Instruction-Giving in EFL Classrooms: A Case of a University in Viet Nam

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https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.24423

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Instruction-giving; current practice; EFL classrooms

Organizing effective instruction is a characteristic of classroom management, which minimizes time wasting and keeps students moving at a good pace. The primary purpose of this study is to explore the current practice of instruction-giving strategies being utilized in EFL classrooms in a Vietnamese public university. To achieve this goal, both qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized to explore the critical characteristics of instruction-giving. Classroom observations were the primary data collection method. During 19 observations, 25 instructions were noted for analysis. The findings of this study present certain characteristics of instruction-giving, namely attention-grabbing skills, repetition, the use of mother tongue and language, demonstration, and checking understanding to support instruction delivery. Also, the study's findings propose weaknesses that EFL teachers can take into consideration for better instruction-giving.

Introduction

Effective instruction-giving in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms plays a vital role in facilitating students' language acquisition and overall academic development (Angulo, 2023). In the context of the ever-evolving educational landscape in Vietnam, where the demand for English proficiency continues to grow, understanding the intricacies of instruction-giving becomes increasingly crucial. Prior research has emphasized the critical role of instruction-giving in fostering effective learning outcomes in EFL settings. The significance of effective instruction is highlighted in promoting students' active engagement and language development (Gündüz & Kılıçkaya, 2021). Similarly, Sowell (2017) underscores that when students do not understand what they are supposed to do, the activities may be on the verge of failure.

Despite its undeniable importance, the specific practices of instruction-giving in EFL classrooms, particularly within the context of Vietnamese universities, still need to be explored in the current area of research. Only a few studies have been done, including Nguyen (2019),

which explores instruction-giving practices in EFL classrooms. However, the study only utilizes a conversation analysis approach to analyze. Recognizing the limited attention given to EFL instruction-giving methods in Vietnam, my study seeks to bridge the gap and contribute valuable insights to the existing knowledge base in the field.

Instruction is a plan of teaching and learning activities in which learning is organized with components, including teachers, students, materials, and learning environment (Dick & Carey, 1996). In our study, we focus on instruction-giving, which refers to how teachers provide guidelines for classroom activities. In the context of a Vietnamese university, this study seeks to comprehensively analyze the challenges and effective guidelines that EFL teachers employ in facilitating language acquisition and proficiency among their students. Through an in-depth examination of the instruction-giving dynamics, the study attempts to contribute to the existing pedagogical practices in EFL instruction, offering practical recommendations for the enhancement of instruction-giving strategies in Vietnamese university settings.

Literature Review

Definition of instruction-giving

There have been various ways to define and interpret the definition of instruction-giving.

In the field of education, Şen (2021) defines instruction-giving as the act of conveying information or guidance to facilitate learning. He emphasizes that effective instructions should be clear, concise, and tailored to the learner's needs. In detail, Marzano (2003) acknowledges instructions as verbal or written orders that belong to classroom management strategies. Similarly, Sowell (2017) supports this view that when a task is presented to students, it is vital to provide instruction; before beginning the assignment, pupils must have a complete understanding of what they are going to perform; otherwise, the activity will be a failure. As a result, the main purpose of instruction is to inform pupils of what they must do before engaging in an activity.

Instruction-giving sequence

The sequence of instruction-giving typically includes the preparation stage, where teachers carefully plan and analyze instructions; the delivery stage, where teachers employ various strategies to convey information to students effectively; and the post-delivery stage, where teachers check for understanding and monitor the activity (Sowell, 2017).

Research has indicated that pre-planning instructions are a fundamental phase in delivering instructions. Kemma (2019) highlights that teachers should think about the right words and illustrations to use to ensure students understand the activity. Woodberry and Aldrich (2000) advise teachers to write them down as they prepare the lesson plan for the lessons. The words for instructions should be familiar to students; hence, if the sentences are too long or complicated, omit the redundant words as long as the original meanings remain (Scrivener, 2005).

In the delivery stage, teachers should get students' attention first (Sowell, 2017). He confirms that there are various strategies to get attention, such as ringing the bell, clapping hands,

blowing a whistle, raising your hand, or even standing still. According to (Arifadah et al., 2020a), clue phrases such as "Time to start"; "Listen up" are commonly used to get attention. Besides, he insists that giving handouts during delivery may distract students' concentration because they focus on handouts instead of what teachers say. The activities will inevitably fail if the students do not listen to the instructions. Holmes (2014) mentions that teachers can use three types of directives to deliver instruction: imperatives, interrogatives, and declaratives. Imperatives are more effective and suggested due to shortness and conciseness. Some principles, such as using repetition, demonstrating, giving a time limit, and using the mother tongue, are recognized as the key to effective instruction in the classroom (Sowell, 2017).

Harmer (2007) underscores that after giving instruction, it is important to ensure that all students understand the requests; therefore, if students are encouraged to ask questions, their comprehension abilities can be enhanced (Loaiza & Jean, 2022). Kemma (2019) elucidates that teachers normally use oral checking questions such as "Do you understand?"; "OK" to check understanding; however, there are various better methods teachers could utilize to grasp the situation, including inviting a student to describe the exercise or asking someone to perform the activity in front of the class (Harmer, 2007). If instructions are given in the right order, there is clarity, and students typically do not get the teacher's point (Loaiza & Jean, 2023; Sowell, 2017).

Strategies and Techniques for Effective Instruction-Giving in EFL Classrooms

Instructions and how to deliver them can determine whether a lesson succeeds or fails (El & Abderrazak, 2019). This is especially true in EFL classrooms, where students are learning a new language and may not be as proficient as native speakers. In this context, teachers need to use strategies and techniques to help students understand what they should do.

First and foremost, teachers should speak less and use simple, understandable vocabulary while delivering instructions for students to follow (Loaiza & Jean (2023). Scrivener (2005, p.90) shares the same perspective that "teachers use short sentences — one sentence for each key piece of information', which is referred to as "KISS" in the literature, which stands for "keep instructions short and simple." Besides, teachers deliver good instruction in classrooms using appropriate demonstration, repetition, or mother tongue support (Sowell, 2017).

Secondly, all English learners come to the classroom with their first language (L1) (Harmer, 2007), and beginners have a tendency to translate everything they learn from English to their L1 to understand what teachers explain. "It is a natural process of learning a foreign language" (Harmer, 2007, p. 38). It has become a topic of controversy that teachers should use the mother tongue- their first language (L1) or the second language (L2) to deliver instruction in the classrooms (Sowell, 2017). On the one hand, teachers can explain the learners' L1, allowing for more precise understanding, followed by tasks requiring students to repeat the instructions in their L1 to assess comprehension (Harmer, 2007). Using the mother tongue can also foster metalinguistic awareness, enhancing language proficiency (Yüzlü & Atay, 2020; Cummins, 2006). On the other hand, we should not abandon the advantages of creating an English environment for English learners (Harmer, 2007). Besides, Le (2022) clarifies that advanced students hold a negative attitude towards using L1 in their English classes, while elementary and intermediate students generally perceive the judicious use of their L1 positively. Allocating

time for L1 instruction could divert valuable exposure to the target language (Gündüz & Kılıçkaya, 2021). Inappropriate L1 use during activities may hinder students' understanding of contextual cues and inferences (Paker & Karaağaç, 2015). Hence, it is essential to balance using the L1 for support and providing ample opportunities for target language practice and production (Wilden & Porsch, 2020).

Thirdly, teachers' most difficult problem in classroom management is having students pay attention (Arifadah et al., 2020a). According to Taylor and Parsons (2011), student attention encompasses willingness, need, desire, and compulsion to engage and succeed in lessons, with paying attention to teachers' explanations being paramount. McIntosh et al., 2004) provide various strategies that exist to capture and maintain students' focus, including hissing, sounding, singing, and clapping. Direct requests for attention and physical movements like clapping hands or using body language are also useful (Gumilar et al., 2023). Despite employing attention-grabbing techniques, some students may still need to respond due to distractions like conversing with peers or engaging in unrelated tasks (Arifadah et al., 2020). Hence, teachers must employ suitable strategies to capture students' attention effectively.

Finally, visual aids and technologies also play a crucial role in delivering effective instruction. According to Shabiralyani et al. (2015), visual aids help teachers quickly convey concepts to students and pique their interest. Technology integration, including the use of interactive whiteboards, could enhance student engagement and motivation (Ha, 2021).

Factors influencing instruction-giving in EFL classrooms

According to Phan (2018) and Şen (2021), the key factors affecting their instruction-giving are activity-based, instruction-based, student-based, and teacher-based.

As a teacher-based factor, Linse (2006) states that problem comes from unplanned and unstructured oral instructions. Some teachers do not prepare instructions before the lessons because giving instructions could be spontaneous.

Activity-based factors refer to the complexity of instructions, which require long and specific procedures (Swift, 2008). Sometimes, instructions with a format or topic that students are unfamiliar with or above their level are examples of instruction-based factors (Şen, 2021). Students sometimes stop listening before the teachers finish the instructions, which causes misunderstanding (Arifadah et al., 2020b).

For student-based factors, Weinstein and Andrew (2007) indicate that the process might be more difficult if students need to pay attention in class. Some students are distracted by their studs around the table, chatting with mates, or doing their work (Weinstein, 2007). Swift (2008) clarifies that some students might think they have understood the instructions while they truly have yet to. It is called a mismatch between them.

Noticeably, Instruction-based factors are the form or content of instructions that students are not familiar with or, above their level, long or complex instructions (Şen, 2021). Instructions with strange forms, unknown vocabulary, and long sentences with confusing explanations entail more teacher clarification, paraphrasing, simplifying, monitoring, and increased teacher talking time. Consequently, as Hughes et al. (2007) concluded, students stop listening before the

teachers finish the instructions, which causes misunderstanding.

Previous studies

Several researchers have studied instruction-giving principles, and other investigations are relevant to the strategies and techniques of instruction delivery in classrooms (e.g., El & Abderrazak, 2019; Şen, 2021; Angulo, 2023; Nguyen, 2019).

The study of El and Abderrazak (2019) revealed several key strategies that have been found to enhance instruction-giving in EFL classrooms. It also provides clear and concise instructions that are crucial for effective communication and comprehension. Teachers should use simple language, break down complex tasks into manageable steps, and provide visual aids or demonstrations when necessary.

Şen (2021) provides a detailed overview of teachers' perspectives on how to plan instruction, secure students' attention, and give and check instruction in the classroom. The study finally points out the determining factors that affect instruction-giving, including activity-based, instruction-based, student-based, timing of the syllabus, and teacher-based.

Angulo (2023) highlights the significance of effective instruction-giving in enhancing students' performance in English lessons. The findings also emphasize the crucial role of educators in ensuring that learners comprehend the requirements of class activities and experience a sense of accomplishment in completing various tasks. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of delivering instructions in a clear and easily understandable manner, regardless of the chosen instructional approach.

Several studies have also been conducted in Vietnam about instruction-giving in EFL classes.

Nguyen (2019) characterizes two types of primary instruction delivery methods: interactive instruction, which involves students' participation, and monologue-type instruction, which involves little learners' involvement. It is emphasized that one technique for measuring learners' understanding without having to devote time to concept-checking questions is to ask students to participate in the teacher's lesson.

Furthermore, Phan's (2018) findings illustrate that there is a significant disconnect between what experienced teachers believe and what they actually do. Participating teachers are aware of the benefits of interactive activities to students' communication skills. However, they adopt a teacher-centered approach in the classroom and use much of the first language to give instruction instead of the target language.

This literature review provides a comprehensive overview of instruction-giving in EFL classrooms and highlights the importance of adopting effective instruction-giving strategies, such as demonstrating rather than simply explaining, to enhance comprehension and promote active participation among students. It can serve as a foundation for conducting and analyzing the data, which will delve further into the instruction-giving practices in EFL classrooms at the university in Vietnam.

Research Question

To find out the recent practices of instruction-giving in EFL classrooms. The research aims to answer the following question:
How do EFL teachers give instructions in EFL classrooms at a Vietnamese University?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The study was conducted at a public university in the capital of Vietnam. The university provides courses in various majors and subjects, such as Information technology, electronics, marketing, tourism, languages, and so on. The university puts effort into educating non-English significant students on English as a Foreign Language (EFL), providing students with the necessary skills to communicate effectively in English and meet the requirements of languages in their career path.

This study's participants were random EFL teachers who were both new and experienced in teaching English. The random selection of EFL teachers as participants mitigates the risk of unreliable research outcomes and provides a comprehensive overview of the entire teaching faculty at the research site. Nineteen teachers were observed in total, and each lesson lasted 50 minutes.

Table 1.

Participants' work experience

Year of experience	
<5 years	5-20 years
7	12

As shown in Table 1, seven EFL participants have less than 5 years of teaching experience experience, while 12 participative participants have experience teaching for over 5 years.

All the students were non-English majors. All the lessons taught basic English for communication; hence, the level of all classes varied from A1 to B1 according to CEFR standard (the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

Design of the Study

The study was conducted using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the research question. Nineteen lessons were observed and audio recorded during the research process to collect the data. An observation checklist is adapted from Sowell (2017) to evaluate the effectiveness of instructions that given in EFL classrooms. The checklist consists of 15 criteria that evaluate the effectiveness of instructions throughout three stages: the preparation stage, delivery stage, and post-delivery stage. The criteria in the checklist were

grouped based on three stages of instruction-giving, each of which criterion belongs to.

Data collection & analysis

As part of a broader thesis, this minor study employed observation as a primary data collection instrument to find out the current practices of instruction-giving in EFL classes and the strategies and techniques used while giving instruction.

The observation is used to gather live data about teachers' practices in the classroom setting. A consent letter from the university's principal was approved before conducting the observation. The major goal of the observation was to understand how teachers give instructions in a Vietnamese university context. Each teacher is observed once only in one 50-minute lesson at the teacher's convenience. There were 19 observations throughout the research, and 25 instruction-giving observations were observed in total. The name of each teacher was numbered from one to 19 based on the observation order. Besides, teacher 1 with instruction 1 and 2 was coded based on 1.1 and 1.2. This was coded similarly to other teachers and given instructions.

There is a huge amount of literature on qualitative and quantitative data analysis. To make sense of the qualitative data gathered for the study, it was noted, analyzed, and categorized based on instruction-giving characteristics. The number of instruction-giving following instruction-giving techniques or without instruction-giving techniques was calculated and analyzed to explore the percentage of each characteristic of each instruction.

Along with class observation field notes, each observation was audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

Results/Findings

After investigating the data, the section illustrates several typical extracts of the research findings on the current state of instruction-giving in EFL classrooms at the case study site.

Teachers utilize some instruction-giving strategies effectively.

Teachers effectively establish time constraints for activities and employ repetition to reinforce instructions. Firstly, students tend to work more seriously when given limited time for each activity. For example, in the activity of listing materials, teacher 5.1 instructed: "So 2 mins, let's start. You have two mins." thanks to giving a specific time, students focused on working in 2 minutes and were aware that two minutes later the teacher would check their results.

Secondly, teachers cannot guarantee that when they give instructions, 100% of students are paying attention, not doing their own work, or wandering their minds elsewhere. Therefore, teachers must repeat instructions to students, and teachers at this university have applied this technique relatively well. For example, teacher 7.2 said: "Work individually. Close your books. Close all your books. Work individually." in contrast to 7.2, teacher 3.1 said, "I want you to work in two groups. Group A, group B, OK? I want each group to come to the board and ring the bell to answer the question. OK? I will show the questions in the slide, and then you will ring the bell." "Are you clear?". On the contrary, very few students in instruction 3.1 responded with the answer "Are you clear?" because they had not yet had time to think through the

instructions they received.

Most EFL teachers used long and academic structures to deliver instructions.

Short and imperatives, which include most words at levels A1 and A2, help students quickly understand information. In case instruction 5.1 "Now, as you can see in the book or in the slide here, I would like you to work individually, and in two minutes, you have to write as many words related to materials and properties that you have learned in lesson 1, and you have learned online.", "What I would like you to do here is I will say a letter, and you raise your hand to give me a word; if you can give me the word correctly, you can sit down with your row or column" because the instructions are too academic, lengthy, grammatically complicated, students face confusion, difficulty in filtering out the main ideas to focus on, thus potentially consume additional time.

On the contrary, instructions with imperative sentences, such as "First, work individually" and "Then, look at the picture," without redundant words such as "I would like you to…", "I want you to…", "And you guys have to…", or "What I would like you to do here is…", present minimal challenges for students in comprehending and adhering to the specified requirements, thereby resulting in significant time savings during the lesson.

When an activity requires multiple steps, each of which requires different instructions, the teacher should break it down rather than giving all the instructions in one utterance. Sequential conjunctions such as "first," "then," "next," and "after that" and simple linkers, namely "and"; and "so," benefit students by helping them visualize the steps they need to take in the upcoming activity.

The use of mother tongue appears among EFL teachers.

The mother tongue was used to support EFL teachers' instructions at the case study site. In some situations, teacher 7 used their mother tongue permittably because the teacher only spoke the mother tongue when she wanted to check students' understanding. Several EFL teachers, namely 3 and 10, habitually translate instructions for students as soon as they are given. The data reveals two reasons for this phenomenon. Primarily, teachers express concerns regarding their students' potential difficulties in comprehending English instructions, prompting them to consistently provide translations in the student's native language to ensure the students fully grasp all the necessary requirements. They are not aware that students can completely get their requests because, in addition to verbal instructions, other non-verbal aids such as slideshows and body language support students partly understanding the instructions. In addition, speak-fast teachers tend to deliver the instruction repeatedly; once English instructions fail, they switch to using their mother tongue to interpret the requirements.

Within the subset of Vietnamese-speaking teachers, some exhibit a tendency to intermingle both languages in a single sentence. For example, in instruction 15, the teacher said: "There are some given information, ở đây các bạn nhìn hai các cái phần task này nhá, A and B, sau đó sẽ thành lập câu hỏi liên quan đến các từ đã cho sẵn ở đây, cái hoạt động giống mình đi thi ý", means "There are some given information. Look at these two task sections, A and B, and then you will form questions related to the given words here. This activity is similar to participating in an English quiz, alright?". in instruction 10.1, the teacher mentioned: "OK nào, bây giờ các bạn

làm gì nhỉ? Thảo luận theo cặp trong 8 phút, and then hỏi và give position, đưa ra vị trí của các địa điểm công cộng trong thành phố, dựa trên cái bản đồ, OK?", which means "Alright, now what are you guys going to do? Discuss in pairs for 8 minutes, and then ask and give positions, indicate the locations of public places in the city based on the map, OK?" in English. Some even spoke Vietnamese entirely to give instructions to students. These situations, which have not been illustrated in any previous study yet, can be considered superfluous and constitute an abuse of the English language.

The habit of checking understanding

After the delivery stage, four behaviors are observed: Asking checking questions, getting summary or repetition from students, asking for demonstration or sample, and not checking the given instructions.

Many teachers predominantly employ the questioning technique as a means of assessing comprehension. Commonly utilized phrases in this context encompass:

"OK?"
"Is this clear to you?"
"Do you understand?"
"Got it?"
"Understand?"
"Are you clear?"

In fact, the students ignore the questions to check their understanding. They tend to remain silent for several reasons. First, they need help understanding the instructions. In some cases, they understand the requirements. However, they are shy and too lazy to reply to the questions. Consequently, when students reply indecisively, teachers also implicitly understand that their students have already grasped the information. It is considered a bad habit in the classrooms because this situation may cause misunderstanding among students and put the activity's success at risk. For instance, in instruction 11.1, the teacher used their first language to support the instruction and then checked understanding by asking, "You got it?" However, students were still confused and needed clarification about what they had to do; some worked individually instead of in pairs as required.

The characteristics of instruction-giving practices in the preparation stage are presented in the table below.

Table 2

Problems in the preparation stage

Criteria	Number of "Yes"	%	Number of "No"	%
1. There is evidence that teachers prepared the instruction before delivery	22	90%	3	10%
2. Student groups are arranged before the instructor gives instructions.	8	31%	13	69%

As shown in Table 2, the number of instructions that teachers prepared the instruction before

delivery accounts for 90%; only 10% of instructions were prepared after lessons. However, most teachers needed to remember to group students before instruction delivery (69%). Table 3 shows the current practices of instruction-giving in the delivery stage.

Table 3

Problems in the delivery stage

Criteria	Number of "Yes"	%	Number of "No"	%
3. The instructor gets students' attention before giving instructions.	23	91%	2	9%
4. The instructor hands out materials at appropriate times.	6	24%	19	76%
5. The teacher uses language at or below/above students' current level of understanding.	3	12%	22	78%
6. The instructor uses imperatives to deliver the instruction.	19	76%	6	24%
7. The instructor uses extra-linguistic devices to aid meaning.	15	60%	10	40%
8. The instructor provides a time limit for the activities.	10	40%	15	60%
9. The instructor checks for understanding before letting students start an activity. How is it checked?	8	33%	13	67%
10. The instructor provides modeling/ demonstration for the activity. What types of demonstration are utilized?	11	44%	14	56%
13. Teachers use their mother tongue to give instructions	6	26%	19	74%

As shown in Table 3, the data presents on challenges encountered by teachers during the delivery stage reveals several critical areas for improvement. Notably, the figures indicate some significant prevalence of issues such as insufficient demonstration of concepts (56%) and handing out materials at inappropriate times (76%).

In terms of language use, although 78% of the instruction was given at students' current level of understanding, there needs to be more attention to imperatives in instruction-giving (76%); only a few teachers used imperatives to deliver instructions (24%). Besides, the misuse of the student's native language (L1) during instruction (26%) suggests potential communication barriers that may hinder effective knowledge transmission. A relatively lower percentage of instruction was delivered without attention acquisition (8%); almost all EFL teachers remembered to get attention before delivery.

The current practices of instruction-giving in the post-delivery stage are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Problems in the post-delivery stage

Criteria	Number of "Yes"	%	Number of "No"	%
11. The instructor monitors students after they start an activity.	25	100%	0	0%
12. The instructor gives students opportunities to ask questions in case they do not understand the activity	25	100%	0	0%
14. The instructor is available if students need further help with instructions after the activity has started.	25	100%	0	0%
15. The instructor gives instructions in a logical sequence, following the instruction order.	11	44%	14	56%

Noticeably, all EFL teachers did well in the post-delivery stage. Table 3 indicates that all EFL teachers monitored class activities, gave students opportunities to ask questions, and provided further support if necessary.

Overall, after observing and analyzing the data, 44% of the instructions were in a logical sequence and followed the given instruction order, and 56% were delivered inappropriately.

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the current state of instruction-giving practices in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms within Vietnamese universities. Through the analysis of the data collected from a diverse range of lessons and teachers, several key patterns and challenges have emerged, necessitating a comprehensive discussion of their implications within the Vietnamese educational landscape.

In terms of strengths, it is observed that teachers employed specific strategies, such as gaining attention, providing time limits, checking understanding, and monitoring the class, to enhance the instruction-giving process.

Firstly, by employing techniques like using body language or visual aids, EFL teachers at the study site can create a conducive learning environment where students are fully engaged and receptive to the forthcoming instructions. This aligns with the findings of Arifadah et al. (2020), who emphasize the role of attention-grabbing techniques in enhancing students' receptiveness to teaching content. Secondly, by setting explicit time constraints, teachers encourage students to prioritize tasks and effectively manage their time, fostering a sense of discipline and accountability in their learning process. Thirdly, using simple and concise language helps students understand. This supports Sowell's (2017, p. 14) suggestion that "using simplified language common in instruction-giving, which often includes imperatives and short sentences," is an essential technique for instruction-giving. Nguyen (2019) also shares the same finding that linguistic linkers such as "but, so, and then" significantly enhance language clarity and

guarantee that students fully comprehend the assigned tasks.

Besides, three techniques of checking instructions are implemented by EFL teachers in our case study, including asking checking questions: getting a summary or repetition from students, asking for a demonstration or sample. This finding is complementary to the study of Şen (2021), which underscores there are two main techniques with some sub-techniques observed in EFL classes in s. He adds three sub-types of questions teachers utilize: play questions, referential, and L1 display questions. The practice of regularly checking students' understanding during instruction, as highlighted in the study, reflects the mutual recognition of the pivotal role of feedback and clarification in ensuring effective comprehension. Thanks to good classroom management skills, teachers can identify any potential barriers or areas where students may require additional support. This finding aligns with the insights provided by Magno & Lizad (2015, p.24) that underscore checking understanding as a formative assessment task "to determine what the students know and do not know, what they can do and cannot do, and their misconceptions, and their confusion."

Thus, this proactive approach allows teachers to provide timely assistance, guidance, and encouragement, thereby fostering a supportive learning environment where students feel valued and understood.

In terms of weaknesses, teachers encounter instruction-giving issues, including the lack of student grouping before instruction-giving, providing demonstrations, checking understanding, misuse of the native language (L1), gaining students' attention, time-consuming processes, and using imperatives. Some remember to ask questions to check if understanding is a formality and do not really care about students' answers. Comparatively, these findings resonate with the observations made by previous studies, which highlight similar challenges faced by teachers in EFL classrooms. For instance, Sowell (2017) emphasizes that students may miss the instruction if it is carried out after grouping. Besides, it is a topic of controversy whether teachers should speak L1 in the classroom. Some argue that when dealing with logistical issues, it seems to be more practical to use L1 in the classroom. However, according to the suggestion of Meyer (2008), they should be exposed to the use of English right from their first class, and maximum use of L2 should be the goal of every language class. This approach helps students be aware that foreign languages are not merely academic subjects to be learned, but rather, they serve as vital tools for effective communication.

The challenges related to gaining students' attention align with the insights provided by Surya Gumilar et al. (2023) that emphasize the need for effective attention-grabbing strategies and provide useful techniques to gain attraction and engagement in classrooms. Additionally, long instruction delivery was contradicted by Phan (2018) in the Vietnamese context, emphasizing the role of precise language use in facilitating effective comprehension and task execution among EFL students.

The problems Vietnamese EFL teachers face are different from what happened in EFL classrooms in an Argentinian Primary school. Liruso and de Debat (2003) reveal that the most conflicting category is the inappropriate use of native language (28%) in primary school, while a few teachers forget to ask for classification before hearing the whole instruction (8%).

Notably, the percentage of each issue that teachers encounter at schools in Argentina does not exceed 30%.

Conclusion

Key themes have emerged in the current practices of instruction-giving in EFL classrooms at a Vietnamese university. First, EFL teachers at universities in Vietnam are aware of the importance of instruction-giving. Hence, they utilize quite effective strategies, namely getting attention, using demonstration, checking to understand, and using visual aids. Secondly, some try their best to speak clearly, clearly, and simply or use imperative sentences to deliver good instructions. Besides, some problems related to the misuse of the mother tongue, checking understanding, giving demonstrations, or language uses need more consideration and improvement.

The present study has some limitations that can affect the generalization of its findings. Firstly, the data were collected from a specific educational setting; therefore, the results can be only applicable to the study context and are unable to represent the perspectives of the whole community of EFL teachers and students in Vietnam. Secondly, in addition to the research instrument, which is observation, more data could have been collected through interviews for deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives of instruction-giving.

For further research on a similar topic, the effects of using the mother tongue to deliver instructions or techniques for grabbing attention could be considered. Future studies can also investigate the comparison between oral and written instruction or utilizing body language and visual aids to support instruction-giving for better classroom management.

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Biodata

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APPENDIX 1: CHECKLIST FOR INSTRUCTION-GIVING PRACTICES

Date: **Teacher Name*:**

Lesson :   **Class:**

	Criteria	No	Yes	Note
	1. There is evidence that instructor prepared the instruction before delivery			
	2. Student groups are arranged before the instructor gives instructions.			
	3. The instructor gets students' attention before giving instructions.			
Delivery stage	**4.** The instructor hands out materials at appropriate times.			
	5.			
	6. The instructor uses language at or below/above students' current level of understanding.			
	7. The instructor uses extra-linguistic devices to aid meaning.			
	8. Instructor provides time limit for the activities.			
	9. The instructor checks for understanding before letting students start an activity. How is it checked?			
	1**0.** The instructor provides modelling/ demonstration for the activity. What types of demonstration is utilized?			
Post-delivery stage	**11.** The instructor monitors students after they start an activity.			
	12. The instructor gives students opportunities to ask question in case they don't understand the activity			
	13. Students face confusing and misunderstanding while doing the activity.			
	14. The instructor is available if students need further help with instructions after the activity has started.			
	15. The instructor gives instructions in logical sequence, follow the giving instruction order.			

*Teachers' names are written anonymously in numbers.