%	11%	18%	35%	29%



No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy.	0%	4%	18%	54%	24%
3.	Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.	0%	7%	18%	65%	10%
4.	Autonomy means that learners can make choices about how they learn.	0%	4%	14%	61%	21%
5.	Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.	0%	7%	29%	43%	21%
6.	Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom.	0%	7%	33%	46%	14%
7.	Involving learners in decisions about what to learn promotes learner autonomy.	0%	0%	21%	65%	14%
8.	Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.	14%	36%	29%	18%	4%
9.	It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners.	7%	46%	36%	11%	0%
10.	It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults.	0%	7%	18%	61%	14%
11.	Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.	0%	0%	11%	54%	35%
12.	Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.	0%	0%	18%	71%	11%
13.	Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.	0%	11%	14%	61%	14%
14.	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do.	0%	4%	13%	54%	29%
15.	Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher-centred classrooms.	0%	4%	21%	57%	18%
16.	Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.	0%	11%	11%	71%	7%
17.	Learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching.	0%	21%	26%	46%	7%
18.	Learner autonomy cannot develop without the help of the teacher.	0%	14%	29%	54%	3%

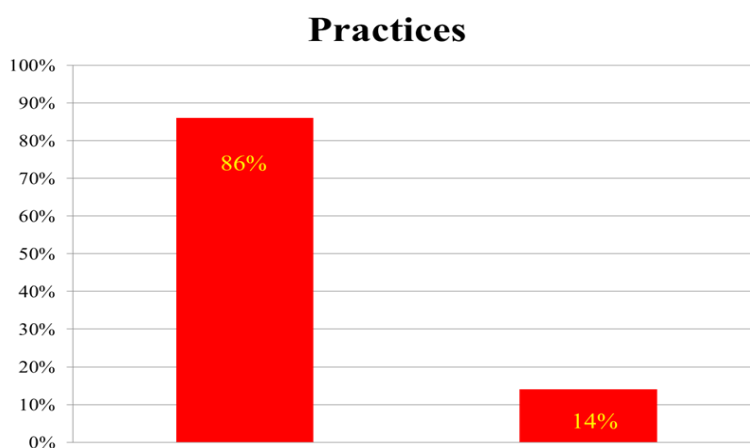
No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together.	0%	0%	11%	75%	14%
20.	Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners.	11%	46%	21%	18%	4%
21.	Learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access centre.	0%	4%	36%	46%	14%
22.	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed.	0%	6%	29%	61%	4%
23.	Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners.	15%	71%	7%	7%	0%
24.	Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.	11%	50%	21%	18%	0%
25.	Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.	0%	0%	7%	82%	11%
26.	Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners.	4%	29%	57%	4%	6%
27.	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners can choose their own learning materials.	0%	3%	29%	68%	0%
28.	Learner-centred classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.	0%	0%	0%	89%	11%
29.	Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy.	0%	4%	17%	50%	29%
30.	Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.	0%	32%	47%	21%	0%
31.	Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy.	0%	4%	25%	71%	0%
32.	The ability to monitor one's learning is central to learner autonomy.	0%	11%	29%	54%	6%
33.	Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.	4%	0%	14%	46%	36%

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
34.	The proficiency of a language learner does not affect their ability to develop autonomy.	4%	54%	14%	21%	7%
35.	The teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy.	0%	0%	7%	64%	29%
36.	Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner.	0%	0%	25%	50%	25%
37.	To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.	0%	0%	4%	46%	50%

According to the above table, 89% of the teachers believed that learner-centred classrooms can provide ideal conditions for developing "Learner Autonomy". Moreover 82% of English language teachers believed that co-operative group work activities support the development of Learner Autonomy.

As learner autonomy is a somewhat abstract construct, however, this begs the interviewed questions of what kinds of teaching and learning activities help develop autonomy and how they do so, which are, perhaps, central to professional development in this area. The sample interview schedule is reproduced with the kind of permission of Borg and Al-Busaidi.

The following figure shows the amount of teachers who practiced Learner Autonomy in their classroom.



**Figure 1: The amount of teachers who practiced Learner Autonomy in their classrooms**

According to the figure above, 86% of the teachers practicing Learner Autonomy in their language classroom; however, 14% replied 'no practice'.

Here are some practices they used to promote autonomy.

*"I try to promote learner autonomy in my class by using worksheets."*

*"I ask my students to assess by peers and do cooperative learning."*

*"I continuously give homework and assignments to be completed."*

*"I encourage my students to learn outside the classroom without help from any teacher."*

*"I encourage my students to do self-study a lot."*

Referring to the comments, teachers tried to encourage their students to do peer assessment, cooperative learning, assignments and they came up with the portfolio assessment, tasks, and worksheets to promote Learner Autonomy.

### **English Language Teachers' Attitude towards Learner Autonomy**

Teachers' attitude on Learner Autonomy is an important factor in helping their students for the improvement of their students' language skills. In the questionnaire, 50 per cent of the teachers agreed that learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner, while 71 per cent agreed that learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would. Overall, then, the teachers expressed positive views about the contribution of learner autonomy to language learning. In the interviews, the teachers were asked to elaborate on these positive views and in response to the interview questions, English language teachers showed the following opinions.

*"Of course, it is important because I am sure that it can motivate my students to study much more than they generally do."*

*"I want my students to learn outside the class without the help of the teachers."*

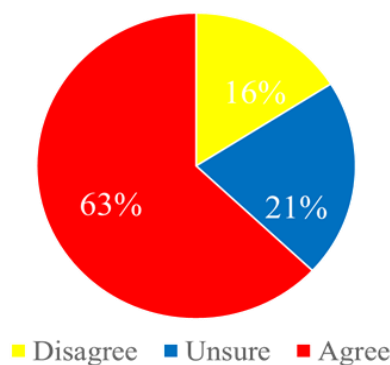
*"For the time being, I don't encourage my students to become independent learners in my class because they are not efficient learners. Outside the class, I encourage to do so."*

*"I encourage my students to become independent learners in my class*

- To pursue life-long learning and to have self-directed skills*
- To become competent users in the real world*
- To evaluate themselves through student-centered approach*
- To develop their learning ability*

The overall data emerged from the interview simply indicated that the informants showed interests in helping their students to become autonomous. In other words, most of the teachers felt their future students should be encouraged to take part in various decisions on teaching and learning process so they can take responsibility for their own learning. However there are few who had negative point of view.

The following figure shows the response to the interview questions towards the attitude of English language teachers towards Learner Autonomy.



**Figure 2: English Language Teachers' Attitude towards Learner Autonomy**

As shown in the figure above, 63% of the teachers had positive point of view on Learner Autonomy but 16% had negative point of view because they thought that learner autonomy would not be suitable in the context of Myanmar. Twenty six teachers were unsure and they replied that they did not have enough experiences to discuss.

### **The Challenges the English Language Teachers Faced**

In response to the interviewed question by Borg and Al-Busaidi, most of the teachers gave comment on the challenges they faced in seeking to do so and they also identified several adverse factors. Some of the challenges have already been listed below:

- *Students are accustomed to rote learning.*
- *Students are exam-oriented and focus on passing the exam.*
- *Students have no creativity.*
- *Students are demotivated after whole day classes.*
- *Students are reliance on the teacher.*
- *Teachers do not have enough time to cover the prescribed curricula within the time frame and they do not have enough relevant resources.*

It can be inferred from the replies of the teachers that educational system and examination system are the hindrances to the development of Learner Autonomy in language classrooms.

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

### **The Belief of English Language Teachers on Learner Autonomy**

This research provided teachers' perspectives concerning the use of autonomous language learning. It mainly focused on the beliefs of the teachers on Learner Autonomy. It also found out how teachers participated to develop Learner Autonomy in EFL settings. One major finding of this study was that nearly all of the teachers (89%) agree to the statement "Learner-centred classrooms can provide ideal conditions for developing Learner Autonomy." Most of the results are in line with Borg & Busaidi (2012). Moreover English language teachers (82%) believed that co-operative group work activities support the development of Learner Autonomy. Moreover nearly half of the teachers (47%) were not sure with the idea that learning to work alone is central to the development of Learner

Autonomy. According to Xu-sheng W. (2010), co-operative learning has positive effects on both students' readiness and their ability to be more autonomous. Co-operative learning can also enhance self-esteem and self-confidence, increase high motivation, encourage learners' responsibility for learning, enhance self-management skills, increase support for language learners to move from interdependence to independence. Little (1996) also suggested that second language learner requires interaction to improve Learner Autonomy.

Most of the teachers (75%) asserted that Learner Autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together and Learner Autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other (71%). It implies that Learner Autonomy can be promoted through activities. Camilleri A. introduced 19 activities using in the classroom in order to promote Learner Autonomy. Each activity is introduced to enhance on Learner Autonomy in a different way. Some activities encourage participants to take control of their learning by giving them opportunities to reflect about themselves as learners, about their attitudes towards autonomous learning and about their own learning and professional needs. Moreover the other activities illustrate specific ways of reflecting about one's own learning needs and process. Some activities take an active role in formulating needs, describing interests and consequently in collecting materials and organizing knowledge. Some provide ideas for implementing Learner Autonomy in a variety of language skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Some show how difficult but essential concepts in Learner Autonomy, like metalanguage and evaluating can be introduced to young learners through metaphor and discussion. Furthermore most of the language experts stated that Learner Autonomy can be enhanced by providing learners with opportunities to make decision about the materials, activities, the way of assessment and so on.

### **The Practices of English Language Teachers on Learner Autonomy**

It is previously mentioned that 86% of the English language teachers showed their interests in helping their students to become autonomous. According to Sykes (2014), there are four strategies for promoting and developing Learner Autonomy in blended learning contexts. However, it is found that the fourth strategy "Creating Learner-generated Quizzes" is not widely used in our language classroom.

Benson (2003) proposed five broad guidelines that teachers who want to foster autonomy in their classrooms might follow:

- (i) Be actively involved in students' learning
- (ii) Provide options and resources
- (iii) Offer choices and decision-making opportunities
- (iv) Support learners
- (v) Encourage reflection

As part of a professional development project, a group of teacher educators came up with a list of pedagogical strategies for autonomy that identified particular ways of organizing teaching and learning activities that could be applied in a lesson or throughout a course, without necessarily changing the planned curriculum or materials. A pedagogical strategy for autonomy was, in effect, a strategy for teaching something that was currently

being taught in a teacher-centered way (e.g., as a lecture) in a more learner-centered way (e.g., as an independent research and peer-teaching activity). While the strategies could be applied comprehensively, the suggestion behind the professional development project was that the introduction of a single strategy could also make a significant difference. The strategies that we identified were:

- (1) Encouraging student preparation.  
Students are more actively involved in teaching and learning if they know what is going to happen in class and have prepared some contribution to it.
- (2) Drawing on out-of-class experience.  
This allows students to contribute to learning content by bringing in personally relevant material.
- (3) Using “authentic” materials and “real” language.  
Again, this heightens involvement and personal relevance, especially if the students play a part in selecting materials.
- (4) Inquiring independence  
Asking students to find out things for themselves (rather than teaching them) is a basic strategy for student involvement. It can also allow students to pursue their own interests.
- (5) Involving students in task design.  
Students can often contribute to the design of tasks by, for example, selecting reading or listening texts and writing comprehension questions for each other to answer or discuss.
- (6) Encouraging student-student interaction.  
This heightens involvement and the more students talk to each other, the more personally relevant the content of learning.
- (7) Peer teaching.  
Students teach each other aspects of the learning content, which can be an extension of student preparation for class, independent inquiry, and involvement in task design. As a more formal way of encouraging student-student interaction, it has similar benefits.
- (8) Encouraging divergent student outcomes.  
Tasks that produce individual outcomes from each student in the class heighten involvement and personal relevance. Divergent outcomes can be a natural consequence of tasks based on out-of-class experience and independent inquiry, and students can be encouraged to read or listen to each other's work.
- (9) Self- and peer-assessment.  
Encourage a sense that learning is being carried out for the students' own benefit, as well as a sense of responsibility and involvement.
- (10) Encouraging reflection.

Short reflection sessions, in which students talk or write about what they have learned, what they will do next or the direction of their learning, can play an important role in heightening student involvement.

### **English Language Teachers' Attitude towards Learner Autonomy**

Over half of the teachers have positive attitude towards Learner Autonomy. However, some teachers have negative attitude and some teachers stated that they did not have enough teaching experiences to discuss the issue. The result is not in line with Anita Wenden (1991, cited in Benson & Voller, 1997, p. 1). Anita Wenden (1991, cited in Benson & Voller, 1997, p. 1) stated that “few teachers will disagree with encouraging learners becoming more autonomous learners”. This might be because of the Education System. In Myanmar, Teacher-centred Approach is still widely used.

### **The Challenges English Language Teachers Face**

For the implementation and development of Learner Autonomy, teachers play an important role because they are responsible for developing a learning environment conducive to promoting Learner Autonomy. However, it is pointed out that in order to promote Learner Autonomy in the teaching contexts, teachers need freedom so that they can apply their own autonomy in teaching.

Moreover, traditional teaching methods are widely utilized in Myanmar. Additionally, students are exam-oriented and creativity is less encouraged. As a result of this system, learners tend not to take responsibility for their own learning during their educational process. According to Jenefer Johnson only Formative Assessment practices help build autonomy. Moreover, Assessment should provide examples of how the criteria can be in practice, opportunities for learners to improve upon their work and adequate exposure and practice of all testing activities

To overcome the challenges, Mari Koivista and Leena Jokinen suggested to have “Supportive Learning Environments” including Institutional support, Teacher and Tutor support, Peer groups support, Home and Partner support, Work and other social network support in their handbook entitled “Becoming A More Critical, Autonomous, Reflective Learner”.

## **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, we hope to have called attention to some of the issues that arise from this research that will be taken up in the various national studies based on their questionnaire and professional development strategies. We consider learner autonomy to be an established concept in the field of language learning, not only at the level of research but also at the level of practice. Their questionnaires assume, therefore, that teachers have beliefs about the meaning and value of learner autonomy and something to say about learner autonomy in practice. The findings of the survey, on the other hand, show that learner autonomy is, indeed, an established concept on which a substantial number of teachers around in Myanmar now hold beliefs that are worth investigating. What is more problematic, however, is the extent to which we can separate these teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy from their academic knowledge of it. Bearing in mind that 90% of the



respondents in this study held a master's degree could the high level of agreement between the teachers' beliefs about the meaning and value of autonomy.

## References

- Balcikanli C. (2010). **Learner Autonomy in Language learning: Student Teachers' Beliefs.** *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. Volume 35: Issue1. Article 8.
- Borg S. & Busaidi. A. (2012). **Learner Autonomy: English Language Teachers' Belief and Practices.** British Council.
- Boyadzhieva E. (2016). **Learner-centered Teaching and Learner Autonomy.** *Social and Behavioral Sciences* 232 (2016) 35 – 40
- Dafei D. (20017). **An Exploration of the Relationship Between Learner Autonomy and English Proficiency.** Professional Teaching Articles, *Asean EFL Journal*.
- Holec, H., 1981: **Autonomy and foreign language learning.** Oxford: Pergamon. Strasbourg: Council of Europe
- Holec H. & Huttenen I. (1997). **The Learner Autonomy. Research and Development.** Starsbourg: Council for Cultural Co-operation, Council of Europe.
- Koivista M. & Jokinen L. **Becoming A More Critical, Autonomous, Reflective Learner.** University of Warwick, UK
- Little D. (1991). **Learner Autonomy: Definitions, Issues, and Problems.** Authentic Language Learning resources Ltd. Dublin.
- Zhang, L.X. & Li X.X. (2004). **A comparative study on learner autonomy between Chinese students and west European students.** *Foreign Language World*, 4, 15-23.

## Appendix: Sample Interview Schedule

### Reproduced with the kind permission of Borg and Al-Busaidi

- (1) Let's start by talking about what 'autonomy' means to you.  
In a few words, how would you sum up your view on what learner autonomy is?
- (2) What for you are the key characteristics of an autonomous language learner?
- (3) 'Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner'.  
Can you tell me a little more about how you see the relationship between learner autonomy and language learning?
  - a) How have you come to develop the views you hold today about learner autonomy and its value?
  - b) Is it an issue you have focused on in your training as a language teacher?
  - c) Have you worked in other contexts where autonomy has been considered an important issue to develop with learners?

- d) What about your own experience as a language learner – do you feel autonomy was / has been an issue you were aware of?
- (4) Desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy.
  - a) In terms of decision-making, you were quite positive both about the desirability and feasibility of learner involvement. But to what extent are learners actually involved in such decisions?
  - b) You were also positive about the feasibility and desirability of learners having certain abilities. Again, does this mean you have a positive view of the situation you work in?
- (5) ‘In general, the students I teach English most often to at University have a fair degree of learner autonomy’.
  - a) Could you say more about why you feel this way?
  - b) What is it that learners do to make you feel that they have a fair degree of autonomy?
  - c) Are there any other particular factors at the LC that hinder learner autonomy?
- (6) ‘In general, in teaching English at University I give my students opportunities to develop learner autonomy’:
  - a) Firstly, what role if any, do you feel the teacher has in promoting learner autonomy?
  - b) Your answer was strongly agreed. Can you say more about what you do to encourage autonomy in your learners?
  - c) What changes in the way the LC operates would allow you to promote learner autonomy better?

## **A CLIL APPROACH IN THAILAND UNIVERSITY SETTING: TEACHING DESIGN THINKING THROUGH ENGLISH**

**Thammanoon Buphate**

College of Integrated Science and Technology, Rajamangala University of Technology  
Lanna

98 Moo 8 Papong, Doi Saket, Chiang Mai, 50220 Thailand

**Krittika Inta**

Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of  
Technology Lanna

128 Huay Kaew Road, Chang Phueak, Muang, Chiang Mai, 50300 Thailand

**Reuben H. Esteban**

Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of  
Technology Lanna Phitsanulok

52 Moo.7 Ban Krang, Muang, Phitsanulok, 65000 Thailand

### **Abstract**

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been known as an approach in teaching using a specific target language with a particular subject offering students to be proficient in learning content, communication, cognition or critical thinking, and culture. Hence, the objectives of this study were to find out: 1) the extent to which a Design Thinking course using a CLIL approach improves Thai undergraduate students' skills in social innovation knowledge, communication skills in English, critical thinking ability, and cultural awareness; and 2) students' learning experiences and perspectives towards the Design Thinking course. The data were collected in the form of Likert-scale questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview about teachers' perspectives on students' performances throughout the four phases of design thinking: sense and sensibility, empathy, ideation, and prototype. The participants consisted of 25 Thai undergraduate EFL students who attended the Singapore Polytechnic adapted framework for Design Thinking course at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna in Thailand, during the Second Semester of the Academic Year 2017 and four teachers who facilitated the said course. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analyses. The study findings indicated that: 1) students showed significant improvement in social innovation knowledge, communication skills in English, critical thinking ability, and cultural awareness, especially communication skills in English, and cultural awareness; and 2) students exhibited satisfactory confidence in their learning experiences and positive attitudes towards the introduced subject matter, Design Thinking.

**Keywords:** *Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), 4Cs of CLIL, Design Thinking, English as a Foreign Language (EFL)*

### **1. Background**

Teaching has revolutionized as years fold into another. The emergence of various methodologies in instruction has brought a wide spectrum for teachers in order to meet the needs of learners. In Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), there are various pedagogies that have served well for instruction and learning. Being one of the countries that is thriving from its English competency, Thailand has adapted some pedagogies that

seem suitable for learners. One distinct pedagogy is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

CLIL has been known as an approach which is teaching a content-based subject using a target language. Marsh (1994) defined CLIL as a dual-focused pedagogy catering a subject matter and a language which is not necessarily the first language of learners. Though its definition states only a subject and a language, CLIL has a more extensive focus. Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) designed and coined the fundamental principles of CLIL which includes content, communication, cognition or critical thinking, and culture. These aspects have framed the formula, 4Cs of CLIL, which further assesses the effectivity of said pedagogy.

CLIL is an efficient tool to improve the proficiency of learners as they are exposed mainly of the target language in classes Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010). According to Marsh, Maljers, and Hartiala (2001), CLIL provides not only linguistic competence opportunity but a definite ‘thinking’ pattern which could open learners’ thoughts in different and diverse ways.

Meanwhile, Design Thinking is a subject or content which is used to teach learners how to design social innovation for community or society. It is a new course content which intends to explore creative ways to develop solutions to a certain coursework or project.

Design Thinking has gained more popularity in this generation where technology and innovation are at hand. Brown (2009), the CEO of IDEO, affirmed that Design Thinking looks at the non-conventional practices on problem-solving. He further added that “It is not only human-centered; it is deeply human in and of itself. Design thinking explores on someone’s ‘ability to be intuitive, to recognize patterns, to construct ideas that have emotional meaning as well as functionality, to express ourselves in media other than words or symbols.’ Design thinking helps learners to create new social innovation together with designers and users to get new things that satisfies the need of the users rather than the learners.

Hence, this study would like to find out the extent of CLIL as a teaching tool for a Design Thinking course. It mainly looks for answers to the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent do the 4Cs of CLIL including social innovation knowledge, communication skills in English, critical thinking ability, and cultural awareness were applied among Thai undergraduate students in learning throughout the four phases of Design Thinking course?
- 2) What are the perceptions of the students towards the Design Thinking learning experiences?

## **2. Related Literature**

### **Defining CLIL**

CLIL is an acronym for Content and Language Integrated Learning that has been defined by various authors and educators based on different practices and contexts. According to the Introduction of the report of The Relevance and Potential of CLIL for achieving MT+2 in Europe by Marsh (2003):

“Content and Language Integrated Learning refers to any dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, thus not usually the first language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content. It is dual-focused because whereas attention may be predominantly on either subject-specific content or language, both are always accommodated (1).”

This corresponds with Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) who defined CLIL as an approach focusing both on language and content. Similarly, Haataja (2007) stated that CLIL is one teaching method which content is given in another language than the original language of the learners. Ball (2002) also implied that both language and content are the dual focus of CLIL.

### The 4Cs of CLIL

CLIL approach has been adopted and practiced differently by many teachers around the world based on their own contexts and learners, however, it is essential to follow the certain fundamental principles to make CLIL effective. According to Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010), teaching through CLIL should contain four fundamental elements, the so-called 4Cs: Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture.

The 4Cs of CLIL are interrelated as shown in Figure 1:

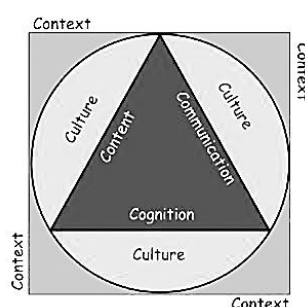


Fig. 1 :The 4Cs of CLIL (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh, 2010)

Based on the 4Cs framework of CLIL (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh, 2010) as seen in Figure 1, content refers to the subject or the theme of lesson or course. Communication refers to the way in which learners use target language to communicate and interact in order to convey their thoughts, attitudes, and opinions related to the subject content. Cognition refers to the higher order thinking ability or critical thinking skills that learners use to engage with and understand the content of the lesson, to solve problems, and to reflect on their learning. Culture refers to enhancing intercultural understanding and awareness and global citizenship.

Moreover, they attested that the 4C elements of CLIL are interrelated in the process of integrating CLIL in practice, though it might be varied from context to context. The 4Cs of CLIL play an important role in supporting teachers in their CLIL lesson planning and highlighting the needs for teachers to integrate all the 4Cs in the process of teaching. This allows them to teach multiple things at the same time to prepare learners for the real world.

### Advantages and Disadvantages of CLIL

Like any other pedagogical approaches, CLIL also has its own advantages and disadvantages. CLIL approach offers many benefits to learners and teachers in various ways. Apart from helping learners to improve critical thinking skills which are not commonly practiced in other language pedagogies, Floris (2014) stated that CLIL provides learners to learn a target language from authentic materials which can be used in the real life. CLIL activities also enable learners to use communicative language to exchange ideas and opinions amongst themselves in order to complete some tasks being given. Moreover, CLIL develops learners' skills, attitudes, and experience. Harrop (2012) added that CLIL increases learners' motivation in engaging and having opportunities to use target language to learn a subject. CLIL also increases learners' linguistic proficiency in various contents

that are related to the subjects which help learners to have both content and language knowledge. In addition, CLIL also raises learners' intercultural understanding and awareness amongst themselves .

On the other hand, CLIL also has its drawbacks in various aspects. Harrop (2012) stated that in order to teach real life communication, CLIL teachers mostly focus on content which leads to lack of linguistic competence among learners. This is being supported in Bruton's (2013) stressing that if CLIL approach is used with learners who have low proficiency in their target language, they are demotivated to learn. Moreover, Harrop (2012) firmly agreed that in CLIL, teachers of language sometimes do not have enough knowledge of content and the teachers have low proficiency of the target language. He further explained that sometimes teachers are not aware of culture bias among learners in a CLIL class.

These are various views of advantages and disadvantages of CLIL, however, it still has been practiced in various educational institutes across the world. Therefore, this paper aims to implement CLIL approach in teaching Design Thinking in English.

### **Implementing CLIL in Higher Education**

Chostelidoua and Procedia (2014) stated about the result of implementing the CLIL program in their study. The performance of the experimental group was visibly developed than the control group in spite of the simultaneous exposure as well as similar quantity of reading comprehension disclosure, emphasizing its efficacy relating to the progress of linguistic skills. Moreover, the formation of positive attitudes on the part of the experimental group was better.

Likewise, in another research carried out by Dalton-Puffer (2007) with regards to Foreign Language Learning (FLL), CLIL has confirmed to have a positive result at the university level for language skills. Furthermore, the study said that CLIL also posed a positive outcome in writing for university students. Soulioti's (2014) study towards CLIL implementation among 65 undergraduate students in the Speech and Language Therapy Department of Epirus Institute of Technology in Greece showed a positive attitude towards students attesting that they really felt that CLIL helped raise their progress in both language learning and content knowledge .

Similarly, Papaja (2012), who worked on 108 CLIL students from the Department of Psychology of the University of Silesia, Poland toward CLIL classroom, also indicated a positive attitude of the students' satisfaction from learning both the English language and the subject matter through CLIL in university setting.

### **Defining Design Thinking**

As stated by Tschimmel (2012), Design Thinking is assumed as a way of thinking which leads to renovation and development and innovation to new procedures of living and to different ways of handling business.

Over the last decade, the term has expanded frame in business mass media and develop a specification for the attentiveness that any kind of business and organization can advance from the designers' ways of thinking and working. Moreover, the focus of businesses nowadays is to make better products with people for others which means inventing products with real data to offer users answers they essentially need (Khan, 2015)

Furthermore, in Southeast Asia like Singapore, Singapore Polytechnic offers a Certificate in Design Thinking. Another company called *Emerge Creatives* by Ling (2018) provides Design Thinking course training and consultancy firm which target to train and enable professionals and individuals with design thinking skills and mindsets on problem-solving, innovation, and customer experience.

Likewise, in Seow's (2018) news report, the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Loong at the Ministerial Forum of the Singapore University of Technology and Design in Changi, said, "We didn't call it Design Thinking then, but with each of these major policies, our founding fathers had to understand the issues, define the problem, come up with creative ideas and solutions, prototype the idea, test out the innovations, and constantly review the thinking and the solutions."

According to Lawson (2004), Design Thinking can be defined as a paradigm, not just only described as a method or methodology. Design Thinking paradigm should be understandable by users since it is the main deep tool in the analysis of designers' thinking process. The Design Thinking paradigm expounds the definite approach employed by designers in providing answers to the issues in their designs.

### **The Four Phases of Design Thinking**

According to the toolkit by Singapore Polytechnic Department of Educational Development (2011), there were four phases of the Design Thinking framework which included sense and sensibility, empathy, ideation, and prototype. In the first phase, *sense and sensibility*, the focus is on using all 5 senses for finding information and motivates learners to open their mind. Secondly, *empathy*. The main concept of the empathy stage is to make students understand the users till they feel like they are one of the users. Empathy, ethnography, interview and observation, analysis tools, insights generation mechanism are focused in this stage. In-depth interview is used to expose assumptions to understand the deeper thoughts and feelings of the users. In-depth interview helps the students understand the users as well as using open-ended (Type A) questions help to keep interviewees at simplicity while building rapport with users before moving to closed-ended (Type B) questions which ask deeper information about the users. *Ideation* phase is about creating a range of ideas and concepts using suitable ideation tools. Students generate a large volume of ideas and then develop these ideas into concepts and select one final concept to work on. The last phase is *prototype*. This is the process of making concepts tangible and real; it is also about communicating the concept and user experience. Therefore, students are asked not to be too much focused on jumping into implementation but spend time exploring with users in the early stages. During prototyping, they have to test their prototype with the users, which is also called co-creation and getting feedback from the villagers. After all, students were asked to do the Gallery Walk, an exhibition style, to implore feedback from experts, visitors, and users.

In Singapore Polytechnic, there are various kind of courses that use Design Thinking framework in the courses since they were effective and useful for the learners to be able to use and understand this framework, therefore they put Design Thinking in their courses. For instances, *Design Thinking 101* which is an introductory tester course about Design Thinking (DT). It is meant to arouse the interests of participants in Design Thinking and enables participants to apply key principles learned from the DT process through hands-on activities and team-work which will be guided by experienced facilitators. In addition, Improving User Experiences with Design Thinking integrating Design into Business Innovation course is designed to introduce Design Thinking fundamentals that will help business stakeholders create innovative solutions as well as equipping participants with essential skills to analyze, ideate and think creatively through visualizations, creating prototypes and innovating concepts/ideas. "Design Thinking for Business Innovation" is another course which is intended to equip both management and operational participants with the following: to introduce DT tools and methods that can help visualize a systems understanding of business activities, to use ethnographic tools to better understand the needs of both internal and external customers, to show how powers of empathy can be used

to develop a personalized customer service, to use brainstorming and ideation strategies and techniques and to show how innovation can be integrated into a business model. The outcomes of the course would be the acquisition of skills on how team can design strategies on how to achieve or exceed goals that have been assigned to them and develop a more user-centric paradigm (Singapore Polytechnic, 2018).

In this view, this paper delves into finding out the extent of what can the 4Cs of CLIL including social innovation knowledge, communication skills in English, critical thinking ability, and cultural awareness do among Thai undergraduate students in learning throughout the four phases of Design Thinking course, and assess their learning experiences and perspectives towards the Design Thinking course.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **Participants**

The participants of this study were 25 first to third year Thai undergraduate students who attended Singapore Polytechnic adapted framework for Design Thinking course at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL) in Chiang Mai, Thailand, during the Second Semester of Academic Year 2017. There were 12 business administration, eight engineering, three fine arts and architecture, majoring students, and two representative students from College of Integrated Science and Technology (CISAT). Among these 25 students, there were 15 female and 11 male students with ages between 18 and 22 years. They were chosen from the selection process delegated by the Office of International Relations (OIR), the main proponent of the course or project.

There were also four Thai teacher-facilitators who participated in the semi-structured interview about their perspectives towards students' performances throughout the four phases of design thinking: sense and sensibility, empathy, ideation, and prototype. They were responsible for teaching the Design Thinking course and observing the students in their assigned fieldwork.

#### **Research instruments**

##### **Questionnaire: Perceptions of students towards the Design Thinking learning experiences**

The students' perspectives toward their design thinking learning experiences questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale adapted from Bertram (2007) was employed to collect the data. It contained 24 items, and divided into four parts: 1) Content (4 items); 2) Communication Skills (10 items); 3) Critical Thinking and Problem Solving (5 items); and 4) Cultural Awareness and Engagement (5 items). The items on students' perspectives towards their design thinking learning experiences were assessed on a 5-point scale using Vagias' (2006) response anchors: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = somewhat agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree. The questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in the field of ELT research with some necessary revisions for content validity and reliability.

##### **Semi-structured interview: Perceptions of teacher-facilitators evaluating the extent of 4Cs of CLIL being applied to the four phases of Design Thinking during the course period among Thai university students**

Teachers' perception regarding the performances of students towards the implementation of CLIL was done through a semi-structured interview. Teachers had to assess the performances of students throughout the four phases of the design thinking



course :sense and sensibility, empathy, ideation, and prototype vis-à-vis the 4Cs of CLIL which includes content, communication, cognition or critical thinking, and culture both in classroom and fieldwork settings.

### Data collection

The data were mainly derived from the Learning Express (*LeX*), a program designed for both Singapore Polytechnic (SP) and Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL) students to enhance their 21st Century skills spearheaded by the Office of International Relations (OIR) of RMUTL with the theme, ‘Social Innovation.’

In this course or project, there were 25 RMUTL students and 25 students from Singapore Polytechnic, Singapore. The *LeX* program ran for 12 days, from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2017, Second Semester of Academic Year 2017. The course or project was divided into two parts: the intensive workshop which was conducted at the Innovation Room, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Liberal Arts Building, RMUTL, Chiang Mai, Thailand and the immersion program which was conducted in three villages in Chiang Mai, Thailand: 1) Ban Kai Noi, Mae Taeng; 2) Ban Lao Moo 4, Mae Taeng; and 3) Mon Ngao Royal Project, Mae Taeng. There were four phases of the Design Thinking course via Toolkit by Singapore Polytechnic Department of Educational Development (2011) which included sense and sensibility, empathy, ideation, and prototype.

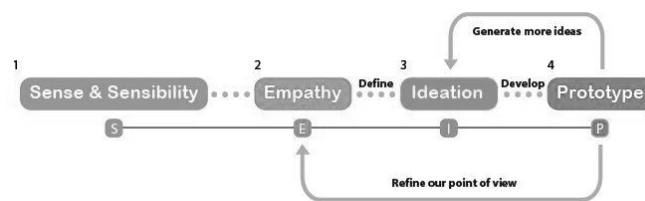


Fig. 2. The four phases of Design Thinking course from Singapore Polytechnic (2011)

Consequently, the collection of data was divided into two parts:

First, Thai students were handed in questionnaire stating their perceptions towards the effectivity of CLIL vis-a-vis Design Thinking course at the end of the project.

Second, the four teachers (teacher-facilitators) who facilitated the activity assessed the students' performances throughout the whole duration of the Design Thinking course focusing on the four phases of design thinking course: sense and sensibility, empathy, ideation, and prototype vis-à-vis the 4Cs of CLIL (content, communication, cognition or critical thinking, and culture).

### Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire were calculated to get their average mean scores ( $\bar{x}$ ), standard deviation (SD), and level of agreement. They were analyzed using descriptive statistics method. The level of agreement for the 5-point Likert scale is as follows:

The data collected from teacher-facilitators who participated in the study were gathered and analyzed using content analyses. They were written and explained point-by-point.

## 4. Results and Findings

The results and findings of this study were categorized into three: 1) demographical information of the students, 2) perception of students towards the use of CLIL in the course,

and 3) perception of teacher-facilitators who were responsible to teach and observe the students.

### Demographic Information of the Students

Table 1: Demographics of the Participants

Major	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Business Administration	12	48
Engineering	8	32
Fine Arts and Architecture	3	12
Integrated Science and Technology	2	8
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	14	56
Male	11	44
<b>Age</b>		
18	2	8
19	14	56
20	9	36

Table 1 shows all of the students who participated in the course completely answered and submitted the questionnaire to the researchers. There were 25 Thai students with ages between 18 and 20 majoring in business administration, engineering, fine arts and architecture, and pre-engineering.

### Perception of Students towards CLIL in the Design Thinking Course

Table 2: Perception of Students towards the Content of the Design Thinking Course

Content	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Level of Agreement
I can improve my design thinking knowledge and skills.	3.56	0.60	Somewhat agree
I learn how to implement design thinking knowledge in creating social innovation.	3.45	0.56	Somewhat agree
I learn and understand the four essential phases of design thinking: sense and sensibility, empathy, ideation, and prototype.	3.45	0.55	Somewhat agree
I think my design thinking and social innovation knowledge and skills will be useful for my career in the future.	3.40	0.62	Somewhat agree
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>0.582</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>

Table 2 shows the results of students' perspectives towards the design thinking experience. It can be seen that most students said that they can improve their design thinking knowledge and skills with an average mean of 3.56. Overall, the average mean for content is 3.46 which means that most students seemed to have learned averagely from the content of the design thinking course.

Table 3: Perception of Students towards Communication Skills of the Design Thinking Course

<b>Communication Skills</b>	<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Level of Agreement</b>
I learn about new words and sentences.	4.25	0.62	Strongly agree
I practice listening and speaking.	4.25	0.56	Strongly agree
I practice presentation skills.	4.22	0.54	Strongly agree
I describe characteristics of a material and give examples to explain the words I don't know.	4.20	0.60	Strongly agree
I ask others for help with the language.	4.20	0.57	Strongly agree
I practice reading and writing .	4.18	0.64	Strongly agree
I check if others can understand what I say.	4.0	0.65	Strongly agree
I use some related words to describe a word I don't know.	3.90	0.60	Strongly agree
I ask others to repeat and speak more slowly.	3.90	0.55	Somewhat agree
I practice pronunciation .	3.88	0.54	Somewhat agree
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.098</b>	<b>0.587</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>

As seen in Table 3, students strongly agreed that they learned new words and sentences and practiced listening and speaking in the whole duration of the course with a mean of 4.25. It could be noticed that most students answered 'strongly agree' to almost all of the items. In total, communication skills garnered 4.098 mean score with an SD of 0.587.

Table 4: Perception of Students towards Critical Thinking of the Design Thinking Course

<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Level of Agreement</b>
I give reasons to support my idea.	3.98	0.56	Somewhat agree
I can think systematically.	3.67	0.56	Somewhat agree
I can suggest solutions to a problem.	3.20	0.56	Somewhat agree
I like making a decision based on gathered information.	3.15	0.53	Somewhat agree
I can solve unseen problems.	3.0	0.60	Somewhat agree
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>0.562</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>

Table 4 illustrates students' perceptions towards critical thinking. As shown, students more likely agreed to give reasons to support their ideas. Items like thinking systematically, making decisions, and giving solutions to problems also garnered more likely agree. As a whole, critical thinking gathered a mean of 3.40 with 0.562 SD.

Table 5: Perception of Students towards Cultural Awareness of the Design Thinking Course

<b>Cultural Awareness</b>	<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Level of Agreement</b>
I listen and respect others.	4.20	0.63	Strongly agree
I work well with others.	3.57	0.60	Somewhat agree
I am willing to share responsibilities with others.	3.33	0.60	Somewhat agree
I take part in leading team members.	3.33	0.56	Somewhat agree
I am a good team member.	3.33	0.60	Somewhat agree
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.552</b>	<b>0.598</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>

Respect for others topped in cultural awareness among the students who participated in answering the questionnaire. As seen in Table 5, with 4.20 as mean, it is highly regarded that students put their respect with each other. However, the overall total garnered only 3.55 prompting its level of agreement into ‘somewhat agree’ which is lower than content and communication skills.

Table 6: Summary of Students’ Perception towards the Design Thinking Course

Summary	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Level of Agreement
Communication skills	4.10	0.587	Strongly agree
Content	3.56	0.582	Somewhat agree
Cultural awareness	3.55	0.598	Somewhat agree
Critical thinking	3.40	0.562	Somewhat agree
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>0.582</b>	<b>More likely agree</b>

Communication skills got the highest mean score among the four principles of CLIL with an average mean of 4.10 (SD=0.587). It is followed by content, cultural awareness, and critical thinking respectively. The overall perception of students towards the use of CLIL in a Design Thinking course could be summed up in a mean score of 3.65 (SD=0.582).

#### **Perceptions of teacher-facilitators evaluating the extent of 4Cs of CLIL being applied to the four phases of Design Thinking during the course period among Thai university students**

The perception of the four (4) teacher-facilitators from RMUTL using CLIL vis-a-vis all the four (4) phases of the Design Thinking course, the results of improvement in their social innovation knowledge and skills or referred to as content, communication skills in English, critical thinking ability, and cultural awareness are as follows:

##### **Phase 1: Sense and Sensibility**

In this phase, students learnt how to use their multisensory senses and open their eyes and their mind. The activity began with a ‘buddy system’ approach, Thai students and SP students were paired together randomly so that they could help each other in the whole project. In this approach, it was perceived that Thai students were able to identify cultural differences between them and the Singaporean students. The Thai students had to try hard to make sure that their buddies could understand the culture and use some easy Thai phrases. Likewise, SP students shared some cultural information to Thai students and taught them some Singaporean games and ways of life, so they both could learn and try to adapt themselves with each other.

In this step, it was evident that some Thai students still had obstacle with using English since it is not their official language. However, the students tried to use gestures and pictures for explaining things to their SP partners. Therefore, communicative skills were employed during this phase enabling the students to convey some ideas to the Singaporean students. In addition, some Thai students used translation applications in their mobile phones. Resulting from the interview among the four teachers, they attested that the 25 Thai students were able to understand and enhance more about cultural awareness as well as communication skills.

##### **Phase 2: Empathy**

The main concept of the empathy stage was to make students understand the users till they feel like “they are in someone’s shoes”.

Interview was a good way to elucidate assumptions to understand the deeper thoughts and feelings of the users. Interviews helped the students understand the users or villagers. Using Type A questions (open-ended) helped to keep interviewees at simplicity while building rapport with users before moving to Type B questions (close-ended) which asked deeper information about the users .

For the roles during the interview, the students had to try talking and framing questions at the same time which was challenging for them .Students had to go in teams with 3 or 4 members. One Thai student was the lead interviewer who observed and engaged with the interviewee while one was a note taker (a Thai student who wrote down the interview data in verbatim). The observers, SP students, took note also of the environment, interviewee's body language and even the place they were assigned to. After the interview, Thai students translated all data into English for the benefit of the SP students.

In this stage, it was noted from the teacher-facilitators that the students needed to use communication and cultural awareness skills in formulating questions to be asked to the users. The teacher-facilitators added, "Since in Thai context, users seemed to have difficulty speaking English at all times, Thai had to take the major role of interview and being the interpreter at the same time.

One thing that was also important in this phase was critical thinking. They had to consider about their project statement and what they wanted to find out then planned their interview question. One teacher-facilitator said, "They must be flexible and be reasonable enough to ask their questions as well as finding appropriate answers to their questions.

### **Phase 3: Ideation**

Ideation is about creating a range of ideas and concepts using suitable ideation tools. In this phase, students generated a large volume of ideas and then developed these ideas into concepts and select one final concept to work on .

In the brainstorming process, students wrote one idea in a piece of post-it paper . Ideas should be as clearly transported as possible, hence, some descriptive text was required .Sketching was also encouraged in place of or in combination with words. It conveyed action, environment, and other elements that words could not efficiently do in a small space.

Then, the students selected 3-5 ideas that they could produce as a concept. A concept may be defined as "the big picture" (something formed by combining all its characteristics or particulars, 'a construct' of different ideas).

At this phase, it was perceived that the students could show their social innovation knowledge for finding suitable ideas for their users as well as the communication skills in English for expressing ideas and negotiating with SP students. Critical thinking was also minimally employed as they had to think and create an appropriate concept for their project .

### **Phase 4: Prototype**

Prototype is the process of making concepts tangible and real, it is also about communicating the concept and user experience.

Therefore, students were asked not to be too much focused on jumping into implementation but spend time exploring with users in the early stages.

After finishing the prototype, students were asked to do the *Gallery Walk*, an exhibition style, to implore feedback from their users in the Design Process. Teams asked users some questions when they sought for feedback on each concept (e.g. What works for the users and why? What doesn't work for the users and why? What could be improved and why?).

The teacher-facilitators stated that the students were open to feedback, proactive at eliciting feedback from users and visitors and ready to receive negative feedback during the whole immersion program. In addition, the students were factual, and they allowed their audience to make their own decisions. Furthermore, they students were seen to have let the users freely express their opinions and invite the participants to help improve an idea or give additional critique.

Social innovation knowledge was largely exercised in this phase. According to the teacher-facilitators, the students had to prepare a lot and they were requested to be expertise in their own project so that they could explain every single step of their project. Communication skills in English was also observed from the students. "Since Thai students had to express their work to some audience which were foreigners, they needed to understand all the processes and should be able to explain and response immediately for questions," one teacher-facilitator answered. Critical thinking was minimally used by the students. It was only observed as the students needed to think quickly to reply to the responses of the visitors. "Cultural awareness was also employed mainly just to inform the SP students about the cultural aspects of the Thai users," according to the teacher-facilitators.

## 5. Discussion

Based on Thai students' perceptions towards the use of CLIL pedagogy in teaching Design Thinking, it was revealed that communication skills were viewed as the most influential element to them. Teacher-facilitators also claimed that most of the Thai students who attended the project were able to understand the usefulness of communication skills and cultural consciousness among the students. It could also be perceived that communication skills likely have strong relationship with cultural awareness as seen in the teacher-facilitators' insights as they observed the Thai and Singaporean students worked together on projects for a certain period.

This present study is attested by Marsh (2000) saying that CLIL provides a larger scope for language development among learners. Prasongporn (2009) also claimed that CLIL can be an efficient method for language learning in Thailand. Moreover, Phoodokmai (2011) studied the effectivity of CLIL approach in Udon Thani Rajabhat University for reading and writing skills for university students and found that the CLIL course enhanced the students' reading and writing skills as seen in results of their post-test. With regards to cultural awareness, Suwannoppharat and Chinukol (2014) reported that among the 24 Thai undergraduate students in a Chinese International Program, they seemed to enhance cultural awareness and English communication ability as well.

Bruton's (2013) claim was different but of high significance to this study. He stated that motivation decreases when learners' language proficiency is low in the CLIL context. According to the teacher-facilitators who served as mentors of this project stressed that the 25 RMUTL students showed high enthusiasm even in their most crucial times of using English as their target language. Though the 25 RMUTL students were taught of Design Thinking with Social Innovation as a content, communication skills still were the most improved element in CLIL approach contrasting to Harrop's (2012) study which stated that in real life communication instruction, CLIL teachers are more focused on content leaving linguistic competence lacking behind.

Content came next to communication being mostly exercised by Thai students in the whole duration of the project. This is a manifestation that "CLIL approach focuses on meaning rather than form, and on fluency rather than accuracy" (Cendoya and Bin, as cited in Suwanapphorat and Chinokul, 2010).

With these being said, the Thai university students for CLIL instructions seem to have a positive attitude towards the use of CLIL using a particular subject matter, Design Thinking.

## 6. Implications of the Study

CLIL is highly regarded as a tool for instructions among Thai students.

Firstly, the results of this study intend to urge instructors and even curriculum developers in a university setting especially in English for Specific Purposes to inculcate CLIL as a pedagogy in their classrooms. Chansri and Wasanasomsithi (2016), having a similar study but focusing on writing and agriculture as a content, her study expressly noted that “CLIL should be implemented/applied in a language course/curriculum, particularly an ESP course/curriculum. That is to say, administrators and stakeholders should promote developing a course/curriculum that helps improve language learners’ English language abilities together with content in their major field of study and cultural knowledge.”

Secondly, with CLIL as a pedagogy to use for instructions, it can be said that it should be largely considered by teachers in tertiary level education because of its high acceptance among Thai university students enhancing the so-called principles or elements including communication, content, cognition, and culture. This is not different from the original framework of CLIL made by Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) furtherly explaining the importance of the said elements and their inter-relationship with each other in the process of teaching.

Thirdly, Design Thinking being introduced as a new subject in education, more students seem to have more understanding and interest in learning this subject matter. In the findings of this study, content being dubbed at ‘Social Innovation’ was largely given attention among Thai university students. Aside from being more likely agreed to have a positive impact, next to communication skills in the conducted project, it should be given emphasis among specific field instructors (e.g. business, engineering, architecture, design) to use this new approach to teach content to their students. Ling (2018) clearly supported the previously mentioned subject stating that Design Thinking offers a great opportunity for learners and professionals to enhance their skills not only in design and innovation but also to critical thinking approaches.

## 7. Recommendations for Further Studies

Since this study mainly focused on the quantitative approach, it is therefore suggested for further studies to delve more into deeper aspects of the project. It is recommended to focus on the journal, diaries, and the 12-day observation process among the students both in classroom and field settings. A more in-depth interview and experimental approaches could be done to attest more on the effectivity of the principles of CLIL in Design Thinking.

Moreover, it is also proposed to study more on the development of students as they learn the contents of the four phases of Design Thinking.

Lastly, since the study was conducted in Chiang Mai, Thailand, another study can be done as Thai students learn CLIL in another country such as Singapore to identify more on the cultural awareness of the students.

## References

- Ball, P. (2002). **What is CLIL?** Onestopenglish. (CLIL), 11-13 [On-line]. Available: <http://www.onestopenglish.co/clil/methodology/articles/article-what-is-clil/500453.article>

- Bertram, D. (n.d.) **Likert Scale** [On-line]. Available:  
<http://poincare.matf.bg.ac.rs/~kristina/topic-dane-likert.pdf>
- Brown, T. (2009). **Change by design. How Design Thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation**. New York: Harper Collins Publishers
- Bruton, A. (2013). **CLIL some of the reason why and why not**. *Science Direct*. 4, 587-597 [On-line]. Available:  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0346251X14000463>
- Cendoya, A. & Di Bin, M. (2010). A CLIL experience based on the use of tasks and different genre types. *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, 3(1), 11-17
- Chansri, C. & Wasanasomsithi, P. (2016). **Implementing CLIL in Higher Education in Thailand: The Extent to Which CLIL Improves Agricultural Students' Writing Ability, Agricultural Content, and Cultural Knowledge**. PASAA, Volume 51 January-June 2016. [On-line]. Available:  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1112239.pdf>
- Chostelidoua, D. & Procedia, E. (2014). **Measuring the effect of implementing CLIL in higher education :An experimental research project** [On-line]. Available:  
[https://www.unifg.it/sites/default/files/allegatiparagrafo/29-10-2018/chostelidou\\_and\\_griva\\_measuring\\_the\\_effect\\_of\\_implementing\\_clil\\_in\\_higher\\_education.pdf](https://www.unifg.it/sites/default/files/allegatiparagrafo/29-10-2018/chostelidou_and_griva_measuring_the_effect_of_implementing_clil_in_higher_education.pdf)
- Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). **CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Cross, N., Dorst, K., and Roozenburg, N. (Eds.) (1992). **Research in Design Thinking**. Delft: Delft University Press
- Dalton-Puffer, C. (2007). **Discourse in content and language integrated learning (CLIL) classrooms**. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Floris, F. D. (2014). **Learning Subject Matter through English as the Medium of Instruction: Students and Teachers' Perspectives**. *Asian Englishes*. [On-line]. Available:  
<http://repository.petra.ac.id/16475/1/13488678%252E2014%252E884879.pdf>
- Haataja, K. (2007). **A definition of CLIL as an umbrella term: A historical perspective**. In B. Roza González (Ed.), *Good practice in content and language integrated learning* (p.9). Be CLIL: Gijón
- Harrop, E. (2012). Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): Limitation and possibilities. *Encuentro*, 21(62)
- Khan, S. (2015, October 22). **Design Thinking and its techniques** [On-line]. Available:  
<https://www.cygnismedia.com/blog/design-thinking-techniques/>
- Lawson, B. (2004). **How designers know**. Oxford: The Architectural Press
- Ling, D. (2018). [On-line]. Available: <https://www.emerge-creatives.com/>
- Marsh, D. (1994). **Bilingual education & Content and Language Integrated Learning** [On-line]. Available: [file:///C:/Users/IT\\_COM001/Downloads/Dialnet-DiscussingContentAndLanguageIntegratedLearningInDo-4595073.pdf](file:///C:/Users/IT_COM001/Downloads/Dialnet-DiscussingContentAndLanguageIntegratedLearningInDo-4595073.pdf)
- Marsh, D. (2000). **Using languages to learn and learning to use languages** [On-line]. Available: <http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/clilmatrix/pdf/1uk.pdf>
- Marsh, D. (2003). **The relevance and potential of content and language integrated learning for achieving MT+2 in Europe** [On-line]. Available: <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/elc/bulletin/9/en/marsh.html>
- Papaja, K. (2012). **The impact of students' attitude on CLIL: A study conducted in higher education** [On-line]. Available:



- [https://www.unifg.it/sites/default/files/allegatiparagrafo/21-01-2014/papaja\\_the\\_impact\\_of\\_students\\_attitudes\\_on\\_clil.pdf](https://www.unifg.it/sites/default/files/allegatiparagrafo/21-01-2014/papaja_the_impact_of_students_attitudes_on_clil.pdf)
- Phoodokmai, B. (2011). Development of an English for Academic Purposes course using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to enhance reading and writing skills of students at Udon Thani Rajabhat University (Unpublished Master's Degree Dissertation, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, 2011)
- Prasongporn, P. (2009, June). CLIL in Thailand: Challenges and possibilities. Unpublished paper presented at the **Access English EBE Symposium, Jakarta, Indonesia**
- Seow, J. (2018, April 5). **PM Lee Hsien Loong calls for 'reimagining of Singapore.'** **The Straits Times**. [On-line]. Available: <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/pm-lee-calls-for-reimagining-of-singapore>
- Singapore Polytechnic (2011). **Design Thinking**. Version 1.1. Singapore Polytechnic: Singapore
- Soulioti, E. (2014). Implementing CLIL in a tertiary setting: Research on learners' attitudes and perceptions. In N. Lavidas et al. Proceedings from **Major Trends in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics 3: Selected Papers from the 20th ISTAL**. London: Versita
- Suwannoppharat, K. & Chinokul, S. (2015). **Applying CLIL to English language teaching in Thailand: Issues and challenges** [On-line]. Available: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1132045.pdf>
- Tschimmel, K. (2012). Design Thinking as an effective toolkit for innovation. Proceedings from The XXIII ISPIM Conference: **Action for Innovation: Innovating from Experience**. Barcelona: Spain
- Vagias, W. (2006). **Likert-type scale response anchors**. Clemson International Institute for Tourism & Research Development, Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management. Clemson University, Clemson [On-line]. Available: <http://www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/tourism/documents/sample-scales.pdf>

## **EFL LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE USE OF VIDEO IN A BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSE**

Tham M. Duong

Nong Lam University – Ho Chi Minh City

### **Abstract**

The global trends in the 21<sup>st</sup> century language learning and teaching have promoted interpersonal communication. Recently, there has been a high demand for learning tools which increase learners' motivation and participation with a focus on communicative competence. This paper aimed to explore EFL students' attitudes towards the application of videos in a Business Communication (BC) course at a Vietnamese university. It then explored students' favorite learning activities employed during the course. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected for an in-depth analysis through the employment of the questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The findings showed that the participants held positive attitude towards the video-based Business Communication (VBC) course. In terms of the learning activities, furthermore, collaborative activities tended to be preferred over individual ones.

*Keywords: attitudes, communicative competence, video, Vietnamese EFL context*

### **1. Introduction**

In the globalized landscape, people of all ages in the world learn English for a myriad of reasons. According to Harmer (1998), students learn English because it is a compulsory curricular subject school. Students are also in need of English for a specific purpose such as tourism, banking, or business. In Vietnam, likewise, students learn English as it is a required subject at school and for other purposes such as improving knowledge, getting good jobs, communicating, travelling, reading, studying overseas, and so forth. In reality, however, Vietnamese EFL students often find it difficult to communicate with English native speakers. One of the prominent reasons affecting students' oral communication is lack of opportunities for using the target language (Duong, 2014; Tran, 2004; Vo, 2005). In fact, English speaking environment for Vietnamese EFL students is predominantly classroom. Furthermore, insufficient providing extracurricular academic activities for learners may generally cause lack of motivation in learning English.

At the research site of the present study, Nong Lam University- Ho Chi Minh City, the majority of students have encountered difficulties with English speaking and listening skills because of the fact that they are from small cities where teacher-centered methods, especially the Grammar-Translation method is mostly emphasized (Duong, 2014). As a matter of fact, Vietnamese EFL students are probably afraid of speaking English and tend to translate every single English word into Vietnamese language. Alongside the era of technology and innovation in 21<sup>st</sup> century, EFL learners may obtain more and more opportunities to have direct interaction with foreigners, especially English native speakers. Hence, English language is seen as a vital tool for communication. In response to the

learners' needs, communicative language teaching has recently been used in language education in order to enable learners to use the target language naturally and confidently in different social contexts.

Apart from communicative activities such as role-plays, problem-solving tasks, or games, technology-based activities are used in the classroom so as to encourage students' participation. Lonergan (1985) asserts video provides exciting opportunities for language learning and teaching. He explains that video is a combination of sound and vision whereby students can hear and see the speakers or participants' conversations, their behaviors, their relationships, etc. (Lonergan, 1985).

In addition to the above-mentioned reasons such as the global socio-economic change and increasing local demand for the mastery of business communication competence, there have been no studies addressing the use of video in a Business Communication course in the research context. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating EFL students' attitudes towards the use of videos in the Business Communication course. It then explores learning activities preferred by the students throughout the course. Based on the aforementioned objectives, the two research questions were formulated:

1. What are third-year English majors' attitudes towards the video-based Business Communication (VBC) course?
2. What do they think about the learning tasks employed in the VBC course?

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Benefits of video**

It is universally known that the use of videos in language teaching and learning benefits learners and facilitates their learning process (e.g., Boateng et al., 2016; Grandon, 2014; Lonergan, 1985). Specifically, Lonergan (1985) claims that video intrinsically draws language learners' attention; that is, learners still want to watch a video even if their comprehension is limited. He also states that video can create an environment for successful language learning. In a similar vein, Allan (1991) indicates four benefits of video in a language classroom. First, video is an authentic learning resource which provides real-life situations. Video is a good medium of bringing living language into the classroom. Second, video gives learners opportunities to speak English. Obviously, well-chosen videos with clear presentation of settings and characters can be used for role play; or it can be a stimulus for communication in the classroom. Third, it yields visual support. It is pointed out that students get much attention when they both watch and listen to what speakers are saying. Lonergan (1985) shares the same idea that communication through the combination of sound and vision can be perceived easily by viewers. Last but not least, video brings rich language environment and entertainment into the classroom. Allan (1991) explains that there are various kinds of technology-assisted teaching aids which EFL teachers can use to improve the teaching.

## **2.2. Types of video materials**

Allan (1991) presents some different types of video materials, namely visual prompts, role-play, video drills, and comprehension exercises. Visual prompts providing students with pictures taken from the video sequence are used before or after watching a video, and these prompts also use freeze frame on the video itself in case there are no pictures for the video materials. For teaching video-based English lessons, Lonergan (1985) demonstrates that the presentation of the scene on a video can help learners have a clear picture of what is required after they see a character act out in front of them. As far as role-play is concerned, Mathews et al. (1991) believes that role-play is one method of maximizing student's talking time, ensuring that students get an optimum level of practice during their limited class time. According to Allan (1991), role-play can be used with several sets of materials and at different stages in a video-based lesson. Video drills are referred to as the third type. Some materials are designed with a practice stage left for learners to supply parts of the dialogue or with 'listen and repeat' technique of pausing the machine after each utterance for students to repeat it (*ibid.*). The last type concerns comprehension exercises. Allan (1991) provides some examples of comprehension exercises, including multiple choice and true/false questions, gap-filling tasks, re-ordering jumbled sentences, filling in information on worksheets. In this sense, Lonergan (1985) emphasizes that viewing guides which can be used in multiple choice questions, incomplete sentences with the possible answers, or questions with an unknown number of items from a list are used to assist learners' comprehension. Allan (1991) also recommends that the teacher should offer a guided viewing exercise before asking them to act out based on the content of the video.

In brief, each video material has its own role in promoting learning outcomes. In the present study, therefore, most of the video-based learning tasks are employed in the course.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Participants**

The participants were the third-year English majors at HCMC Nong Lam University. Of the 125 students, there were 113 females (90.4%) and 12 males (9.6%). They were randomly arranged in three classes which were instructed by a teacher of English other than the researcher. In particular, the researcher first made the ultimate goal of the study comprehensible to the teacher and then trained her how to apply videos in the Business Communication (BC) course. Prior to this course, the students were required to take Business English which provides business conventions and useful language for work. That is, it was expected that the students gained basic knowledge for the present course.

### **3.2. The experimental teaching**

According to the official curriculum, students have to finish eight semesters, and after the first four semesters, students have a right to register one of the two sub-majors of business management and TESOL methodology. The former aims at providing students with business-related knowledge so that they could look for business-oriented jobs while the latter's focus is to supply knowledge with which students can become teachers of English after graduation. The BC course took place in the sixth semester for third-year

English majors. The course included 45 periods (one period was equal to 50-minute class meeting) taught in 15 weeks. As usual, students took the BC course with the textbook *Business Venture 2* only. This study was designed by integrating videos into the course together with the textbook.

For the experiment, there were eight weeks of video-based learning and seven weeks of textbook-based learning used every other week. The series of videos named BBC Business English Portfolio consists of twenty episodes. Since the content of the videos was kind of a story, the course covered the first seven episodes including *Introducing yourself*, *Answering the telephone*, *Making appointments*, *Receiving visitors*, *Describing your company's products*, *Making travel arrangements*, and *Staying at a hotel*. The teacher delivered some exercises to students before they watched the video files. The tasks focused on listening and speaking skills because the ultimate goal of the course was that students would be able to improve their communication skills. Specifically, the listening tasks fell into three parts: *before you watch*, *while you watch*, and *after you watch*. The teacher corrected the listening tasks before moving on to speaking tasks in order to ensure that misunderstanding would not hinder students from practicing speaking skill.

Based on the content of video file for each week, the speaking tasks could be designed. In addition, the teacher adapted some interesting tasks to promote their motivation to speak English.

### **3.3. Data collection and analysis**

Questionnaire and interview were employed for data collection. The former was designed with two main parts: personal information and questionnaire content. The questionnaire content consisted of 13 items. The reliability of the questionnaire, quantitatively calculated by Cronbach, was .74, which means that the questionnaire was reliable enough to be employed.

#### **3.3.1. Questionnaire**

The questionnaire for students was written in Vietnamese to ensure that the participants' understanding of the questionnaire would not be affected by their English proficiency, and the questionnaire was mostly designed in the multiple-choice format so that students could answer the questions easily. There were some open-ended questions in which students provided details. The interview was delivered to the students right after the course. They took them home and submitted them to the class monitor who collected and returned them to the teacher on the following day. The questionnaire has three parts: (1) personal information including age, gender, and a required course, (2) students' attitudes towards the integration of videos into a BC course, and (3) students' favorite learning activities in the course.

#### **3.3.2. Interview**

In this study, the group focus semi-structured interview was conducted in Vietnamese with 12 students (4 for each class) who participated actively in class activities with the aim that language barriers would not affect the results of the interview and in-depth

information could be obtained. Furthermore, the researcher conducted the interviews twice (i.e., in the middle and at the end of the course) to ensure the consistency of information. All interviews which were audio-recorded were transcribed right after each meeting. Interviewees were coded according to the order of the first set of interviews, from the first student (S1) to the last student (S12). In addition to the core questions designed prior to the interview, some extra questions were probed if the researcher desired to get more details or elaborate a certain point.

Concerning data analysis, the researcher used SPSS 22.0 to process the data generated from the closed-ended questionnaire, whereas qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interview through content analysis. To begin with, the researcher listened to the tape many times to transcribe the content of the interviews. Then, the transcripts were read and reread several times before the researcher marked segments of the text, categorized them into themes.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Students' attitudes towards video-based Business Communication (VBC) course

As displayed in Table 1, overall, the participants held a relatively positive attitude towards VBC class because the average mean scores of two aspects, namely cognition ( $M=3.72$ ,  $SD=.49$ ) and emotion ( $M=3.54$ ,  $SD=.50$ ) were quite high and that of behavior ( $M=2.96$ ,  $SD=.45$ ) was moderate. Noticeably, the average mean score of cognition reported by the participants was the highest of all. That is to say, they believed that the application of videos in English communication class benefited them.

Turning to the details, concerning the participants' understanding of the role of videos in Business Communication class, item 1 referring to the attraction of the students' attention and participation in the VBC course occupied the highest mean score ( $M=4.23$ ,  $SD=.77$ ). The fact that videos contribute to developing students' English listening and speaking (item 4) reached quite high mean score at 3.99. This means that the participants mostly admitted the importance of videos towards language skills development. In addition, they reckoned that watching videos led to their good scores (item 3:  $M=3.50$ ,  $SD=.96$ ). However, they were unsure about whether or not videos facilitated their learning performance (item 2:  $M=3.16$ ,  $SD=.97$ ).

*Table 1.* Students' attitudes towards the VBC course in terms of cognition, emotion, and behavior

Item		N=125	
		M	SD
Cognition	1. The use of videos attracts my attention and participation in this course.	4.23	.77
	4. Watching videos improve my listening and speaking skills.	3.98	.80
	3. Watching videos will help me get good scores.	3.50	.96
	2. The use of videos facilitates my learning performance.	3.16	.97

<b>Average</b>		<b>3.72</b>	<b>.49</b>
Emotion	6. I feel comfortable when watching these videos.	3.84	.91
	5. I enjoy video-related activities in this course.	3.69	.99
	8. I like the follow-up exercises of videos.	3.40	.85
	7. I like to watch video sections as required.	3.23	.91
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.54</b>	<b>.50</b>
Behavior	9. I pay attention to the video lessons in class.	3.06	.83
	11. I practice the follow-up activities after watching videos.	3.05	.76
	10. I spend a lot of time watching videos outside the classroom.	2.98	.93
	12. I search for more videos besides the scheduled ones to gain knowledge.	2.75	.86
<b>Average</b>		<b>2.96</b>	<b>.45</b>

*Note: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neutral, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree*

Likewise, most of the interviewees (83.3%) had positive thinking about the VBC course. SI4 revealed, for example, that she liked to learn the lesson through videos rather than through the textbook because she could memorize the lesson well thanks to images. Another informant asserted, “video-watching is an intriguing time throughout the BC course” (SI7). In addition, three interviewees (SI3, SI10, & SI12) admitted that their English skills, especially listening and speaking skills considerably improved. Concerning score enhancement, approximately 50% of the informants attributed their good achievements to video-watching. SI8 explained, “watching videos inside and outside classroom helps me do the tests well because I can fully understand the content of the lesson though real-life situations in videos.” In this sense, the results were found in a few previous studies (e.g., Boateng, et al., 2016; Grandon, 2014; Lonergan, 1985). Despite the aforementioned merits, however, two participants (SI5 & SI10) thought that videos could make their learning easier. One of them straightforwardly revealed that she was unfamiliar with the application of videos in class; as a result, she needed to work harder in the first three week. Then she knew how to handle them well with the teacher’s counselling.

As far as the respondents’ feelings of the VBC course was concerned, item 6 implying that watching videos offered a comfort to most of them constituted the highest mean score ( $M=3.84$ ,  $SD=.91$ ). A few interviewees (SI2, SI5, SI9, & SI12) disclosed with great pleasure that they regarded watching videos in class as movie-watching time at the cinema. SI5 added, “this activity creates a pressure-free learning atmosphere during this course as we have not taken any courses where videos are used as an obligatory learning material from the beginning to the end.” They also found it interesting to watch videos and do video-related activities in the course (item 5:  $M=3.69$ ,  $SD=.99$ ). Qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interview provided various reasons for such a fascinating the VBC course (e.g., real-life situations, follow-up discussion, role-play, presentation, and story-telling).

When asked about their preference for video exercises and required video sections, furthermore, they showed a little affection for the former with the moderate mean score

(item 8:  $M=3.40$ ,  $SD=.85$ ) which was between 4.00 (*agree*) and 3.00 (*neutral*), whereas the mean score of the latter was slightly lower (item 7:  $M=3.23$ ,  $SD=.91$ ). Concerning the possible causes contributing to the results, a big number of the interviewees pinpointed that the seem-to-be-unchanged format of the tasks (i.e., before you watch, while you watch & after you watch) was major reason, which partly reduced their creativity and curiosity. SI7 frankly admitted, “if the exercises were used solely, they would be so boring. Thanks to the varied methods, the class tends to be more motivating.” Similarly, Boateng et al. (2016) found out that the participants held a negative attitude towards the uninteresting content and the repeated format of videos. In order to attract learners’ attention and participation, therefore, there should be a wide range of exercises and activities (Allan, 1991).

With respect to their behavior in the VBC course, compared to students’ concentration on in-class video lessons (item 9) and their practice of follow-up activities (item 11) which had nearly the same mean scores ( $M=3.06$ ,  $SD=.83$ ;  $M=3.05$ ,  $SD=.76$  respectively), their spending extra time for watching videos (item 10:  $M=2.98$ ,  $SD=.93$ ) and looking for extra videos outside the classroom (item 12:  $M=2.75$ ,  $SD=.86$ ) received lower mean scores. That is to say, the participants tended to choose in-class activities rather than out-of-class ones as their first priority. The findings gained from the interview to some extent justified the quantitative data. Some explained that their time budget was too limited to spare time for extra activities. Some attributed their hesitation in looking for extra videos to watch to laziness. Noticeably, they believed that videos used in class were more well-chosen and reliable than those selected by themselves. It can be inferred that they are doubtful about their knowledge as well as experience to choose videos appropriate for the course.

#### 4.2. Students’ attitudes towards video-based learning tasks

Table 2 illustrated the participants’ opinions of their preferred learning activities in the VBC course. In general, the participants were more likely to choose collaborative activities such as group work or pair work than individual work. More specifically, the first position was occupied by group discussion with a high proportion (77.6%). The reasons for this choice were provided through the interview. Most of the advocates agreed that they could learn more from their partners when working in group. Apart from knowledge gained during group work, for instance, they learned how to negotiate and tolerate with one another, how to make a decision, how to lead a group, how to deal with stress, etc. In addition, three interviewees (SI6, SI8, & SI11) claimed that their critical thinking was significantly increasing during the course. The same results related to the correlation between group work and critical thinking can be found in other studies (e.g., Dennis & Christine, 2014; Dennis et al., 2016). Undoubtedly, group discussion is beneficial to the participants who achieved not only knowledge but also necessary skills.

Table 2. Students’ ideas about their favorite activities

No.	Tasks	N=125	
		<i>F</i>	%
1	Group discussion	97	77.6



2	Role-play	68	54.4
3	Conversation	53	42.4
4	Oral presentation	34	27.2
5	Story-telling	11	8.8

Role-play and conversation also constituted quite high percentages at 54.4% and 42.4% respectively. This means that the respondents were into these activities. The quantitative data were confirmed by the information collected through the interview. Approximately two-thirds of the interviewees thought that role-play increased their interaction and creativity thanks to real-life situations. This finding was in a similar vein with some previous studies (e.g., Duong, 2014; Krebt, 2017). Regarding the benefits of role-play in an EFL classroom, Ladousse (1992) pinpoints that role play is one of the communicative techniques which promote interaction in the classroom. In terms of conversation, half of the informants opted for this activity as it encouraged them to express themselves more easily. In fact, it is believed that conversation provides opportunities for learners to practice their speaking skill through communicative tasks (Bygate, 1997; Klippel, 1991).

Meanwhile, only 27.2% of the surveyed students reported that they were fond of oral presentation, and very few participants (8.8%) showed their affection for story-telling. The fact that the students did not keen on working on their own was responsible for the modest proportions. SI5 explained, “I do not really like telling the video-based story because it is kind of uninspiring to work alone” while two other interviewees viewed oral presentation that was followed by group discussion as a tedious leaning activity in the VBC course. According to Brown and Yule (1989), interactional function of spoken language is to maintain social relationships, which promotes learners’ participation. Therefore, it can be inferred that it was little interaction that decreased their excitement about these activities.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study generally showed the third-year English majors’ positive attitude in terms of cognition, emotion, and behavior towards the use of videos in Business Communication course. Firstly, the students thought that videos really enabled them to take this BC course in an effective and interesting way. More specifically, videos helped them pay much attention to the lessons and improve their scores as well as language skills. Nevertheless, they were skeptical about the fact that videos may facilitate their learning because of their unfamiliarity with the video-based learning. Secondly, they felt relaxed and excited to watch videos and do activities relating to the content of the videos except for the almost fixed structure of the follow-up exercises. Last but not least, they preferred the activities carried out inside the classroom to those done outside the classroom because of time limit, laziness, and more importantly lack of experience and knowledge. Regarding the participants’ favorable learning activities, group discussion, role-play and conversation outweighed oral presentation and story-telling as working with others brought them more benefits than doing so on their own.

In order to facilitate the employment of video in an EFL classroom, some implications for EFL teachers are provided as follows. First of all, video is regarded as a digital genre which gives EFL learners space for exposure to spoken English (ref). Accordingly, learners can learn a variety of English through such a technological tool. To this end, it is suggested that authentic materials should be utilized during the course. Second, collaboration between learners needs to be promoted, which may assist each of them to get more involved in the learning process. Last but not least, out-of-class videos should be accompanied by in-class ones to develop life-long learning.

As per the findings presented earlier, it is undeniable that this study may contribute to language education in EFL contexts, especially in Vietnam; however, there exist some unavoidable limitations (e.g., limited time, lack of reliability and validity). Due to the time constraint, the author could not employ other instruments (e.g., pre-test, post-test, observation and journals) resulting in more convincing results. It is hoped that, therefore, the future research will be conducted with the employment of the suggested instruments to investigate students' language skills development apart from their attitudes. Moreover, the comparison between teachers' and students' perceptions of the VBC course should be taken into account.

### Acknowledgments

The authors would like to send our heartfelt thanks to the research participants, who offered us great cooperation with the data collection for the paper. Without their help, this paper would not have been done.

### References

- Allan, M. (1991). **Teaching English with Video**. UK: Longman.
- Barnard, R., & Cady, J. (2009). **Business Venture 2**. Oxford: OUP.
- Boateng, R., Boateng, S. L., Awuah, R. B., Ansong, E., & Anderson, A. B. (2016). **Videos in learning in higher education: Assessing perceptions and attitudes of students at the University of Ghana**. *Smart Learning Environments*, 3(1), 1-13.
- Brown, G. B. & Yule, G. (1989). **Teaching Spoken Language**. Cambridge: CUP.
- Bygate, M. (1997). **Speaking**. Oxford: OUP.
- Dennis, C. F., & Christine H. (2014). **Group work and the learning of critical thinking in the Hong Kong secondary liberal studies curriculum**. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 44:2, 245-270, DOI: 10.1080/0305764X.2014.897685.
- Dennis, C. F., Helen T., & Kit L. (2016). **The influence of collaborative group work on students' development of critical thinking: The teacher's role in facilitating group discussions**, *Pedagogies. An International Journal*, 11:2, 146-166, DOI: 10.1080/1554480X.2016.1159965.
- Duong, T. M. (2014). **An investigation into effects of role-play in an EFL speaking course**. *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 4 (2), 81-91.
- Grandon, M. (2014). **Exploring student attitudes towards video-based lessons**. *Studies in International Relations*, 34(2), 97-105.
- Harmer, J. (1998). **How to Teach English**. UK: Longman.

- Klippel, F. (1991). **Keep Talking: Communicative Fluency Activities for Language Teaching**. Cambridge: CUP.
- Krebt, D. M. (2017). **The Effectiveness of Role Play Techniques in Teaching Speaking for EFL College Students**. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8(5), 863-870.
- Ladousse, G. P. (1992). **Role play**. Oxford: OUP.
- Lonergan, J. (1985). **Video in Language Learning**. Cambridge: CUP.
- Mathews, A., & Spratt, M. & Dangerfield, L. (1991). **At the Chalkface: Practical Techniques in Language Teaching**. UK: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd.
- Tran, H. K. (2004). **The Leading Factors to Success for Speaking Classes of English Majors at Binh Duong University** (Master Thesis). HCMC: USSH.
- Vo, O. T. P. (2005). **How to Improve the Teaching and Learning of Spoken English to Pre-intermediate English Learners at AFU Foreign Language Centre** (Master Thesis). HCMC: USSH.

## Appendix

### A. Before you watch

#### Conversation 1:

meeting everyone	Let me know	anything else	I'll put you through	Who's calling please
------------------	-------------	---------------	----------------------	----------------------

Operator: Powerglide Systems

Ernesto: I'd like to speak to Emma Wood.

Operator: (1).....?

Ernesto: Ernesto Garrone

Operator: One moment. (2).....

...

Emma: Was there (3)..... ?

Ernesto: No, that's everything, I think.

Emma: (4)..... if there's anything else we can do.

Ernesto: Thank you.

Emma: Until Thursday at round eleven, then

Ernesto: I'm looking forward to (5) .....

Emma: Thank you for calling. Goodbye.

#### Conversation 2:

how about	going to	that would be possible	Shall we say	instead
-----------	----------	------------------------	--------------	---------

Kjell: Could we meet on Friday (6).....?

Emma: He's (7)..... the Peterborough plant.

Kjell: I know, but (8) ..... a breakfast meeting?

Emma: Yes, (9).....

Kjell: (10) .....8:30 at the Dorchester?

Emma: yes, ok.

#### Conversation 3:

is bringing	showing	not at all	would suit	Would you prefer
-------------	---------	------------	------------	------------------

Emma: Mr Garrone (11) ..... a colleague - a Mrs Agnelli. Would you mind (12)..... her the rolling mill in operation?

Michael: No, (13) .....

Emma: That's very good of you.

Michael: (14) When..... you best?

Emma: Some time on Thursday, if possible. (15) .....the morning or afternoon?

Michael: The afternoon, I think.

### B. While you watch

**SECTION ONE** (up to **Edward**: Thank you. Goodbye.)

Watch section one and tick the correct box.

- a. Edward Green is using .....  
☐ office phone                      ☐ cell phone
- b. Don Bradley ..... talk to Phil Watson.  
☐ can                      ☐ can't
- c. Don would like to .....  
☐ leave a message    ☐ talk to Phil direct
- d. Phil's cell phone number is .....  
☐ 08 02 543 77        ☐ 0802 453 77
- e. Phil's cell phone is .....  
☐ with him                ☐ in the car
- f. What does Don want Phil to do?  
☐ see a new product   ☐ see him
- g. It can be inferred that Edward will .....  
☐ ring/ call later        ☐ send the product specifications

## SECTION TWO (to the end of the episode)

Read the sentences. Watch and mark the sentences true (T) or false (F). Then correct the incorrect information.

- a. \_\_\_ There is someone called Peter Toyama in his room.
- b. \_\_\_ The caller has the right extension.
- c. \_\_\_ The secretary thinks that Mr Smith is busy all today and tomorrow.
- d. \_\_\_ Kate hasn't finished the sales report used for the presentation to Mr Sakai yet.
- e. \_\_\_ Mr Clark will hold to meet someone.
- f. \_\_\_ Edward thinks that Mr Smith is still at work and his secretary is too.
- g. \_\_\_ Mr Smith says that he has already had the products he needs.

## C. After you watch

### • Telephone quiz

1. Think of another way of saying:

- a. Is it possible to speak to...? .....
- b. I'll connect you. ....
- c. Just a minute. ....
- d. The line is busy. ....

2. Choose the polite reply in each of these conversations.

- a. Can I speak to Loretta?  
☐ Who are you please?        ☐ Who's calling please?
- b. Could I have your name please?  
☐ Yes, I'm Anna Long.        ☐ Yes, it's Anna Long.
- c. This is Terry Rance  
☐ Sorry?                      ☐ Repeat, please.
- d. Is she free on Friday?  
☐ No, she isn't.                ☐ I'm afraid not.
- e. Would morning or afternoon suit you best?  
☐ I don't mind.                ☐ I don't care.
- f. The line is still busy. Do you want to wait?

☐ Yes, please.

☐ Yes, I do.

- **Discuss the following questions**

1. Who has a successful phone call? Who not?
2. Why do you think Mr Smith's secretary doesn't want Edward talk to him?
3. Do you think that Edward can persuade Mr Smith to give him an appointment? Why?

- Practice (Role play)

*Student A: You receive a call and take a message for **Paula**. Change the roles. Now you call **Leonardo** to talk about something important, but he isn't there. You leave a message with the following information.*

Name: Mrs. .... Simpson Address: ..... Street Phone number: Email address: ..... Message: ..... .....	Name: Mr. Greg Wilton Address: 131 Tall Street Phone number: 01 38 79 20 61 Email address: <a href="mailto:gwilton@gcs.net">gwilton@gcs.net</a> Message: invite <b>Leonardo</b> to a football match at 5pm on March 21 <sup>st</sup>
--	--

*Student B: You call **Paula** to talk about something important, but she isn't there. You leave a message with the following information. Change the roles. Now you receive a call and take a message for **Leonardo**.*

Name: Mrs. Jennifer Simpson Address: 170 Bell Street Phone number: 001 56 22 38 Email address: jsimpson@ccc.net Message: Talk to <b>Paula</b> about the change of the meeting room (from 201 to 203)	Name: Mr. .... Wilton Address: ..... Street Phone number: ..... Email address: ..... Message: ..... .....
--	--

# **EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN THE CLASSROOM: A CASE OF HIGH SCHOOLS IN VINH LONG PROVINCE**

**Ta Thi Thanh Lan**

Nguyen Binh Khiem High School for the Gifted, Vinh Long Province, Viet Nam

**Doan Thi Loan**

The Southern Transport College, Can Tho City, Viet Nam

**Thai Cong Dan**

Can Tho University, Can Tho City, Viet Nam

**Phan Thi Phuong Lan**

Huynh Man Dat High School for the Gifted, Kien Giang Province, Vietnam

## **Abstract**

The importance of formative assessment in facilitating students' learning has been well established in the literature. However, defining and implementing formative assessment in the classroom is a complicated task. This study aims to (1) investigate EFL teachers' beliefs of using formative assessment in the classroom (2) to find out the tools for formative assessment used by EFL teachers in the classroom. The methodology employed in this study is a multi-method approach. Views of teachers were gathered using a self-completed questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Participants were fifty high school teachers in Vinh Long province. The results indicated that most participant teachers had positive attitudes towards formative assessment. They believed that the basics of formative assessment such as feedback, sharing learning goals, questioning and self-peer assessment should be applied in their classrooms. In addition, in spite of having positive beliefs towards formative assessment, teachers did not apply formative assessment very frequently in their classroom.

**Keywords:** *EFL teachers' belief and practice, formative assessment*

## **1. Introduction**

The process of understanding students and responding to their needs plays an important role in the success of teaching and learning. In recent years, researchers have stressed the role of assessment in this process. Assessment is really vital to the process of education. In schools, the most visible assessments are summative. However, assessment also serves a formative function. In classroom, formative assessment refers to frequent, interactive assessments of student progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately. Teachers using formative assessment techniques are better prepared to meet diverse students' needs. Over the past few years, there is a growing emphasis on the use of formative assessment. However, formative assessment has remained "an enigma in the literature" (Black & William, 1998). Therefore, it is necessary to do research on teachers' formative assessment practices in the classroom.

## **2. Literature Review**

Teacher's beliefs- the term usually used to refer to teachers' pedagogic beliefs or beliefs of relevance to an individual's teaching. According to Pajares (1992), he stated that "teachers' beliefs have a greater influence than the teachers' knowledge on the way teachers plan their lessons, on the kinds of decisions they make, and on their general classroom practice ... teachers can identify the level of students' capacities ... select and adjust their

behavior and instructional choice accordingly” (pp.231-234). In the same way, Xu (2012) found that teachers’ beliefs were “far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems ... tend to be culturally bound, to be formed early in life and to be resistant to change” (p.1399). Tackling the issue from another angle, Davis & Andrzejewski (2009) noted that teachers’ beliefs are a form of subjective reality: What they believe is real and true. In other words, teachers’ beliefs have an influence on many aspects of the teachers such as teachers’ ‘consciousness, teaching attitude, teaching methods and teaching policy.

There has been much work on defining what assessment is. Many researchers such as Black and William, Bachman, Huhta or Berry have proposed the definitions of assessment. Black and William (1998) hold the view that “teachers should see assessment as a tool to promote greater student achievement in the classroom context” (p. 49). In this sense, assessment is a part of the teaching and learning process and is taken to support learning. Similarly, Bachman (2004) defined assessment as “a process of collecting information about something that we are interested in, according to procedures that are systematic and substantially grounded” (pp.6-7).

Formative assessment as Lewy (1990) confirmed, does not have a precise definition. Because the focus of this study is related to formative assessment, the researcher will spend more time on this. The term *formative assessment* is not used consistently in the literature (Bennett, 2011). There are some terms used interchangeably with formative assessment such as Classroom Evaluation (Crooks, 1988), Learning- Oriented Assessment (Pryor & Crossouard, 2008), Alternative Assessment (Berry, 2008), Assessment for Learning (Asghar, 2010) or Classroom-Based Language Assessment (Stoynoff, 2012). According to Black (1986), “formative assessment involves a close relationship between teachers and pupils and a key characteristic is that the assessment information used by both teacher and pupils to modify their work in order to make it more effective” (p.9). In a similar vein, Tunstall and Gipps (1996) claimed that formative assessment means teachers using their judgments of children knowledge or understanding to feedback into the teaching process and to determine for individual children whether to re-explain the task/concept, to give further practice on it or move on the next stage. To apply formative assessment effectively in the classroom, teachers have to know about formative assessment principles so that they can optimize the opportunities for gathering evidence. In so doing, it helps improve students’ learning process. Black and William (1998) “set out four main headings for formative assessment practice: sharing learning goals, questioning, self/ peer assessment and feedback” (p.28). To be more specific, sharing learning goals means that teachers give students an opportunity to get involved in what they are learning through discussing and deciding the criteria for success, which they can then use to recognize proof of improvement. Hence, information about learning objectives as well as success criteria needs to be presented in clear, explicit language which students can understand. Next, questioning is an important element in formative assessment. The quality of the questions has a great effect on the quality of the assessment. In addition, self/ peer assessment is another key aspect of the teaching and learning process. Assessment can contribute powerfully to the educational development of students if students are supported to examine and comment on their own work. Feedback is also a key element for formative assessment. Feedback can be found in various contexts but mainly occurs through teachers’ comments on individuals’ performance on tasks during the class.

In the past, assessment tools were chosen at the level of the Ministry of Education, school administration or program coordinator. However, with the advent of learner-centered and communicative teaching methodologies, there is a shift in how teachers assess



their students. Berry (2008) emphasized that it is impossible to make a complete list of formative assessment strategies As long as the strategy informs student learning and is not traditional test-based assessment. He grouped alternative assessment strategies into broad categories according to their most distinctive characteristics. By their nature, alternative assessment can be classified into “product” and “performance”. Specifically, formative strategies which are more product-oriented require students to produce or create something to demonstrate their understanding of the learning intentions. The outcome of the learning process is usually referred to as the “product” of learning. The examples of alternative assessment strategies include portfolios, journals, observations, exhibitions, oral presentations, experiments, interviews and projects. In contrast, alternative assessment strategies which are more performance-based require the performers or students to perform some kinds of task which are judged against some pre-established criteria. The strategies used for assessment of students’ performances are often observation, with an understanding that other strategies can also be used. There’s been a lot of confusion regarding the construction of the performance-based assessment and the product based assessment. Confusion starts with the lack of understanding with regards to the definition and application of these two authentic assessments. When we say **performance-based assessment**, *we refer to the type of assessment that mainly focuses on the ability of the students to arrive or produce or demonstrate their own learning.* While in the **product-based assessment**, you are focusing on the product your learner was able to come up with. It can be seen that many of the assessment techniques or tools discussed by many researchers above have something in common. They can be intergraded into daily classroom activities and give a comprehensive picture of the students’ performance. Almost all can be used with a little modification. A few are better for either younger or more sophisticated learners. There is also a need for teachers to use a variety of tools of formative assessment, especially non-threatening informal techniques.

### 3. Research Questions

The researcher attempted to find out answers to the following questions:

1. What are EFL teachers’ beliefs of using formative assessment in the classroom?
2. What tools are used for formative assessment by EFL teachers?

### 4. Methodology

#### 4.1. Participants

The participants were fifty high school English language teachers working at different high schools in Vinh Long province. They were randomly selected from 220 high school English teachers of the province. Fifty teachers come from seven different high schools in Vinh Long province: three schools in urban areas and 4 schools in suburban areas. To be more specific, there are twenty-five teachers (50%) teaching in urban areas and twenty-five teachers (50%) in suburban areas.

The reason for choosing teachers teaching at different areas in Vinh Long was that the researcher wanted to identify whether there were any differences in applying formative assessment between the teachers in rural areas and those in urban areas. Moreover, most of the teachers (46) were female (92%); only four teachers were male (8%), and all of them taught in public schools.

The participant teachers were investigated in terms of their student numbers because the number of students per class is one of the factors affecting their practices of formative assessment in the classroom.

**Table 1: Overall information about the number of students in the classroom**

	<i>Number of students</i>			<i>Total</i>
	20-30	30-40	>40	
<b><i>Frequency</i></b>	0	44	6	50
<b><i>Percent %</i></b>	00	88	12	100%

According to Table 1, there was no teacher out of 50 (0%) who had a class with 10-20 students. 44 teachers (88%) had 30-40 students in their classes. On the other hand, 6 teachers (12%) had classes consisting of more than 40 students- a class which could be regarded as a crowded classroom. In general, it can be said that most of the teachers had more students in their classes than in an average classroom.

#### 4.2. Instruments

##### 4.2.1. Questionnaire

In order to gain insights into teachers' beliefs of formative assessment as well as their practices in the classrooms, the questionnaire was developed on the basis of literature review. It is based on the framework of Black and William (1998). This enabled "the researcher to collect data quickly and time need to code answers was kept to a minimum" (Lederman et al., 2002, p.503). One more reason is that the samples for the research were scattered all over a province (high school teachers in Vinh Long province). Therefore, a questionnaire was considered to be the suitable tool for data gathering (Burns, 1997; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). After reviewing the related literature, items addressing the issues such as teachers' class size, average number of students, years of teaching experience and their ideas as well as applications of formative assessment were included in the questionnaire. The first version of the questionnaire was piloted with 10 teachers of English working at 2 different high schools in Vinh Long (Pham Hung high school and Vinh Long high school). After analyzing the responses and suggestions of the teachers, some questionnaire items, which were analyzed using SPSS 17 to calculate statistics, were omitted or removed, some items remained unchanged. In addition to this, the questionnaire was also sent to the supervisor of this study. Basing on the supervisor's feedback, the researcher made some changes for the questionnaire. Specifically, there are four items were removed and 5 items were reworded. As a result, the final version of the questionnaire consists of 40 items. The items were Likert-scale type in each section. The details of the questionnaire will be described below. *The questionnaire has three main sections:*

The first section (section A) includes 6 questions asking about participants' background information such as gender, age, school, professional qualification, years of teaching experience, and the number of students in each class.

The second section (section B) comprises 16 items in the 5-point Likert Scale form (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). It has 4 clusters including sharing learning goals (item 1, 2, 4, 5), questioning (item 3, 6, 7, 8), peer/self assessment (item 9, 13, 14, 15) and feedback (item 10, 11, 12, 16). Among them, two items (item 1 and item 12) are double-checked. It aims to collect information on teachers' beliefs of formative assessment in the classroom.

The third section (section C) consists of 24 items in the 5-point Likert Scale form (frequently, often, sometimes, seldom, never). It includes two clusters: product-based assessment (item 26,27,32,33,35,36,38,39,40) and performance-based assessment

(item17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25, 28,29,30,31,34,37). It aims to find out teachers' practices of formative assessment. Specifically, the frequency of each selected formative assessment tools used by teachers in the classroom.

Furthermore, the results of piloting confirmed the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability Analysis on 40 items showed that the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was acceptable ( $\alpha = .76$ ). In addition to this, the researcher also received corrective feedback for this questionnaire from the supervisor, her colleagues as well as classmates. Therefore, it is assured that this instrument was reliable to collect the data for the research.

#### 4.2.2. Semi-structured interview

In order to enrich research results and provide more insights on specific formative assessment principles, a semi-structured interview was used in this research. The semi-structured interview enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth statements of preferences, opinions and experience about formative assessment. The researcher interviewed randomly four participants including two teachers teaching in the urban areas and two teaching in the suburban areas.

In the research, the participants were asked similar questions with the questionnaire. All the questions are about participants' beliefs and practices of formative assessment. However, the researcher suggested some sub-questions so that the participants could give answers easily. For example, when interviewing a participant, the researcher provided some suggested questions (sub-questions) for the participants:

*Researcher: What do you know about formative assessment in general?*

*Participants: .....*

*Researcher: When do you assess your students?*

*Do you think formative assessment is useful for the teaching and learning process?*

### 4.3. Data analysis

#### 4.3.1. Questionnaire

The quantitative data were employed as a main feature. To be more specific, the SPSS statistical software was run to investigate teachers' beliefs and practices of formative assessment. Below is a description of kinds of tests that the researcher ran in the study with the help of SPSS statistical software (version 17).

First of all, a scale test was run to check the reliability of the questionnaire. Then, the descriptive statistics test was run to find out the average level of participants' beliefs and practices of formative assessment. Next, One Sample T-test was used to compare one mean score to the test value. Besides, in order to compare the mean score of each cluster, the researcher also used Paired Samples- T test. Finally, Independent samples T-test was run to check the difference between teachers in urban areas and those in suburban areas of the beliefs and practices of formative assessment in the classroom. For all analyses, differences were considered the most highly significant if  $p < .05$  and vice versa.

#### 4.3.2. Semi-structured interview

For qualitative analysis, in order to produce the most effective results, the researcher should have the necessary skills to be able to condense reorganize related information from the data collected in the study (Thomas & Peterson, 2012). Therefore, the notes of each

interview session were hand-written and transcribed immediately after each interview. Data collected during the interview were reviewed and transcribed. The transcripts of the interview went through careful analysis and interpretation. Besides, the tapes were listened to several times in order to transcribe them correctly. In addition, the transcripts were reread several times so that important information would not be excluded.

## 5. Results and Discussions

### 5.1. Teachers' beliefs of formative assessment in the classroom

To measure teachers' beliefs of formative assessment in the classroom, the 16 items questionnaire was used. Participants selected their answers by marking a scale of individual item ranging from *strongly disagrees* to *strongly agree*. Teachers' beliefs of formative assessment were analyzed by *Descriptive Statistics Test and One Sample t-Test*. First of all, the descriptive statistics test was run to find out the average level of participants' beliefs of formative assessment. Table 2 displays the results of the *Descriptive Statistics Test*.

**Table 2: Teachers' beliefs of formative assessment in the classroom**

	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
<i>Teachers' beliefs</i>	50	3.19	4.63	3.82	.28

From the table, it can be seen that the mean score of teachers' beliefs of formative assessment is ( $M = 3.82$ ). Next, the *One sample t-test* was conducted on teachers' attitudes scales towards formative assessment. This test evaluated whether their mean was significantly different from 3.8, the accepted mean for teachers' positive attitudes toward formative assessment in general. The sample mean ( $M = 3.82$ ) was no significantly different from 3.8, ( $t = .591$ ,  $df = 49$ ,  $p = .557$ ). The result supports the conclusion that teachers have positive attitudes towards formative assessment. In other words, teachers typically believe that formative assessment can be useful in their classroom settings. This result also supports the first hypothesis of the study. EFL teachers have positive attitudes towards formative assessment. They believe that the basics of formative assessment should be applied in their classroom.

### 5.2. Teachers' beliefs of each principle of formative assessment

To analyze teachers' beliefs of each principle of formative assessment (sharing learning goals, questioning, self/peer assessment, and feedback) the researcher used *Descriptive Statistic Test* to see teachers' beliefs of each principle of formative assessment. Table 3 shows the results of this test.

**Table 3: Teachers' beliefs of four principles of formative assessment**

Principles of formative assessment	N	Min.	Max.	Mean (M)	SD
Sharing learning goals	50	3.00	5.00	4.09	.46
Questioning	50	3.25	4.70	4.20	.40
Self/peer assessment	50	3.00	4.75	3.80	.42
Feedback	50	2.25	4.75	3.33	.60

As can be observed from table 3, among four principles of formative assessment, participants favored and highly appreciated questioning more than sharing learning goals, self-peer assessment and feedback. The mean score of questioning ( $M = 4.20$ ) is higher than that of sharing learning goals ( $M = 4.09$ ), self/peer assessment ( $M = 3.8$ ), and feedback

(3.33). It can be observed that the participants were fond of questioning most and feedback least.

After collecting the data from the questionnaire, the semi-structured interview was made aimed at getting more insights into teachers' beliefs of formative assessment. General results from the semi-structured interview showed that all of four teachers had positive attitude towards formative assessment. They strongly agreed that formative assessment had positive effects on teaching and learning process. Teacher B (from urban area) emphasized that formative assessment can benefit both students and teachers; it can provide evidence about student learning.

It is evident from the interview that the teachers had positive attitudes and values towards using formative assessment in the classroom, but they had a fairly narrow view of what actually constitutes formative assessment and the teacher role in it.

In general, the teachers had complex conceptions of assessment and claimed to use different forms of assessment to achieve different purposes. They were unable to explicitly describe what they did in the classroom that could count as formative assessment.

### 5.3. Insights into teachers' beliefs of four principles of formative assessment

It would take further in-depth investigation and analysis of the principles of formative assessment. The teachers were asked to express their thoughts about each principle of formative assessment (sharing learning goals, questioning, self/peer assessment and feedback). It is obvious that the teachers had different ideas about the importance of each principle. Generally, they believed that the basics of formative assessment such as feedback, sharing learning goals, questioning and self-peer assessment should be applied in their classrooms. However, each teacher had their own preference for each formative assessment principle. There were two teachers expressing their favor for questioning. They believed that questioning is the most important among the four principles. One teacher favored sharing learning goals and one teacher supported self/peer assessment. These beliefs can be seen in their interviews. Teacher A and Teacher B (from the urban area) expressed their thoughts about the importance of questioning. Specifically, among 4 principles, they strongly believed that questioning was the most useful and most important. They liked asking questions to their students.

On the other hand, Teacher D (from suburban area) found using peer/self-assessment in her classroom very useful and it was the most powerful one among four principles of formative assessment. He said that students were very reliable when they evaluated their own and their friends' work. In some cases, they were even harder than teachers in assessing their own work. Therefore, he supported peer/self-assessment.

Teacher C had another idea; she agreed with Teacher D that peer-/self-assessment was useful. However, she emphasized that sharing learning goals was more important.

Also, Teacher A argued for the importance of sharing learning goals. She did not support the idea that the learning objectives as well as assessment criteria should be shared with students because she thought that her students came from different backgrounds with various abilities and skills, if she set the criteria for good students, she wouldn't know how many of the rest students would be able to reach that level.

It is obvious that all the teachers were aware of the value of formative assessment for both themselves and their students. The findings described above highlight teachers' beliefs of formative assessment in general as well as their attitude towards formative assessment principles in particular. It is apparent that the teachers placed emphasis on

questioning rather than other principles of formative assessment. Whether these beliefs are consistent with their practices of formative assessment in the classroom or not, it will be represented in the following sections.

#### 5.4. Teachers' practices of formative assessment in the classroom

To measure teachers' practices of formative assessment in the classroom, specifically, the frequency on how often formative assessment tools were used by teachers in the classroom, the 24 item questionnaire was used.. Participants were selected their answers by marking a scale of individual item, ranging from *frequently* to *never*.

Teachers' practices of formative assessment were analyzed by *Descriptive Statistic Test and One Sample t- Test*. First of all, the descriptive statistics test was run to find out the average level of teachers' practices of formative assessment. The results of the *Descriptive Statistic Test* were shown in *Table 4*.

**Table 4: Teachers' practices of formative assessment in the classroom**

	N	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
Teachers' practices	50	2.50	4.50	3.28	.46

From the table, we can see that the mean score of the questionnaire is ( $M = 3.28$ ). Next, the *One sample t-test* was conducted on teachers' practices of formative assessment. This test evaluated whether their mean was significantly different from 3.0, the accepted mean for teachers' practices of formative assessment in general. The sample mean ( $M = 3.28$ ) was significantly different from 3.0, ( $t = -10.95$ ,  $df = 49$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The results indicated that teachers' practices of formative assessment are not often. The teachers lacked awareness on the concept of formative assessment and failed to understand it as an important means of promoting and encouraging language learning. As a result, they did not use them very frequently in their teaching.

#### 5.5. Teachers' practices of each type of formative assessment tools

There are two types of formative assessment tools: performance-based assessment tools and product based assessment tools. In order to check whether there were any differences between teachers' practices of performance-based assessment tools and those of product-based assessment tools, a *Paired Sample T-test* was used.

A Paired Sample T-test was run to check the difference between teachers' practices of performance-based assessment tools and those of product-based assessment tools . Table 5 displays the mean score of teachers' practices of performance-based assessment tools and those of product-based assessment tools.

**Table 5: Teachers' practices of each type of formative assessment**

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Product-based assessment tools	50	2.95	.549
Performance-based assessment tools	50	3.55	.443

The table show the Mean for ( $M_{pro} = 2.95$ ;  $M_{per} = 3.55$ ). The results indicated that the differences between teachers' practices of performance-based assessment tools and their practices of product-based assessment tools were observed ( $t = -13.07$ ,  $df = 49$ ,  $p = .000$ ). It was seen that the teachers use performance-based assessment tools more frequently than product-based assessment tools. In other words, the teachers had a

preference for performance-based assessment tools rather than product-based assessment tools.

The teachers were interviewed about the formative assessment tools that they often used as well as the frequency on how often these tools were used in their classroom. In general, the teachers used different forms of formative assessment in the classroom. However, most of the teachers had a preference for performance-based assessment tools rather than product-based assessment ones. Their responses on this issue were almost similar. Among four teachers, three said that they often used observation, questioning and feedback in order to assess their students' learning in the classroom.

In order to make sure that teachers really used these tools in their classroom and used them effectively, the teachers were also asked to explain exactly what they did in relation to formative assessment in the classroom. It can be seen that teachers had basic knowledge about the tools they use. For example, when asked to talk about how they use questioning in their classroom. All teachers reported that raising different forms of questions was very important. Most of the teachers agreed that the content and the targets of the questions changed when the lesson progressed. At the beginning of the lesson, it aimed at linking the previous lesson with the new one. During instruction, teachers use questions to check whether their students understood the task or not. At the end of the lesson, questions were used to review, to check whether teachers attained the lesson's objectives. However, when putting it into practice, the teachers had their own ways of making questions: (1) opened-ended questions helped develop students' critical thinking and related the knowledge to daily life; (2) closed and low-level questioning such as recalling facts, rules or dates were made for low-level students. Generally, oral questioning was identified as one of the dimensions of formative assessment, and this result supports previous research regarding the importance of oral questioning by Hargreaves (2005) and Sato et al. (2008).

It was also applicable to observation; the teacher also gained the feedback from the children by observing their reactions, their body language as well as from what they had said. Most of the teachers agreed that they would adjust their teaching according to the reactions and signals they received from their students during the lesson.

It is apparent that teachers used observation tool rather effectively in the classroom. They knew how to collect the information or evidence from the students and use this information to adjust their teaching in order to better their students' learning. However, one of the teachers explained that although she knew her students' problem by observing their behaviors, she could not do anything but continuing the lesson. The reason was that she always had the time pressure.

Apart from questioning and observation, the teachers also made extensive use of feedback in their teaching. All the teachers emphasized that they used both verbal and written feedback to their students' work, and they found it really useful for their students' learning.

Nevertheless, when required to describe how to give feedback to students in class, the teachers could not explain them clearly. Their feedbacks were often too general and short. In addition to this, they did not provide any explanations in relation to strengths and weakness of the work done. They often used short comments such as "Very good", "Well done" or "You should try harder". In fact, praise can make students feel good but it does not help their learning unless it is explicit about what the students has done well. It can be seen that these comments would not say much or anything about their students' learning

progress. In reality, students need comments to be more specific to better their learning, but it is difficult to give written or verbal feedback to each student individually and control this assessment process due to crowded classroom setting.

In fact, teachers failed to give timely feedback for their students. Two teachers mentioned time constraint as a reason for this and the other teachers took class size as a reason. Therefore, it was clear that the teachers often used feedback in teaching, but it was not as effective as expected. They were reluctant to give timely feedback to their students. It also indicated that the teachers were not aware of the importance of timely feedback for their students' learning process. In addition, the teachers' use of information collected for formative assessment was not as effective as it had previously claimed to be. This result also supports the previous study by Gatullo (2000) that teachers' use of information collected for formative assessment was not as effective as it had previously claimed to be.

The findings from the interviews described above highlight formative assessment tools that teachers often use in the classroom. They are observation, questioning and feedback. Additionally, it is apparent that all formative assessment tools that teachers often use in their classroom are performance-based assessment tools. All the teachers when interviewed stated that they often use these tools to assess their students in the classroom. In addition, they also described how they used these tools in details as well as the problems they encountered when applying these tools. However, we can also see that they did not use them effectively in order to enhance their students' learning due to some factors such as time pressure and crowded classes. Almost all the teachers failed to include students in the assessment process. They did not understand the importance of formative assessment in encouraging the improvement of work in progress. In general, these findings are consistent with the results collected from the questionnaire. The teachers tend to use performance-based assessment tools rather than product-based assessment tools.

The teachers often used performance-based assessment. In other words, they often used the type of assessment that mainly focused on the ability of the students to arrive or produce or demonstrate their own learning. They rarely used the assessment tools that focused on the product their students were able to come up with. There were many reasons why the teachers were reluctant to use formative assessment in their classroom. Time shortage and large class size were two of the main reasons that the teachers mentioned in their interview. Moreover, the teachers decided their assessment types basing on its convenience for management. They preferred using tests or quizzes-traditional assessment to other kinds of assessment. It seems to the researcher that some of the tools used were beneficial for the teachers rather than the students.

Teachers' beliefs about formative assessment seem to be a significant obstacle to implementation of formative assessment. Although all the teachers held positive views of formative assessment, they did not use formative assessments on a regular basis or in an effective way. This result is consistent with the previous study by Buyukkarci (2014). We can also see that the teachers had difficulty in understanding formative assessment. They did not have a clear understanding of formative assessment. As a result, the teachers were resistant to implement it in their teaching. Even though they really used them in their classroom, they could not explain what they did in the classroom in relation to formative assessment.

## **6. Summary**

In terms of teachers' beliefs of using formative assessment in the classroom, it is clear that the teachers had positive attitudes towards formative assessment. They believed



that the basics of formative assessment such as feedback, sharing learning goals, questioning and self-peer assessment should be applied in their classrooms. Moreover, among four basic principles of formative assessment, the teachers favored questioning most. In addition to this, all the teachers were aware of the value of formative assessment for both themselves and their students.

For teachers' practices of formative assessment, the teachers could not use formative assessment practices in their classes very often and effectively. They tended to have a preference for performance-based assessment tools rather than product-based ones. In addition, there were many reasons mentioned why teachers did not implement formative assessment frequently. Most of the teachers had crowded classrooms. There sometimes could be up to 40 students in a class, which made the use of formative assessment very hard to implement. These issues made it difficult for the teachers to apply formative assessment effectively in their classroom. It can be concluded that the teachers were under pressure by the system of formal assessment (in form of tests and examinations). Therefore, they tended to complete the syllabus and overlooked the assessment of the students' skills and knowledge.

There was a difference in EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of formative assessment in the classroom. Although most of the teachers believed that formative assessment was beneficial to their students' learning, they did not use it frequently.

## **7. Pedagogical Implications**

Based on the results of the research, the following recommendations are drawn:

Firstly, EFL teachers themselves should realize the importance of formative assessment and use them more effectively in their teaching. In other words, they should change the way they assess their students in teaching. EFL teachers often spend more time on finishing the syllabi, so they do not have time to use formative assessment. In fact, there should be a change in teachers' attitudes towards the importance of implementation of formative assessment in the classroom.

When EFL teachers apply formative assessment in teaching, the need for flexibility for the implementation of formative assessment takes into account the academic needs and the level of English proficiency of the students.

Next, training on the importance and practical implementation of formative assessment should be given to EFL teachers. The teachers should get support in form of supervision. It can be seen from the research that the teachers expressed their confusion regarding assessment in general and formative assessment in particular. Therefore, the school management needs to provide opportunities for their teachers to participate in a variety of professional development such as workshops, seminars and in-service programs. The programs should particularly focus on helping teachers have general knowledge of formative assessment by providing some technical terms related to formative assessment. In addition to this, these programs also help teachers realize the importance of using formative assessment as well as encourage them to develop skills required for using it.

Besides, schools should include formative assessment activities in the assessment packages of their teachers and follow-up its implementation. Furthermore, there should be a framework for formative assessment and be included in the national curriculum. In so doing, they can encourage teachers to use formative assessment more frequently in their classroom.

There should also be a need for changes in educational system at universities in Vietnam. Teacher education institutes should include the course about classroom assessment in their curriculum. Student teachers, especially would-be English language teachers are required to take up this subject in their formal teacher training program. It is essential to provide training and support to teachers at the beginning period of their job so as to enable them to use assessment in an effective way afterward.

### Acknowledgements

First of all, the researchers would like to pose their sincere thanks to all of the lecturers of English at School of Foreign Languages (SFL) and School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSSH) Can Tho University (CTU) Vietnam for their teaching and supervisions towards MA program for TESOL. Secondly, their great thanks would come to the teachers of some high schools in Vinh Long Province, especially those in Nguyen Binh Khiem High School for the Gifted, Vinh Long Province, Vietnam as well for their kind cooperation to the research through the questionnaires and interviews. Also, the great thanks would go to the School Board of The Southern Transport College, Can Tho City, Vietnam and that of Huynh Man Dat High School for the Gifted, Kien Giang Province, Vietnam, for their cooperation in teaching practice, joint research and professional development. And last but not least, their deep thanks would go to ICELS 2018 Organizing Committee at School of Foreign Languages, Suranaree University of Technology, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, for their supporting this article to be published in order to bring this paper to those interested in Vietnamese education, especially English teaching and learning in high school level on the way to the global and regional cooperation and development.

### References

- Asghar, A. (2010). **Reciprocal peer coaching and its use as a formative assessment strategy for first-year students.** *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35(4), 403-417.
- Bachman, L. F. (2004). **Statistical analyses for language assessment.** Ernst Klett Sprachen.
- Bennett, R. E. (2011). **Formative assessment: A critical review.** *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 18(1), 5-25.
- Berry, R. (2008). **Assessment for learning (Vol. 1).** Hong Kong University Press.
- Black, H. (1986). **Assessment for learning.** *Assessing educational achievement*, 7-18.
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). **Assessment and classroom learning.** *Assessment in Education: principles, policy & practice*, 5(1), 7-74.
- Burns, R. B. (1997). **Introduction to research methods.** Addison Wesley Longman.
- Büyükkarcı, K. (2014). **Assessment beliefs and practices of language teachers in primary education.** *International Journal of Instruction*, 7(1), 10.
- Crooks, T. J. (1988). **The impact of classroom evaluation practices on students.** *Review of educational research*, 58(4), 438-481.
- Davis, H., & Andrzejewski, C. E. (2009). **Teacher beliefs.** *Psychology of classroom learning: An encyclopedia (PCL)*, 2, 909-915.
- F. Gatullo, **Formative assessment in ELT primary (elementary) classrooms: an Italian case study.** *Language Testing* 17(2), (2000) 278.

- Fraenkel, J. R. (8). Wallen. NE (2006). **How to design and evaluate research in education. 4<sup>th</sup> edition.**
- Hargreaves, E. (2005). **Assessment for learning? Thinking outside the (black) box.** *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 35(2), 213-224.
- Huhta, A. (2008). **33 Diagnostic and Formative Assessment.** *The handbook of educational linguistics*, 469.
- Lederman, N. G., Abd-El-Khalick, F., Bell, R. L., & Schwartz, R. S. (2002). **Views of nature of science questionnaire: Toward valid and meaningful assessment of learners' conceptions of nature of science.** *Journal of research in science teaching*, 39(6), 497-521.
- Lewy, A. (1990). **Formative and summative evaluation.** *The international encyclopedia of educational evaluation*, 26-28.
- Lowry, D. (2011). **A Survey of Teachers' Beliefs Regarding the Importance and Implementation of Formative Assessment** (Doctoral dissertation, University of
- Pajares, M. F. (1992). **Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct.** *Review of educational research*, 62(3), 307-332.
- Pryor, J., & Crossouard, B. (2008). **A socio-cultural theorisation of formative assessment.** *Oxford review of Education*, 34(1), 1-20.
- Sato, M., Wei, R. C., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2008). **Improving teachers' assessment practices through professional development: The case of National Board Certification.** *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(3), 669-700.
- Stoynoff, S. (2012). **Looking backward and forward at classroom-based language assessment.** *ELT journal*, 66(4), 523-532.
- Tunstall, P., & Gipps, C. (1996). **'How does your teacher help you to make your work better?' Children's understanding of formative assessment.** *The Curriculum Journal*, 7(2), 185-203.
- Thomas, L., & Peterson, E. D. (2012). **The value of statistical analysis plans in observational research: defining high-quality research from the start.** *Jama*, 308(8), 773-774.
- Wang, X. (2014). **Investigating Assessment Practices in Three EFL Oral Language Classrooms in China.**
- Xu, L. (2012). **The role of teachers' beliefs in the language teaching-learning process.** *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(7), 1397.

## **LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS OF GENERAL ENGLISH COURSE: A CASE IN A COLLEGE IN CAN THO CITY, VIETNAM**

**Doan Thi Loan**

The Southern Transport College in Can Tho city, Vietnam

**Thai Cong Dan**

Can Tho University, Vietnam

**Ta Thi Thanh Lan**

Nguyen Binh Khiem High School for the Gifted, Vinh Long Province, Viet Nam

**Phan Thi Phuong Lan**

Huynh Man Dat High School for the Gifted, Kien Giang Province, Vietnam

### **Abstract**

The current research study aimed to analyze learning needs of non-English major students toward General English Course (GEC) in order to improve the quality of the course and meet students' learning needs, and the national criteria of curriculum design. The EFL students' learning needs are defined as encompassing students' reactions to GEC, language input, language skills, use of knowledge, teachers and teaching methods, testing and assessment, and learning outcome. Since the needs analysis and course evaluation were complex tasks with various possibilities of the needs, interviews of students and teachers were conducted to collect qualitative data purposing to strengthen the quantitative data from two questionnaires. The two pre-post questionnaires were adapted from the original version of Stufflebeam's (1983) CIPP evaluation model or Context, Input, Process, Product approach and Sarah Cook's (2005) ADDE model - Analysis, Design, Delivery, Evaluation model - in Likert scales. The questions for interviewing students and teachers were adopted from interview questions in Mahmoud's (2014) study. The data were analyzed to answer the two research questions: (1) What are non-English major students learning needs? (2) To what extent does general English course satisfy students' learning needs? One hundred forty-eight students and four teachers got involved in the study as participants. The findings revealed that students (at STC) were most interested in knowledge and language input provided from GEC. It also revealed that the students preferred extracurricular activities, watching videos or small group discussions in the language learning process. From the students' evaluation of GEC, it was seen that their learning needs were different from the actual course they received. The students fairly agreed with teachers and teaching methods, testing and assessment, but the actual course did not entirely satisfy students' learning needs.

**Keywords:** *General English course, learning needs, non-English major students*

### **1. Introduction**

In the context of education in Vietnam, English is a compulsory subject to Vietnamese students from primary schools to universities. Non-English major students would like to learn English because they had more functional or external needs, such as the need to pass examinations, or for possibly, career opportunities. Therefore, EFL students' learning needs analysis is an essential step in foreign language curriculum design and course evaluation for EFL students in non-native English speaking countries. This study is conducted as an EFL students' learning needs analysis in order to evaluate General English

Course at elementary level (A2) at a college in the Mekong Delta, with an expectation of finding out the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum to ensure the programmers to decide whether the curriculum should be revised, compared, continued or completed (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988).

It is believed that GEC provides foundational English knowledge for academic study or social communication to non-English majored students (EFL). However, EFL students prefer studying reading and writing to listening and speaking skills, so they often face difficulties in practicing listening and speaking in real communications. In addition, students are not able to use of language contents in GEC for their academic study after finishing GEC. Moreover, Seedhouse (1995) believed that there were not many studies about students' needs in GEC, and the application of needs analysis research in GEC may be able to illuminate students' needs in GEC and serve as foundation to plan a course. This study aims to: (1) gain insight into EFL students' learning needs in GEC; (2) identify whether their practical English course satisfies their learning needs.

## **2. Review of Literature**

According to Al-Jardani et al. (2012, p.1), "there is a need for a systematic curriculum evaluation to support practitioners in the field". Indeed, researchers' views on language program evaluation have changed considerably. Changes in the goals of EFL program evaluation have shifted the methods of evaluation from an empirical tradition to specific evaluation situations and questions. Such changes emphasize the importance of including additional program components such as language policy, materials, curriculum, administrators, students, teachers, methods and external consultants, in order to determine the merit or the achievement of a particular program (Lynch, 2003).

Many studies have shown that it is necessary to understand and be aware of learners' needs (Bienvenu, 2016; Husain, Kamarudin & Mohamad; 2013; Karababa & Karagül, 2013; Mahmoud, 2014; Zohoorian, 2015). With Widdowson (1981), needs refers to the present or future requirement of learners, and what they expect to learn after they finish the language course. Likely, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) classified learners' needs into two types: Target needs (necessities, wants, and lacks), learning needs. Brindley (1989) states that needs may be equally to learners' "wants" or "desires" which refers to what the students themselves would like to learn in addition to their program requirements. Berwick (1989) defines "needs" as "the gap between the current situation and the anticipated future state" (p. 52). According to Long (2005), the determination of learner needs in foreign language teaching is a prerequisite that becomes increasingly more important for efficient course design. Besides, Lüdtke and Schwienhorst (2010) define a full-scale needs analysis as a beneficial tool for a language centre that thinks strategically and seeks long-term development.

One very useful approach to educational evaluation is known as Context, Input, Process, Product approach (CIPP), developed by Stufflebeam (1983). Harrison (1993) emphasizes that the CIPP model enables evaluators to intervene the evaluation process when needed, both before and during the program and it also gives the possibility of evaluation for only one component. The Stufflebeam's CIPP model is an attempt to make evaluation directly relevant to the needs of decision-makers during the phases and activities of a programme. It is recommended as a framework to systematically guide the conception, design, implementation, and assessment of service-learning projects, and provide feedback and judgment of the project's effectiveness for continuous improvement.

In European context, Karatas and Fer (2009) conducted the study to evaluate English curriculum at Yildiz Teknik University in Istanbul. The researcher used CIPP model through two forms of a single questionnaire for the teachers and students which consisted of 46 items. The findings of the study has proven that there were significant differences between teachers' and students' opinions concerning certain items related with the context, input, process and product component of the curriculum. According to the findings obtained from teachers' opinions, it is essential that audio-visual materials must be varied and implemented properly in the activities. In the students' opinions, the students' needs related with their fields and English knowledge necessary for business life must be determined.

Besides, at Can Tho University in the Mekong Delta, there are two studies which have close relationship with students' learning needs analysis and evaluation of an English course were conducted. The first researcher is Nguyen Anh Thu (2011) who investigated "Learners' Academic and Occupational Needs in ESP Course (English for Civil Engineering) at a Vocational College in the Mekong Delta". The participants were 150 second-year students who answered two different questionnaires to find out students' needs and identify whether the new curriculum meet their target needs along with their learning needs. Students' perception toward their own English proficiency pointed out that the new course curriculum should focus more on improving students' reading and listening skills than speaking and writing skills. In addition, 8 ESP teachers also responded to the questionnaire about the necessity of four skills for students' success in their future occupation. Surprisingly, the teachers did not perceive the listening skill as important as the other three skills. Likewise, Vo Thi Ngoc Anh (2014) conducted a descriptive study of "The Four Year EFL Students' Reflection on Their Teacher Training Curriculum on before and after Their Practicum Placement: A Case Study at Can Tho University". There were 45 participants answering two questionnaires (pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire) and 6 of them were interviewed to reflect the problems they faced in their teacher training curriculum. The results of quantitative data reported the conclusion that the students' perception of curriculum remained unchanged before and after their practicum placement. From the qualitative data, students evaluated that the current teacher training curriculum at Can Tho University was useful for them in their practicum; however, the number of credits in the field of teaching skills or professional development should be increased.

In this research, Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation model and Sarah Cook's (2005) ADDE model have been adapted. The reason why these models have been chosen is that they are feasible in foreign languages curricula and involve various evaluation types in the current research such as students' reactions, language input, skills, knowledge, teachers and teaching methods, testing and assessment, and learning outcome. The researchers used the questionnaire of students' learning needs to survey what students need from GEC at the beginning of the course. At the end of the course, the questionnaire of student's evaluation of GEC was conducted to get students' opinions about what they were satisfied or unsatisfied from GEC. The findings from this study helped the teachers and administrators revise the curriculum of GEC in order to improve the quality of it and meet the legitimate learning needs of students.

### **3. Research Questions**

The two research questions were:

1. What are non-English major students learning needs?
2. To what extent does general English course satisfy students' learning needs?

## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1. Participants

Participants were freshmen who are attending two-year courses at The Southern Transport College (STC) in the school year of 2016-2017. There were 148 participants selected from a total of 221 students in 4 classes responded to the questionnaires. Seven students were chosen from 148 participants answering the survey questionnaires to join in the interviews. Four in seven students were selected from the volunteers and three were appointed randomly by the researcher. Most of the participants are male students whose majors are in Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Waterway Accounting. The participants have passed the examinations of English for general purpose from lower and upper secondary schools around three to seven years. The participants' ages range from 18 to 30 years old. The GEC is taught as a compulsory subject. Besides, the researchers also interviewed four EFL teachers who have experiences of general English teaching at STC from 6-10 years. Teachers' responses were considered as evidence in order to confirm the information of students' evaluation and seek their own view of points about GEC as well.

### 4.2. Instruments

#### 4.2.1. Questionnaires

The pre-questionnaire of students' learning needs (QN) and post-questionnaire of students' evaluation (QE) of GEC were surveyed to collect the quantitative data. They were adapted from the original version of Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation model (1983) and Sarah Cook's the ADDE model (2005) and followed the five-point scales of Likert-Scale from a stronger endorsement to a weaker endorsement of needs and satisfactory such as (5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree. Both two survey questionnaires have similar characteristics such as different 57 items inside each questionnaire in order to measure the same 7 clusters: (1) students' reactions, (2) language input, (3) language skills, (4) use of knowledge, (5) teachers and teaching methods, (6) testing and assessment, (7) learning outcome. The clusters and items in the questionnaires are described in Table 1.

Table 1: Clusters and items in the two questionnaires

Competences	Clusters	Questionnaire items	Total number
Context	1. Students' reactions	1 - 6	6
Input	2. Language input	7 - 16	10
	3. Language skills	17 - 28	12
	4. Use of knowledge	29 - 35	7
Process	5. Teachers and teaching methods	36 - 47	12
	6. Testing and assessment	48 - 52	5
Product	7. Learning outcome	53 - 57	5
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>57</b>

Because the all participants had passed a placement test at the beginning of the GEC, their English competence was approximately from level A1 to A2; therefore, the questionnaires were designed in bilingual versions to avoid misunderstanding with a desire to obtain the most reliable data. The questionnaires were piloted with 36 students and 25 students respectively. It was proven that the questionnaires are acceptable to be used for conducting research with a larger number of participants.

### 4.2.2. Interview

Semi-structured interview was used to demonstrate whether the information from the questionnaires was reliable or not, or to gather further information to ensure the validity of evaluation study. Interview questions for EFL students were designed into bilingual version with two formats: (1) multiple choices in which respondents could select multiple items about which ones satisfied their learning needs; (2) free discussions of the items which did not satisfy their learning needs, and they were asked to give suggestions to develop the GEC in order to meet their learning needs. Interview questions for EFL teachers were designed in English version. EFL teachers' evaluation of GEC helped to strengthen the reliability and validity of the data from students' evaluation.

### 4.3. Data analysis

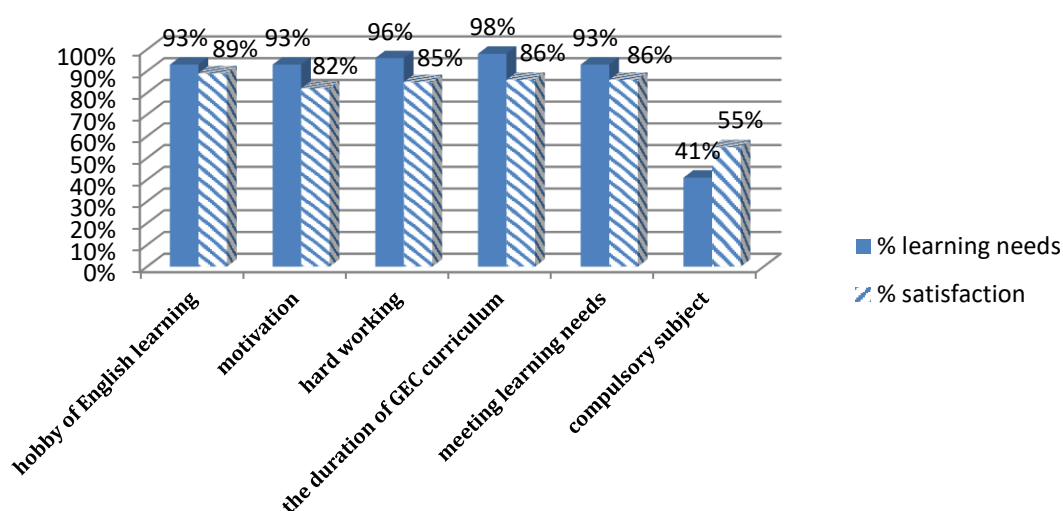
The raw quantitative data was statistically analyzed with the following tests: *Scale Test, Descriptive Statistics Test, One Samples T-Test, Pair Samples T-Test* to find out the average level of participants' agreement with pre- and post-questionnaires, see the differences between the students' learning needs and their satisfaction of the actual course. With qualitative data, an interview protocol was employed with the following steps of analysis: (1) develop a framework of themes for investigating within an interview protocol; (2) analyze the transcribed data and code the information relating to themes investigated; (3) organize the theme data coded into the interview protocol; (4) search for the similarities and differences among students' learning needs and the actual course they received; (5) interpret the data from the interview protocol; (6) report the results.

## 5. Results and discussion

### 5.1. Results from quantitative data

#### 5.1.1. Students' reactions of general English course

The cluster includes 6 items and aims to gain inside students' hobbies, motivation, attitudes towards learning GEC as a compulsory subject at a college.



**Figure 1:** Responses to pairs of items (items 1-6) in QN and QE

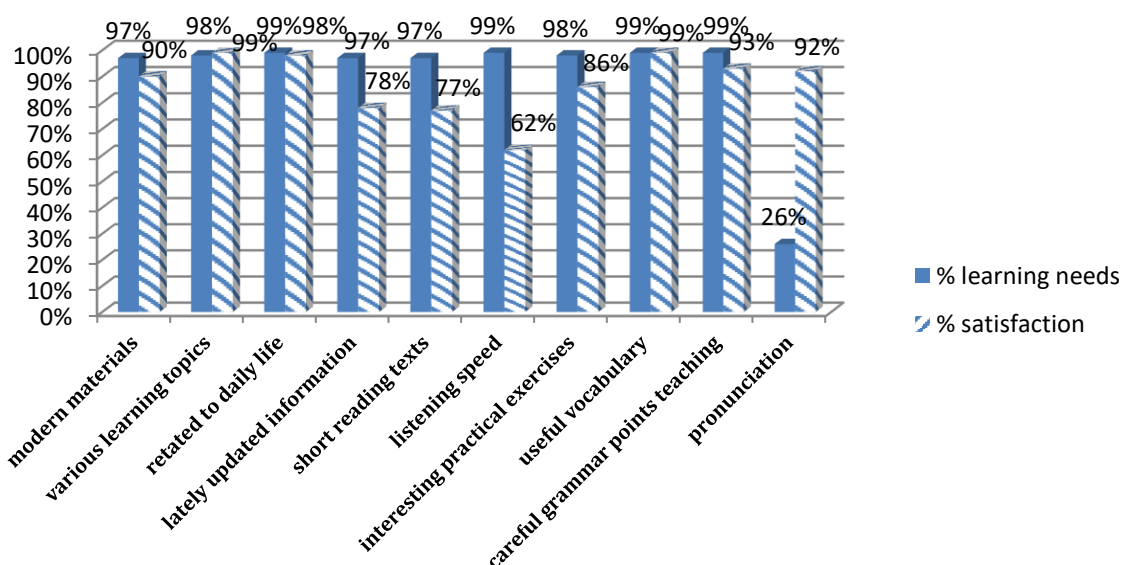
In general, the students' reactions of the actual GEC were positively. Most of the percentages of students' learning needs and their satisfaction of GEC were over 80%. There were 41% students agreed with QN.I6, it means 59% of them confirmed that they learned GEC not just because it was a compulsory subject, they learned GEC because they liked



studying English and they were “looking forward to studying”. The result shows that participants’ satisfaction of the actual English course is above average but lower than their needs.

### 5.1.2. Language input

This part was investigated to find out whether the language contents, leaning topics of leaning materials are lately updated and related to daily life or not.

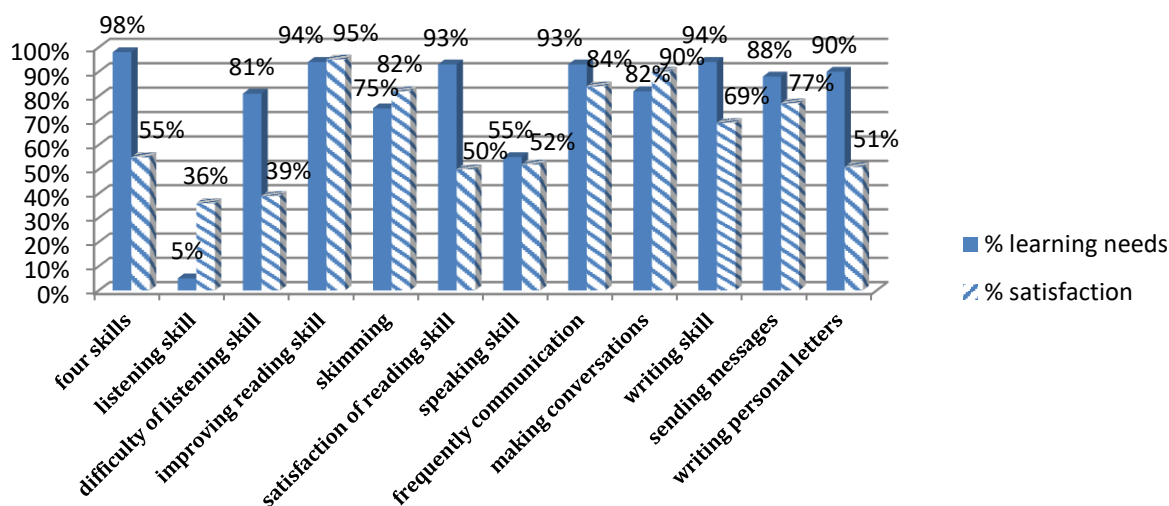


**Figure 2:** Responses to pairs of items (items 7-16) in QN and QE

The participants’ satisfaction of the language input in Figure 5.1.2 was at very high values in some aspects such as materials, learning topics, daily life, and vocabulary. However, some items like updated information, short reading texts, listening speed, interesting practical exercises, and pronunciation were not highly evaluated. The reasons for these problems might be found out from the information of qualitative data. The results give suggestion that educators, program designers and teachers should make plans to improve the quality of these aspects in order to meet students’ learning needs and gain the highest result in the teaching process.

### 5.1.3. Language skills

There were some difference between students’ learning needs and students’ satisfaction regarding language skills.

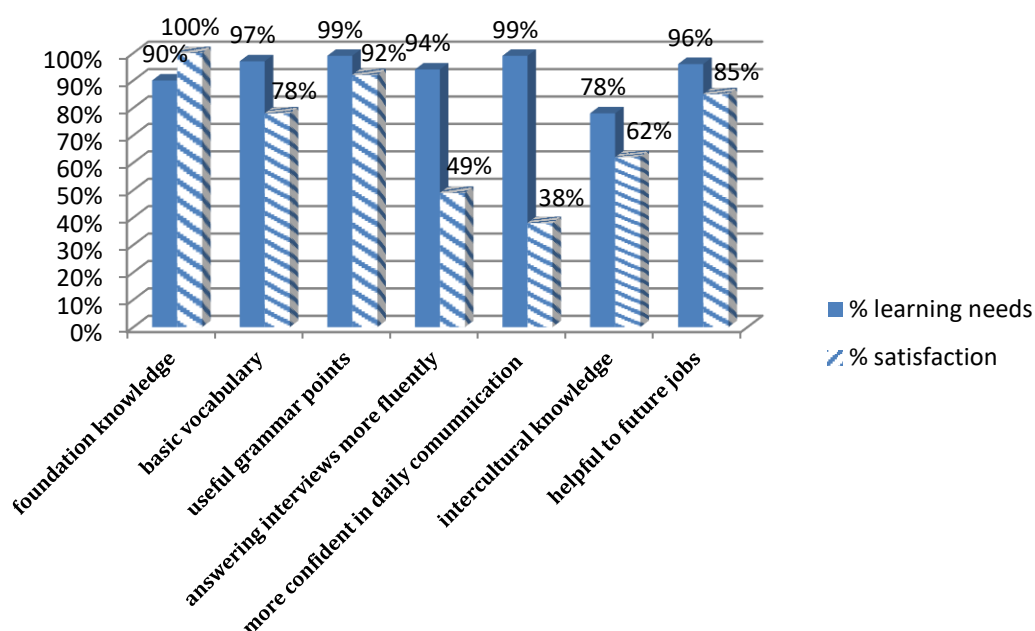


**Figure 3:** Responses to pairs of items (items 17-28) in QN and QE

Most of the items in language skills cluster of students' learning needs scored over 80% demonstrating that there is a desire to develop all language skills through GEC. However, there are only 55% of participants agreed that they have been developed all four skills. To be more specific, the degree of participants' satisfaction of language skills was different from each other (listening: 64%, reading: 50%, speaking: 52%, writing: 69%). The students reflected that their language skills were not improved as their desire at the beginning of the course.

#### 5.1.4. Use of knowledge

The values in figure 5.1.4 reflected a significant difference between students' learning needs and students' evaluation of GEC.



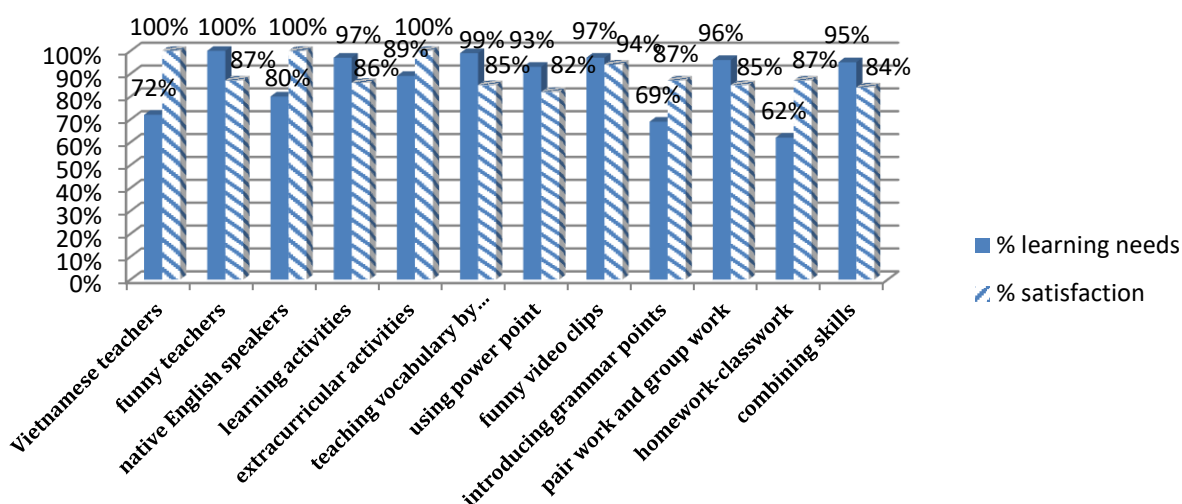
**Figure 4:** Responses to pairs of items (items 29-35) in QN and QE

Participants' satisfaction of knowledge provided from GEC was high in some aspects such as foundation knowledge, basic vocabulary, useful grammar points, helpful to

future jobs; however, the degree of their satisfaction was lower than average level in daily communication because they could not answer the interviews as confidently and fluently as they used to expect. Consequently, there was a significant difference between students' satisfaction of speaking skills provided from the actual GEC and their learning needs.

### 5.1.5. Teachers and teaching methods

The participants highly evaluated most of the items in teachers and teaching methods except no native English speakers in class, and no extracurricular activities in GEC.

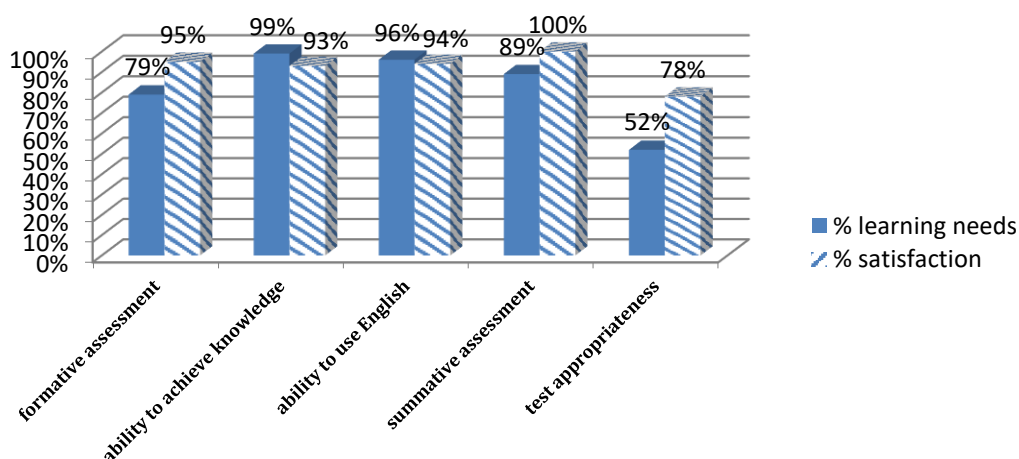


**Figure 5:** Responses to pairs of items (items 36-47) in QN and QE

Comparing students' learning needs and their evaluation, we can see what they have been supported was approximately to their learning needs. Teachers have been successful with their teaching methods, they have combined four skills (listening-reading-speaking-writing) in a period to maximize the benefits and reduce the limitations of them. To know more about the teaching methods, the results of students' and teachers' interviews were answered in the qualitative report.

### 5.1.6. Testing and assessment

Basing on the result from pre-questionnaire at the beginning of the course, the participants' knowledge of testing and assessment was above average level. That means they have ability to determine the goals of formative and summative assessments.

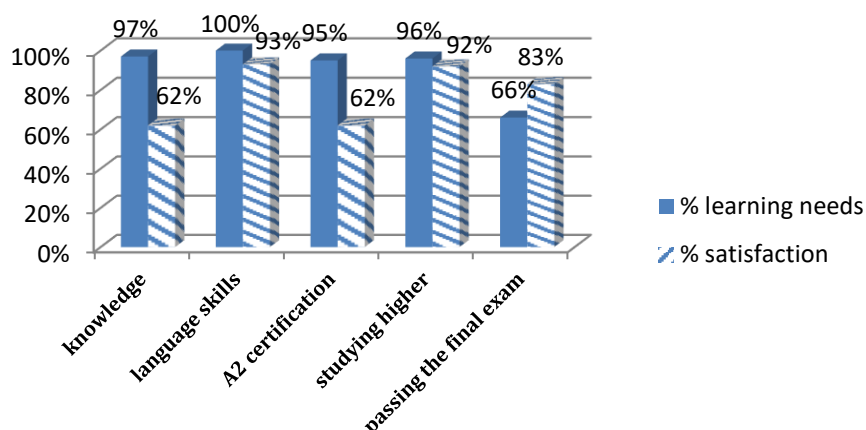


**Figure 6:** Responses to pairs of items (items 48-52) in QN and QE

The result showed that there was no significant difference between students' learning needs and the actual English course. They highly evaluated GEC and even higher than their needs in some items. They were satisfied with the appropriateness and validity of the tests, and the results of testing will present and discuss in the next part.

#### 5.1.7. Learning outcome

The percentages of students' learning needs and their satisfaction of learning outcome from GEC were expressed in Figure 5.1.7.



**Figure 7:** Responses to pairs of items (items 53-57) in QN and QE

The results reflected that students evaluated the actual GEC lower than their learning needs all items except item 55 (QE) “passing the final exam” (83%). About 62 percent of them thought that their English competence was at level A2 and they were willing to take the national examination of level A2. The problem is that they highly evaluated the appropriateness and validity of the tests, but why there were 17% of them fail in the final exam. More information about their learning styles, knowledge, and test taking was reported and discussed in qualitative data.

### 5.2. Results from qualitative data

In addition to the quantitative data, the qualitative data supplied more profound information from the interviews of seven EFL students and four EFL teachers. The students' interviews aimed to find out the reasons why the students were not satisfied with some aspects in the actual GEC and looked forward to seeking more information about their expectations of their English course. The teachers' interviews purposed to confirm the information about students' evaluation and seek their own view of points about improving the quality of GEC in order to meet students' learning needs but still keep the rules in the curriculum design as well.

#### 5.2.1. Students' interviews

**Question 1:** *What were you satisfied with GEC?*

Most of the participants were satisfied with topics in the course book, contents of the topics, vocabulary, teachers and teaching methods, and testing and assessment. The items they did not satisfy were grammar points, pronunciation, and outcome.

**Question 2:** *Why weren't you satisfied with the other(s)?*

They were not satisfied with “grammar points” because there were not variety of interesting practical exercises in class, and they did not have chance to work in groups; therefore, they could not discuss to find the answers exactly.

With “pronunciation”, five participants responded that teachers did not concentrate on practicing pronunciation in class. Some pronunciation parts in the course book were not taught, so they usually made mistakes in pronouncing the words.

However, the causes were not only from the teachers but also from students themselves. In fact, many non-English major students did not like studying English, so they did not spend much time for doing homework or practice English outside classrooms. Five out of seven students responded that they did not “*practice pronouncing English through video clips at home*”. Therefore, the effectiveness of developing pronunciation for students in GEC was not good because there were no cooperation and effort from both teachers and students in teaching and learning process.

The result showed that three participants were not satisfied with “learning outcome” because they “*didn't go to class regularly*”. Therefore, they fell some skills in the GEC such as speaking and reading, and lacked of test taking skills.

To sum up, there were two reasons for students' failure in developing their pronouncing skill. First, EFL teachers did not have an in-depth investment for improving all language skills and knowledge of students. Second, the participants loved studying grammar rather than pronunciation because they would like to have a lot of interesting practical exercises in groups but they did not spend time for practicing pronouncing English.

**Question 3:** *What skill(s) have you been improved? What most?*

Most students agreed that they have been improved listening, reading, speaking, writing skills and sub-skills (skimming, making conversations, sending messages), but there was only one among seven students thought that their sub-skills were improved most. The skill that seven students thought was developed most was listening skill.

**Question 4:** *What skill(s) has not been improved? Why not?*

Five over seven students responded that their soft-skills have not been improved because there was not much group work.

Comparing to the answers of the interview question 2, students also complained they did not have many chances to work in groups. As a result, their soft-skills in group working such as negotiation, discussion, meeting holding, presentation... did not improved much through GEC.

From the results of students' interviews, it can be concluded that teachers have not created an effective learning environment to enable students to develop their speaking, writing, and soft-skills.

**Question 5:** *If there is a national examination of level A2 organized at school, will you register?*

Five over seven students said: “No”. There were two reasons for this choice. First, they were not confident enough to take the national exam, and they thought they needed more time to review their skills and knowledge. The second reason was that they just needed to pass the final exam. The reason is because the interviewees fell in the final exam.

Therefore, their immediate goal was to pass the exam. However, the major goal of administrators at STC is to give students chances to gain the certificate of level A2 so that they will get certain benefits for their future job application.

### 5.2.2. Teachers' interviews

**Question 1:** *Have you ever used any supplemental teaching materials? What skills for?*

All of the teachers have used supplemental teaching materials in their teaching process. The similarity of them was they used supplemental teaching materials for listening skill. Also, it is the reason for the answer of the interview question 3 of students that their listening skill was improved most through GEC. The difference between the four teachers was that two of them supported for four skills while the first teacher did not find any supplemental teaching materials for writing skill, and the third teacher only concentrated on developing students' listening skill.

**Question 2:** *What skills of students have been improved through GEC? What has not much?*

The teachers shared the same view of point toward the skills that the students have been improved. Three over four teachers confirmed that their students have been improved both listening and speaking skills. Students' writing skill has not been improved much because they might be lazy or did not like practicing writing at home.

**Question 3:** *Which methods have you regularly used in your teaching?*

Three over four teachers used Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), but one teacher did not use it. Three teachers combined more than one method in their teaching; however, one of them tended to favor CLT. Two over four teachers used Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Grammar Translation Method (GTM).

Sometimes, it is necessary to translate some difficult words into Vietnamese for EFL students. In this case, GTM should be used. However, in this case, the two teachers seem to refuse using GTM for the purpose of saving time. Comparing to the result of the interview question 2, the male teacher said that some reading texts were long and difficult for students to find the detail information. This is the reason why the teacher translated or encouraged his students to translate anything in the reading texts.

**Question 4:** *If you could change something in GEC, what would you like to change?*

Most of them would like to have more time for students to practice speaking skill and do more reading exercises to develop reading skill, have more time for both inside and outside activities. For example, they believed that: "*picnics or thematic discussions with English only*" would give the students "*chances for free talking with their partners or even strangers*" in a new learning environment, which could motivate students become more confident. They said they would spend 10 periods for extracurricular activities, 20 periods for developing students' vocabulary and reading skill through reading texts in class.

Besides, they would also rebuild some reading tasks related to Vietnamese culture context and give students more intensive reading.

**Question 5:** *What is your suggestion(s) for the administrators of our school in the future?*

According to the result, there were 95% students who needed the certificate of level A2, but only 62% of them were willing to take the national examination at the end of GEC.

Comparing the answers of question 4 with question 5, the similarity of them was increasing the periods of GEC curriculum. For instance, the curriculum of GEC should be

120 periods instead of 90 periods in the current course. The second suggestion was opening a revision course for students before encouraging them to register for the level A2 examination in order to help students will be more confident to take the exam, and improve their English skills and test taking skills.

To sum up, the teachers have various teaching methods with experiences from 6 to 10 years. Their strong points are attentive to their students, clearly know students' learning needs and lacks, suggest some practical solutions in order to improve the quality of GEC. Nevertheless, they also have some certain limitations such as still hesitating about innovation of methodology, no balanced investment between the development of knowledge and skills for students.

## **6. Conclusion**

Primarily, students need being provided knowledge in GEC most because GEC is foundation knowledge that helps them in academic study. They needed to be provided basic vocabulary, useful grammar points enable them to study English for Special Purposes in term II and they can become more confident in daily communication.

The second learning need of students in GEC is language input with motivated materials, various learning topics related to daily life, lately updated information, short reading texts, listening tapes with slow speed, interesting practical exercises, useful vocabulary, careful grammar points teaching, and improving pronunciation. Their learning needs of the skill improvement are significant high, but they are unaware of the importance of sub-skills which help develop main skills such as "read for main idea" (scanning), "read for details" (skimming), "make conversation" (sub-speaking skill), "send English messages" (sub-writing skill) and so on. This is their limitation of learning styles that needs to be supported by teachers immediately.

The participants highly evaluated the ways of testing and assessment, and teachers and teaching methods. They satisfy with studying English through short, funny video clips, foundation knowledge for academic study, summative assessment, helpfulness for their jobs, useful vocabulary, appropriateness to students' English competence, related subjects to daily life, formative assessment, passing the final exam, various learning topics, and careful grammar points teaching. However, students' learning needs are not satisfied by the actual GEC in many extents such as the speed of listening tapes, all four skills, pair work and group work, the duration of GEC curriculum, knowledge of level A2, practical exercises, amount of basic vocabulary, information in the course books, reading passages, grammar points, daily communication, making conversations, intercultural knowledge, and testing students' ability to use English.

## **7. Pedagogical Implications**

From the research findings based on both quantitative and qualitative data, some pedagogical implications would be inferred in order that they might be helpful in improving the quality of GEC in the current school in particular and in the context of EFL in general.

Teachers need to put a great deal of thoughts into identifying students' learning needs in particular context in order to satisfy their leaning needs. Additionally, the teachers should concentrate on training students' pronunciation, plan and design activities which should be various, meaningful, pragmatic, and compatible with students' learning needs. Finally, yet importantly, in the teaching process, teachers should combine various teaching methods in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the limitations of particular method, avoid having a special favor with a single method.

Administrators should increase the amount of periods in GEC curriculum and add extracurricular activities to GEC as compulsory periods. Next, the administrators should invite educational experts to introduce modern methodology and give useful advice for the teachers in their own contexts. Moreover, the administrators should make good condition for EFL teachers and students to organize seminars, thematic discussions or extracurricular activities in English only and invite some native English teachers to train pronunciation for the teachers and students as well. Finally, they should open revision English courses and encourage student to attend by reducing tuition fee aiming to strengthen their English skills and test taking skills to satisfy students learning needs.

### Acknowledgements

First and foremost, the researchers would like to express their sincere thanks to all of the lecturers of English at School of Foreign Languages (SFL) and School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSSH) Can Tho University (CTU) Vietnam for their teaching and supervisions towards MA program for TESOL. Secondly, their great thanks would come to the students from The Southern Transport College (STC) Vietnam as well for their kind cooperation to the research through the questionnaires and interviews. Also, the great thanks would go to the School Board of *Nguyen Binh Khiem High School for the Gifted, Vinh Long Province, Viet Nam* and that of *Huynh Man Dat High School for the Gifted, Kien Giang Province, Vietnam*, for their cooperation in teaching practice, joint research and professional development. And last but not least, their deep thanks would go to ICELS 2018 Organizing Committee at School of Foreign Languages, Suranaree University of Technology, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, for their supporting this article to be published in order to bring this paper to those interested in Vietnamese education, especially English teaching and learning in college level on the way to the global and regional cooperation and development.

### References

- Al-Jardani, K. S. S., Siraj, S., & Abedalaziz, N. (2012). **A Need for a Framework for Curriculum Evaluation in Oman.** *i-Manager's Journal on English Language Teaching*, 2(4), 1.
- Berwick, R., 1989. **Needs assessment in language programming: from theory to practice.** In: Johnson, R. K. *The second language curriculum.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 48-62.
- Bienvenu, B. M. (2016). **An attempt to assessing learners' need of English and specific English language syllabus designing in general mechanic section at secondary school: Case study of 5<sup>th</sup> year at ITFM. Bukavu.** *International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies*, 14(1), 16.
- Brindley, G., 1989. **The role of needs analysis in adult ESL programme design.** *The second language curriculum.* 63-78.
- Brown, J., 1989. **Language program evaluation: A synthesis of existing possibilities.** In R. K. Ministry of Education and Training of Viet Nam, 2014.
- Circular No. 01/2014 /TT-BGDDT, dated on January 24th, 2014, **The six-level foreign language competence framework for Vietnamese.** Accessed on March 16th, 2014. Available from <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Thong-tu-01-2014-TT-BGDDT-Khung-nang-luc-ngoai-ngu-6-bac-Viet-Nam-220349.aspx>
- Cook, S., 2005a. **Learning needs analysis: Part 1: What is learning needs analysis.** *Training Journal.* 64-68.
- Cook, S., 2005b. **Learning needs analysis: Part 2: Linking learning needs analysis to business.** *Training Journal.* 50-54.



- Cook, S., 2005e. **Part 5: Learning needs analysis methods**. Training Journal. 54-58.
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A., 1987. English for specific purposes. Cambridge University Press. pp. 2-22.
- Husain, F. M., Kamarudin, N., & Mohamad, A. (2013). **First year undergraduates' perceptions of English language needs: A study at a Malaysia public university**. *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*, 6(1), 491.
- Jacobs, C., 2000. **The evaluation of educational innovation**. *Evaluation*. 6: 261- 280.
- Karatas, H., & Fer, S. (2009). **Evaluation of English curriculum at Yildiz Technical University using CIPP model**. *Egitim ve Bilim*, 34(153), 47.
- Long, M. H., 2005. **Second language needs analysis**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-225.
- Lüdtke, S. & Schwienhorts, K., 2010. **Language centre needs analysis: Defining goals, refining programmes**. Frankfurt: Peter Lang Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften.
- Lynch, B. K., 1996. **Language program evaluation**. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 2-139.
- Lynch, B. K., 2003. **Language assessment and programme evaluation**. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University. pp. 52-168.
- Mahmoud, S. S., 2014. **A framework for investigating foundation year students' needs in general English in KAU: Needs analysis extended to curriculum development**. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. 5: 335-342.
- Middlewood, D., & Burton, N., 2001. **Managing the curriculum**. SAGE Publications. London, pp. 35-86.
- Nguyen, A. T., 2011. **An investigation into learners' academic and occupational needs in ESP course (English for civil engineering) at a vocational college in the Mekong Delta**. Master thesis. Can Tho University. Viet Nam.
- Nguyen, A. T., 2011. **An investigation into learners' academic and occupational needs in ESP course (English for civil engineering) at a vocational college in the Mekong Delta**. Master Thesis. Can Tho University. Vietnam.
- Nguyen, H., & Nguyen, T., 2017. **English for Specific Purposes (ESP): Perceptions of students and teachers of learning needs at a Vietnamese school**. *International Journal of Advanced Research*. 5: 793-803.
- Ornstein, A. C., & Hunkins, F. P., 1988. **Implementing curriculum changes-guidelines for principals**. *NASSP Bulletin*. 72: 67-72.
- Stufflebeam, D. L., 1983. **The CIPP model for program evaluation**. In *Evaluation models*. Springer Netherlands. pp. 117-141.
- Widdowson, H. G., 1981. **English for specific purposes: Criteria for course design. English for academic and technical purposes: Studies in honor of Louis Trimble**. pp. 1-11.

## SOME VIETNAMESE CULTURAL OBSTACLES IN SPEAKING ENGLISH: A CASE AT CAN THO UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM

**Thai Cong Dan**

Can Tho University, Vietnam

**Huynh Nguyen Anh Mai**

Can Tho University, Vietnam

**Thach Chanh Da**

Can Tho University

**Phu Thi Hong Chau**

Chau Thanh High School, Kien Giang, Vietnam

**Lam Son Hai, M**

Dien Hai High School, Bac Lieu, Vietnam

### Abstract

This article aims to report on a study which identifies some Vietnamese cultural obstacles and their influences on EFL learners' speaking skill. Suggestions for overcoming cultural challenges are proposed in accordance with the findings from both qualitative and quantitative methodology. One hundred English-majored freshmen at Can Tho University were invited to this study. Follow-up interviews were carried out on 7 EFL learners. The findings from questionnaires and interviews revealed that *face-saving, hesitation, high context communication and conflict avoidance* affected EFL students' speaking performances. This study offers suggestions for advancement based on respondents' perception towards cultural hindrances. Finally, the study also addresses implications and suggestions for further study.

*Key words: cultural obstacles, speaking skill, cultural influences, Can Tho University*

### 1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, it cannot be denied that the ability to use English effectively plays an important role in adapting to the globalized environment. Warschauer (2007) stated that "English and globalization have spread hand in hand through the world." (cited by Mydans, 2007). Thus, English competence has been a crucial tool for the purpose of connecting the world and become the common code for international communication. In addition, it has become the language of essential sectors namely education, academia, business and sciences. That is to say, English has been recognized as a "global language".

The emphasis on the usage of English is growing with the widespread increase of globalization regarding both spoken and written forms. Language acquisition requires four basic skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing. These are classified into "productive skills", comprising speaking and writing and "receptive skill", which are listening and reading. In the process of learning a language, "The four skills must be learned, developed and enhanced equally because they are interrelated." (Litiem & Mebrouki, 2012). Notwithstanding, in considering the dramatic development of communication, "increased spoken voice interactions, and English language exposure in media have placed a growing importance on listening and speaking skills." (Sawir, 2005:567). Oral competency provides

people with not only direct interaction with interlocutors but also mutual emotional understanding thanks to changes in tone, facial expressions and other signals, which can only be identified in in-person interaction. Arnold (2000) pointed out the importance of speaking skill in languages learning by showing the way people usually think about “speaking” and “knowing” a language. When people mean “knowing a language”, it is widely to use “speaking a language” alternatively.

The way of using language is determined by cultural values (Elmes, 2013). Elmes also claimed that the reflection of a culture can be noticed in the way people use their language since “they value certain things and do them in a certain way, they come to use their language in ways that reflect their value and what they do.” (Elmes, 2013). When native culture and target culture, which can be understood as learners’ culture and culture of foreign language respectively, contradict in language usage, people are interested in referring to their native language. (Litiem & Mebrouki, 2012).

## **1.1. Cultural obstacles**

### **1.1.1. Culture**

The term “culture” has been defined in a variety of ways according to different approaches and fields of study. UNESCO interprets culture as a “complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society.” This definition represents the role of UNESCO in preserving and promoting culture since it involves various components of human life. Lederach (1995) valued the relationship between society and citizens in clarifying “culture”. According to Lederach, “a set of people” in a particular society share knowledge and schemes that are created for them to perceive, interpret, express, and respond to the social realities, which constitutes culture. Hofstede (1984:51) viewed “culture” as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.”

Despite differences in expressing manners, the definitions above highlight the connection and values existing between humans and society, which are the roots of culture in general. This study addresses hindrances related to culture in language learning; particularly English speaking skill, thus, the current study views the definition of culture from Kramsch (1993:1) as the foundation for analyzing culture.

“Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one...challenging (learners’) ability to make sense of the world around them.” (Kramsch, 1993:1, cited from Elmes, 2013).

In terms of language learning, culture is an indispensable factor in increasing language competency. Foreign language acquisition requires not only target culture awareness but also native culture understanding. In other words, identifying the differences between native culture and target culture gives an insight into adjustment in learning and using foreign language since “an analytic look at the native culture is as important as the learning of the target culture. On the other hand, problems that arise from the lack of cross-

cultural awareness are not limited to the verbal side of communication.” (Cakir, 2006:2) and culture plays an important role in communication in the form of gestures.

### **1.1.2. Cultural obstacles**

Obstacle is defined a situation, an event, etc. that makes it difficult for you to do or achieve something. Also, an obstacle can be also viewed as “a concept with objective and subjective validity. It is defined as a task that requires effort or labor to solve,” (Khan, 2016:156). Learning foreign languages, English in particular, is a process of overcoming obstacles objectively and subjectively. In the light of such observation, obstacles in learning languages, Obstacles are “problems, hurdles, and difficulties” in acquiring languages. Cultural barriers encountered by EFLs arise from differences in traditions, religious beliefs, etiquette and social habits (Amin, 2015), which become hurdles in approaching foreign languages sharing few prevalent features with native one.

The inseparability of language and culture brings learners the opportunities to immerse in a culture through language and make it animate since “language and culture are two faces of the same coin” (Al Farabi, 2008:71). On the other hand, hindrances in learning languages occurring due to cultural differences induce misunderstanding in receiving and interpreting messages, which results in the increase of complexity in learning and using languages.

Thus, it is indispensable for EFL learners to hold a deep understanding of how their native culture differs from “Western culture” and raise their awareness of acquiring language and culture simultaneously.

## **1.2. Effects of Vietnamese culture on EFL students’ speaking skill**

### **1.2.1. Collectivism**

“In general, Vietnamese culture, like that of many other Asian countries, is strongly influenced by Chinese ideologies and religious beliefs, namely Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.” (Nguyen, 2002:1). Vietnamese culture appreciates “in-group” attitude and people are expected to “take their opinions from others and to go along with what are best for the group.” In other words, collectivism cultures are “group- oriented.” (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Wiseman, 1991:93). In learning English, which belongs to individualism that promotes independent individually contribution, it is not natural at first for Vietnamese students to strongly raise their voices and “they feel more comfortable working as a team member.” (Burns, 1998:11). Interdependence and obedience are highly valued in collectivist culture. Children are taught to think in terms of “we” instead of “I” and obey “people senior in age” or with higher classes in most situations without doubts. Obedience is also a criterion to value whether a child or a student is good or not. According to Nguyen, (2002), students keep quiet in class to show respect to teachers as well as to create a productive learning environment and “being talkative, interrupting, bragging, or challenging the teacher are not typical of Vietnamese culture.” Normally, outstanding individual performances which are not linked with group work may not be strongly esteemed. As a result, individual presentations, which are focused on language learning, cause students anxiety in tackling them.

### 1.2.2. Face-saving

Face can be defined as a “public self-image” (Gudykunst, 2004). According to Brown and Levinson, 1978:61, cited from Pham, 2011:19, “face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction.” Pham, 2011:32 stated that “Vietnamese culture considers face is not only a possession of the individual, but also of a group.” In the book “Communicating with Vietnamese in intercultural contexts: Insights into Vietnamese values” (2011), Pham, clarified this point by illustrating some Vietnamese proverbs and collocational possibilities about “face” including “*giàu ở làng sang ở họ*, which means a person is rich thanks to his village and famous thanks to his clan”; and “*làm nở mày/nở mặt, làm đẹp mặt*, which are understood as beautifying and bringing luster on the face of others.” In collectivist cultures, saving face is indicated as a sense of self-respect, which results in the so-called implication that “public criticism and humiliation are considered extremely rude and should be avoided.” (Nguyen, 2002). In contrast, straight forward feedback is welcomed in individualist cultures to which English belongs. This contrasting aspect may affect EFL learners’ attitude and confidence once criticized in public. In addition, people are “afraid of losing face and also afraid of causing others to lose face” (Huong, 2008: 15), especially their teachers and seniors since in learning environment, teachers are regarded as “the complete source of knowledge”. (Huong, 2018: 23). Unquestionably, Vietnamese EFLs may find difficult to directly give their own opinions or ask for clarification if they have opposite points of view with their teachers.

### 1.2.3. High-context communication

High context communication represents collectivist cultures. Gudykunst et al. (1991:52) compared the core cues between “high - context communication” exemplifying collectivist cultures and “low context communication”, which is incorporated in individualism. In high - context communication, people tend not to go straight to the point but indirectly imply their messages, especially complaints or censure. Conflict avoidance is encouraged to maintain social harmony. In discussing and presenting ideas, “the conflict or discussion still occupy with very small percentage of the time.” (Huong, 2008:18). It is because of the “harmony characteristics”, which are highly evaluated in Vietnamese society. In addition, “contextually appropriate ways to maintain relationships” are priorities in high - context communication (Gudykunst, 1991:52). In this way, avoiding conflicts is to save others’ face since “when people feel that they have been shamed or lost face, they may react impassively and withdraw from the situation or relationship.” (Brick & Louie, 1984: 53).

Besides, Tomlinson & Bao Dat (2004) and Lewis & McCook (2002: 147) affirmed that the attitude towards “verbal perfection” has been “traditionally valued across many Asian cultures.” (cited from Huong, P. T. T., 2008:17). Thus, students tend to “start a little but correctly” rather than “verbalize a lot but wrongly.”

For those reasons, hesitation in expressing opinions becomes one of the obstacles in learning English. It is easy to understand why Bình, Diller, & Sutherland (1975:126) claimed that “According to Vietnamese custom, one should remain modest and humble,

showing the extent of knowledge or skills only when asked. In Vietnam, there is the motto of saying less than what one actually knows, often and admirable characteristic.”

In general, collectivism, saving – face and high – context communication highlight the “modest and humble” characteristics in an “in-group” society. Learning a language which belongs to the opposite side as English, learners must be conscious of the differences in the cultures that draw possible hindrances. This paper aims to ascertain some Vietnamese cultural hindrances on EFL students at Can Tho University responding to the research questions:

- What are Vietnamese cultural obstacles that affect EFL students in speaking English?
- What are suggestions to help students overcome cultural obstacles in English speaking?

## **2. Methodology**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in this study. Respondents’ self-consciousness of cultural obstacles in learning speaking English was manifested with the use of questionnaires. Interviews were conducted afterwards for in-depth understanding. The survey was carried out with the participation of 100 English-majored freshmen majoring in English Studies and English Translation and Interpretation in School of Foreign Languages (SFL), Can Tho University in the academic year of 2016-2017 and 7 of them were randomly invited to take part in interviews.

Questionnaires were designed to investigate the respondent’s opinions on encountered cultural obstacles in speaking English. Questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section A collects respondent’s general information namely full name, age, class, course and time of learning English. Section B consists of 29 statements focusing on some cultural obstacles in speaking English designed in five-point Likert scales. Respondents choose one scale out of five regarding how much they agree or disagree on the statements. (SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly agree). The original statements are in English and translated into Vietnamese for respondents to completely comprehend.

Interviews were conducted as the second instrument for collecting data to examine respondents’ perception towards culture in learning English, encountered difficulties and possible solutions for improvements and carried out in Vietnamese so that the interviewees could completely understand the questions and comfortably express their thoughts.

The data obtained from questionnaires was analyzed and calculated by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 20.0 (SPSS). The reliability coefficient Cronbach’s Alpha was computed to check the reliability of this instrument. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were calculated to examine the respondents’ opinions on encountered cultural hindrances in their English speaking skill. The data from interviews was transcribed and translated into English then analyzed by content analysis to get insights into difficulties related to culture those English-majored freshmen at Can Tho University face during their speaking learning process.

The scale test was run to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire. The results showed that the reliability coefficient Cronbach's Alpha was acceptable ( $\alpha = 0.744$ ) to guarantee for reliable data analysis.

The Table 1 below presents the reliability of the questionnaires in collecting data.

**Table 1: The reliability of the questionnaire**

Number of participants	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
100	29	0.744

To examine the overall perception of EFL freshmen at EFL, CTU towards cultural obstacles in English speaking, descriptive statistics was computed and displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Summary Items Statistics**

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Items	3.285	2.270	4.060	1.790	1.789	.157	29

As can be seen from the table, the Mean score is 3.285, which is higher than the accepted score of the five-point scale ( $M = 3.0$ ). This Mean score indicates that perception of EFL students is higher than average. The following parts will illustrate specific points.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following would be the results from the two research questions through the tools of questionnaire and interviews.

#### 3.1. The responses to the questionnaire

From the first research question, "What are Vietnamese cultural obstacles that affect EFL students in speaking English?" Here are the obstacles mentioned.

##### 3.1.1. Face-saving

**Table 3: Perception of respondents towards face-saving in speaking English**

	Statements	Percentage				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I am afraid of losing face when I speak English wrong.	2	13	17	56	3
2	I am afraid that people will talk behind my back if I give my own opinions.	0	27	27	43	3

3	I pretend to be knowledgeable in communication with other English learners.	4	31	26	37	2
4	I do not have ideas to speak out.	2	19	23	47	9

The percentage of respondents who are afraid of losing face when speaking English wrong is 59%, which is nearly four times more than those who are not. Noticeably, 46 respondents are fearful for being talked behind their back if they give opinions. More than half of the surveyed students agree that they do not have enough ideas to speak out, comparing with 21% of the total has opposite ideas. And in Item 3, this negative statement shows that students with 31% did not pretend to be knowledgeable when communicating with their classmates.

### 3.1.2. High context communication

The results in the table below draw that 66% of respondents expect interlocutors to understand their implications. One out of three prefer to use long sentences in speaking English and the proportion of those who like using complicated structures is slightly higher (36%). Twenty seven students agree that they do not go straight to the point when they speak English.

**Table 4: Perception of respondents towards high-context communication in speaking English**

	Statements	Percentage				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I do not go straight to the point when speaking English.	2	35	36	22	5
2	I expect other people to understand my implications.	2	7	25	48	18
3	I prefer to use long sentences in speaking English.	2	21	43	31	2
4	I prefer using complicated structures in speaking English.	2	30	32	36	0
5	I do not like using implications in speaking English.	2	18	36	42	2



### 3.1.3. Interdependent attitude

**Table 5: Perception of respondents towards interdependent attitude in speaking English**

	Statements	Percentage				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I am afraid of giving my opinion in a foreign language.	4	9	33	48	6
2	I do not give my opinion because I think someone else with the same idea will speak up.	3	28	27	38	4
3	I prefer the ideas that many people agree on instead of my own ideas.	7	30	30	29	4

Fifty-four out of one hundred students are afraid of giving opinions in a foreign language and up to 42 respondents choose to wait for someone else with the same idea will speak up instead of raising their own voice. The number of students who prefer the ideas that many people agree on are approximate the number of those who disagree, 32 and 37 out of 100 respectively.

### 3.1.4. Conflict avoidance/Being outstanding avoidance

As shown in the following table, 45% of surveyed EFL students agree that they only speak English when being asked. Up to 58 participants avoid being “outstanding” when expressing themselves. 58 out of 100 students preclude conflicts when they have disagreed ideas with other people. More than 40 respondents do not dare to give opinions when teachers’ opinions are different from theirs.

**Table 6: Perception of respondents towards conflict/being outstanding avoidance in speaking English**

	Statements	Percentage				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I am afraid of giving disagreed opinions.	1	41	25	31	2
2	I do not like to debate to protect my point of views.	4	34	28	32	2
3	I only speak English when I am asked to do so.	1	26	28	44	1
4	I do not want to be “outstanding” when expressing myself.	3	21	18	46	12
5	I totally agree with my teachers without any doubts.	1	21	43	31	4
6	I do not dare to give my	1	24	33	40	2

	opinions if they are different from my teachers'.					
7	I avoid conflicts even when I have opposite ideas with other people.	1	16	28	48	7

### 3.1.5. Hesitation/Timidity

**Table 7: Perception of respondents towards hesitation/timidity in speaking English**

	Statements	Percentage				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I am not confident to speak English individually in front of people.	1	19	18	57	5
2	I am more comfortable when speaking English in a small group than in front of many people.	1	4	20	52	23
3	I hesitate when I want to say something in English.	0	11	24	59	6

Table 8 reveals that 62 % respondents are not confident to speak English individually in front of people in comparison with 20% of those who disagree. Three – fourths of the students are more comfortable when speaking English in a small group than in front of many people. It is noticeable that 65 out of 100 students hesitate when they want express something in English.

### 3.1.6. Gender prejudices

**Table 8: Perception of respondents towards gender prejudices in speaking English**

	Statements	Percentage				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	In speaking English, I think men's opinions are more persuasive than women's.	28	36	18	17	1
2	I think <i>women</i> are more timid in expressing ideas in English than <i>men</i> .	22	25	26	26	1

Although the number of respondents disapproving the statement that *men's* opinions are more persuasive than *women's* is more than a half, nearly 20% of students still agree on this. Similarly, 27 % students suppose that *women* are more timid in expressing ideas in English than *men*.

### 3.1.7. Suggestions

From the things mentioned above related to “cultural obstacles”, the following would be suggestions.

**Table 9: Suggestions to overcome cultural obstacles in speaking English**

	Statements	Percentage				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I think my English is not good enough to join English Clubs.	6	23	32	32	7
2	I cannot find English environment to practice.	2	18	27	40	13
3	I want to join English clubs to improve my speaking skill.	1	5	14	47	33
4	I do not have many opportunities to speak English with native speakers.	0	6	14	55	25
5	Speaking hours in class is too short for me to practice English.	2	14	31	32	21

Table 9 indicates that the majority of students want to join English clubs to improve their speaking skill (80%). The same percentage of total agrees that they do not have many opportunities to talk to native speakers and above and speaking hours in class is too short for 53 % of the respondents.

## 3.2. The findings from the interviews

### 3.2.1. Hesitation and Timidity

Four in seven interviewees experienced hesitation in speaking English.

Student 1 said, *“I speak up when I think my opinions are appropriate. In other cases, I hesitate a bit before I speak.”*

Student 3 answered, *“I was timid to say something or answer questions in class but now I am not.”*

Student 4 reported that she only answer questions when her teachers asked. She felt more active when practicing speaking with her friends.

Student 7 expressed, *“It depends on situations. When I am confident with my ideas, I will speak out. In case I am not confident with them, I do not express them.”*

### 3.2.2. Reasons for hesitation/timidity

In identifying the reasons for hesitation in speaking English, “the lack of confidence”, “the fear of being laughed at”, “the fear of speaking wrong” are common reasons that most interviewees agreed on (4 out of 7 interviewees).

Student 5 said, *“Many people are afraid of speaking wrong and being laughed or they worry that other people don’t understand what they say.”*

Student 6 answered, *“I think they lack confidence or are afraid of losing face.”*

Student 3 replied, *“The reasons are lacking of confidence and being afraid of speaking wrong. I was in these situations. If I speak English wrong in classes, my teachers and my friends can understand but in real life, foreigners don’t understand me.”*

Student 1 agreed that the lack of confidence is one of the most influential factors leading to hesitation in speaking English.

Additionally, “learning style” is also a reason as student 7 expressed her opinion.

*“I usually hesitate in speaking English. I think it is because of learning style. I spend much time on doing grammar exercises and don’t focus on speaking and listening. I am also afraid of being laughed if I speak wrong.”*

### 3.2.3. Influences of characteristics and environment on learning speaking English

The vast majority of the interviewees, specifically 6 out of 7, agreed that characteristics and environment are influential in learning English.

Student 1 stated, *“I think characteristics and environment affect English speaking learning a lot. If I am in an environment with a lot of active and confident people, I tend to become more active. Students from English-speaking countries are very confident. Characteristics, I think, also affect speaking learning. If a person is timid, his or her timidity remains when learning English.”*

Student 3 answered, *“I think they affect one’s speaking skill. But when we learn a language, we need to accustom to its culture. If we are timid, we can try to reduce it and become more confident.”*

In student 2’s opinion, characteristics and environment have effects on English speaking skill and vice versa.

*“A person is preserved in speaking Vietnamese but may become more active and confident when he or she speaks English. I think English leaning process and its culture affect his or her characteristics.”*

### 3.2.4. Suggestions

To overcome the lack of confidence in speaking English, “creating English environment” seems to be most effective way on which 100% interviewees agreed.

Student 2 proposed, *“My suggestion is practicing as much as possible. If you cannot find English environment to practice, you can create yourself, record or practice in front of mirrors.”*

Student 3 suggested, *“I think practicing speaking, joining English clubs and extra activities with English environment can help with confidence in English speaking.”*

Student 4 stated, *“Practicing speaking outside classrooms is very important because speaking hours in class is not enough for us to practice speaking skill. Practice makes me more confident. I also think reading books and watching films in English help a lot in understanding culture so that we can learn English better.”*

In addition, “learning culture” is an effective approach to accustom to English as student 7 suggested.

*“I think we need to learn about target culture to find out differences and similarities in order to address and minimize weaknesses. I suppose that we can gain confidence by participating contests, activities and practicing more.”*

### **3. Conclusion**

This study was conducted with the aims to point out some obstacles related to Vietnamese culture in EFL students' speaking skill and basing on EFL students' perception towards cultural hindrances they encounter, suggestions for improvements are proposed. The findings from this study indicated that EFL learners' speaking performances may be affected by some cultural impediments comprising face-saving, high-context communication, conflict avoidance/being outstanding avoidance, interdependent attitude and hesitation/timidity. In learning foreign languages which belong to “low context communication” English in particular, which share few similarities with Vietnamese, approaching methodology should be carefully taken into considerations. Adjustments and changes in learning style to meet target language requirements should be strategically encouraged and implemented.

### **Acknowledgments**

First of all, the researchers would like to pose their sincere thanks to lecturers of English at Can Tho University (CTU) Vietnam, especially those at School of Social Sciences & Humanities (SSSH) and School of Foreign Languages (SFL), CTU, for their teaching and supervisions towards the Bachelor of English Studies. Secondly, their great thanks would come to EFL students at SSSH and SFL, CTU, for their kind cooperation to the research through the questionnaires and interviews. Also, the great thanks would go to the School Boards of Dien Hai (Bac Lieu Province) and Chau Thanh (Kien Giang Province) High schools for their cooperation in teaching practice and professional development. And last but not least, their deep thanks would go to ICELS 2018 Organizing Committee at School of Foreign Languages, Suranaree University of Technology, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, for their supporting this article to be published in order to bring this paper to those interested in Vietnamese education, especially English teaching and learning on the way to the global and regional cooperation and development.

## References

- Al Farabi, R. (2008). **Cultural Barriers in English Language Learning: A Socio-Linguistic Perspective**. *Culture*, 3-4.
- Allen, I. E., & Seaman, C. A. (2007). **Likert scales and data analyses**. *Quality progress*, 40(7), 64.
- Amin, A. (2015). **Cultural barriers on English language Teaching and Learning in EFL context**. *Research Journal of Recent Sciences*, 4(1), 32-36.
- Arnold, J. (2000). **Speak Easy: How to ease students into oral production**. Retrieved March, 14(2014), 07-19.
- Bashir, M., Azeem, M., & Dogar, A. H. (2011). **Factor effecting students' English speaking skills**. *British journal of arts and social sciences*, 2(1), 34-50. Accessed from [www.hltmag.co.uk/mar03/martmar035.rtf](http://www.hltmag.co.uk/mar03/martmar035.rtf) (22/04/2017).
- Bayyurt, Y. (2006). **Non-native English language teachers' perspective on culture in English as a Foreign Language classrooms**. *Teacher Development*, 10(2), 233-247.
- Bình, D. T., Diller, A. M., & Sutherland, K. (1975). **A handbook for teachers of Vietnamese students: Hints for dealing with cultural differences in schools**. Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Bonvillain, N. (2013). **Language, culture, and communication**. Pearson Higher Ed.
- Brick, J., & Louie, G. (1984). **Language and culture: Vietnam**. Sydney, Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1978). **Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena**. In *Questions and politeness: Strategies in social interaction* (pp. 56-311). Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, R. (1998). **Doing business in Asia: A cultural perspective**. Addison-Wesley Longman.
- Cakir, I. (2006). **Developing Cultural Awareness in Foreign Language Teaching**. *Online Submission*.
- Chavez, M. (2002). **We say" culture" and students ask" What?": University students' definitions of foreign language culture**. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*, 129-140.
- Chot, P. (2015). **Factors affecting students' learning English speaking skills: A Case of second year students of English Department in Gambella College of Teachers Education** (Doctoral dissertation).
- Dörnyei, Z., & Kormos, J. (2000). **The role of individual and social variables in oral task performance**. *Language teaching research*, 4(3), 275-300.
- Elmes, D. (2013). **The relationship between language and culture**. *National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Kanoya International Exchange and Language Education Center*, available at: [www2.lib.nifs-k.ac.jp/HPBU/annals/an46/46-11.pdf](http://www2.lib.nifs-k.ac.jp/HPBU/annals/an46/46-11.pdf) (accessed 15 March 2014).
- Flowerdew, L. (1998). **A cultural perspective on group work**. *ELT journal*, 52(4), 323-329.
- Friedman, J. (1994). **Cultural identity and global process** (Vol. 31). Sage.

- Genc, B., & Bada, E. (2005). **Culture in language learning and teaching.** *The Reading Matrix*, 5(1).
- Genc, B., & Bada, E. (2005). **Culture in language learning and teaching.** *The Reading Matrix*, 5(1).
- Gudykunst, W. B., Ting-Toomey, S., & Wiseman, R. L. (1991). **Taming the beast: Designing a course in intercultural communication.**
- Gudykunst, W. B. (2004). **Bridging differences: Effective intergroup communication.** Sage.
- Hau, D. T. N., & Utsumi, L. (2008). **Trends in teaching and learning English in Vietnam: Implications for the future.**
- Hoa, N. T. (2016). **Cultural obstacles in speaking English: EFL students' difficulties and teachers' suggestions.** Can Tho University.
- Hofstede, G. (1984). **National cultures and corporate cultures.** In L.A. Samovar & R.E. Porter (Eds.), **Communication Between Cultures.** Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Hofstede, G. (2003). **What is culture? A reply to Baskerville.** *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 28(7), 811-813.
- Hornby, H. S. (2015). **Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary**, New 8th International Student's Edition.
- Huong, P. T. T. (2008). **How Vietnamese Culture Influence on Learning and Teaching English.** *Online Submission.*
- Kieu, H. T. (2015). **An investigation into perception of the first year English - majored students toward common problems in listening comprehension: A case at Can Tho Univerity.** Can Tho University.
- Khan, T. J., & Khan, N. (2016). **Obstacles in Learning English as a Second Language among Intermediate Students of Districts Mianwali and Bhakkar, Pakistan.** *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(02), 154.
- Kramsch, C. (1998). **Language and culture.** Oxford University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (2003). **Teaching Culture and Intercultural Competence.** Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Kroeber, A. L., & Kluckhohn, C. (1952). **Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions.** *Papers. Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University.*
- Kumagai, Y. (1994). **The Effects of Culture on Language Learning and Ways of Communication: The Japanese Case.**
- Lederach, J.P. (1995). **Preparing for peace: Conflict transformation across cultures.** Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Lewis, M., & McCook, F. (2002). **Cultures of teaching: Voices from Vietnam.** *ELT journal*, 56(2), 146-153.
- McDermott, R., & O'Dell, C. (2001). **Overcoming cultural barriers to sharing knowledge.** *Journal of knowledge management*, 5(1), 76-85.

- Mebrouki, H. (2012). **The effect of cultural interference on the EFL learners' speaking skill** (Doctoral dissertation, BISKRA UNIVERSITY).
- Mirdehghan M., Hoseinikargar N., Navab S. and Mahmoodi T., **Cultural barriers: Pros and Cons on ELT in Iran**. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, V(1)
- Nguyen, T. H. (2002). **Vietnam: Cultural background for ESL/EFL teachers**. *The Review of Vietnamese Studies*, 2(1), 1-6.
- Mydans, Seth. **Across cultures, English is the word**. *The New York Times* 14 (2007).
- Nguyen, T. H. (2002). **Vietnam: Cultural background for ESL/EFL teachers**. *The Review of Vietnamese Studies*, 2(1), 1-6.
- Nhu, P. T. T. (2010). **Influence of socio cultural perspective in learning English on first-year students of English Department, CFL – DNU**.
- Ogbu, J. U. (1992). **Understanding cultural diversity and learning**. *Educational researcher*, 21(8), 5-14.
- Pham, T. H. N. (2011). **Communicating with Vietnamese in intercultural contexts: Insights into Vietnamese values**. Nha Xuat Ban Giao Duc Viet Nam.
- Sang, L. T. (2016). **An investigation into general English teachers' intercultural awareness level and their practice of intercultural language teaching**. Can Tho University.
- Sawir, E. (2005). **Language difficulties of international students in Australia: The effects of prior learning experience**. *International Education Journal*, 6(5), 567-580.
- Shemshadsara, Z. G. (2012). **Developing cultural awareness in foreign language teaching**. *English Language Teaching*, 5(3), 95.
- Shumin, K. (2002). **Factors to consider: Developing adult EFL students' speaking abilities**. *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*, 12, 204-211.
- Sullivan, P. N. (1996). **Sociocultural Influences on Classroom Interactional Styles**. *TESOL Journal*, 6(1), 32-34.
- Tanveer, M. (2007). **Investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language** (Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Glasgow).
- Tomlinson, B., & Dat, B. (2004). **The contributions of Vietnamese learners of English to ELT methodology**. *Language Teaching Research*, 8(2), 199-222.
- Triandis, H. C. (2001). **Individualism–collectivism and personality**. *Journal of personality*, 69(6), 907-924.
- Trinh, N. T. (2016). **Cultural factors influential to students' participation in group work in EFL speaking classes**. Can Tho University.
- Tuan, N. H., & Mai, T. N. (2015). **Factors affecting students' speaking performance at Le Thanh Hien High School**. *Asian Journal of Educational Research*, 3(2), 8-23.
- Valsiner, J. (2007). **Culture in minds and societies: Foundations of cultural psychology**. *Psychol. Stud.* (September 2009), 54, 238-239.



Yến, V. T. H. (2016). **Cultural Differences: A Barrier to Native English Teachers in English as a Foreign Language Contexts**. *VNU Journal of Science: Foreign Studies*, 30(1).