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A Note from the Editor-in-Chief

Dear authors and colleagues,

Volume 3 Issue 2 of the International Journal of TESOL & Education is dedicated to the subject of TESOL & Education. This issue features a variety of research papers that examine the impact of TESOL on various aspects of Education.

To begin with, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to all the authors who have contributed quality research papers to this issue. Their commitment, knowledge, and scholarly efforts made this publication possible. Each article is a significant contribution to the field of language teaching and learning, casting light on important issues and providing educators and researchers with valuable insights.

We also extend our deepest gratitude to the reviewers who generously contributed their time and expertise to comprehensively evaluate the submitted manuscripts and provide constructive feedback. Their insightful comments and suggestions were instrumental in ensuring the quality and rigour of the articles in this issue. The meticulous review process conducted by our esteemed examiners has contributed to the preservation of the academic integrity and relevance of the research presented in these pages.

In addition, we would like to recognise the contributions of our editorial staff. Their diligence, dedication, and attention to detail were instrumental in shaping and enhancing this publication's overall quality. Their tireless efforts in the peer-review process, editing, and formatting have contributed to the International Journal of TESOL & Education's high standards and professionalism.

This issue aims to promote the exchange of ideas, research findings, and innovative practises as TESOL and Education continue to evolve and adapt to the ever-changing global landscape. We hope that the articles in this volume will serve as a catalyst for further investigation and discussion within the TESOL community, inspiring new ideas and approaches that improve language teaching and learning around the world.

We encourage our readers to explore the wide variety of research papers featured in this issue, as they provide valuable insights and potential future research avenues. Together, the authors, reviewers, and editorial staff have produced a publication that we believe will make a significant contribution to the fields of TESOL and Education.

Again, we would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue, and we hope that this volume will inspire and stimulate additional research and discussion in the field of TESOL & Education. We hope that you enjoy your reading experience.

Thanks be to God for everything!

Sincerely yours

Associate Professor Dr. Pham Vu Phi Ho
Editor-in-chief
International Journal of TESOL & Education

Fostering self-regulated learning in an online writing course: Challenges and solutions

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: self-regulated learning, online learning, writing skills	In this day and age, self-regulated learning (SRL), as a predictor of students' academic success, has been dedicatedly fostered through online classrooms since virtual learning situationally dominated in the wake of the global pandemic. Given the prominence of implementing instructional practices to foster SRL and the possible challenges that emerged during its adaptation to the online learning platforms, the study aims to shed light on the hindrance in promoting SRL during online writing classes at Van Lang University. With the participation of 35 experienced EFL teachers at Van Lang University, quantitative data was collected from a questionnaire, and qualitative one was collected from a semi-structured interview. Quantitative results showed that developing a critical learner, a learning community, and promoting self–peer evaluation presented the most challenges to teachers. In addition, the practical suggestions gained from qualitative findings were useful for those aspiring to lay the groundwork for SRL during an online writing class. In essence, online learning could offer a chance to instill SRL in EFL learners with the right touch on appropriate instructional practices.

Introduction

In the 21st century, it is critical for students to cultivate the essential skills for independently constructing their own knowledge. In this light, self-regulated learning (SRL) has been perceived as the key to nurturing a generation of lifelong learners who can take autonomy over their knowledge acquisition (Bai & Wang, 2023; Kosimov, 2021; Oxford & Schramm, 2007; Pintrich, 2000; Raoofi, Tan, & Chan, 2012; Zimmerman, 1989, 2000). By definition, SRL refers to the learners' ability to actively self-monitor their own learning progress by taking advantage of effective metacognitive strategies such as monitoring, planning, regulating, and reflecting (Zimmerman, 1990). Additionally, during the process of knowledge acquisition, self-regulated learners are intrinsically motivated and purposefully tailor their environment to achieve the best possible learning outcome. (Zimmerman, 1990)

Although SRL is not a brand-new subject of research, the recent shift in the global educational

landscape may require a change in instructional practices to foster the growth of the SRL mindset. For years, SRL had been nurtured in traditional brick and mortal classrooms until learning worldwide predominantly transitioned to online platforms in the wake of the pandemic. This change in the learning environment would inevitably lead to a number of adjustments in the way SRL is promoted. The call for attention to SRL also lends itself to the researcher's own curiosity about how fostering SRL virtually could possibly make a long-lasting impact on the learners, especially regarding the study of writing skills. In my personal teaching experience, most students in writing classes still place much of the academic progress on teachers' shoulders due to the predominance of instructors' feedback over peers and self-assessment. Furthermore, despite a number of research into the effective instructional practices for fostering SRL in writing classes (Abd Majid, 2007; Mak & Wong, 2018; My, Hong, Vu, & Linh, 2022; Rosalia, 2014), most of them were conducted at the brick-mortal classrooms, leaving a gap for more research into fostering SRL on virtual writing classes to fill in. In all consideration, the study aims to shed light on the possible challenges that EFL teachers may encounter in promoting SRL during an online writing course. Besides, in the hope of making more useful contributions, presenting feasible solutions to overcome such challenges is also the main interest of the study.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, two research questions were employed :

1. What are the challenges of fostering SRL in an online writing course?

2. What are solutions suggested by teachers to foster SRL in an online writing course?

Literature review

Definition of self-regulated learning

Theoretically, SLR lends itself to the socio-cognitive approach to learning that essentially frame learning in a dynamic interaction between the outer learning environment and the inner cognitive process of the learners (Atkinson, 2002). Viewed in this light, self-regulated learning emerges through interaction among three interdependent components: personal, environmental and behavioral processes (Zimmerman, 1989). On the ground of this social-cognitive view, Pintrich (2000, p. 453) similarly defines SLR through a multifaceted lens, highlighting its nature as a reciprocally dynamic process "whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and their contextual features in the environment". In this sense, learners are perceived as self-regulated only when they are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally adapting their learning toward a well-established goal (Zimmerman, 1989). Elaborating on the definition of self-regulated learning, Zimmerman emphasized two distinctive features of self-regulated learning: self-oriented feedback and the purpose for selecting a particular learning strategy (1990). While the former refers to how self-regulated learners see feedback as a useful resource for learning improvement, the latter essentially sets them apart from passive learners who are less

intrinsically motivated to proactively use selective metacognitive strategies for the attainment of personal learning goals.

Component of self-regulated learning

In regard to components, SRL is seen as the triadic interaction among three interdependent factors: person, behavior, and environment (Zimmerman, 1989). These components reciprocally influence each other so as for self-regulated learners to achieve their pre-determined goals.

As a key contributor driving intrinsically toward their academic achievement, personal influences manifested itself through self-efficacy, goal setting, learners' knowledge, metacognitive process, and affect (Zimmerman, 1989). Among these influential factors, self-efficacy is perceived to be of more importance than the others since "those who have a high sense of self-efficacy set themselves more challenging goals to accomplish" (Bandura, 1986, p. 348). It is also worth noticing that learners' perception of their own competency doesn't appear out of thin air yet rather a positive outcome resulting from the reciprocal interaction of the other factors pertained to personal influences.

Similar to personal influences, behavior influences comprise three reciprocal practices: self-observation, self-judgment and self-response. In essence, self-observation refers to the learners' active engagement in regulating their own academic performance, while self-judgment is observable through learners' self-evaluation of their own performance against a specific standard or criteria (Zimmerman, 1989). Self-response focuses on how students react to self-judgment. Noticeably, not all reactions appear positive, and the negative ones can hinder progress in learning. In contrast, a well-received self-judgment can prompt positive changes in goal setting, perception of self-efficacy, metacognitive planning, and behavioral outcome.

The environmental component wields its influence on self-regulated learning through modeling, seeking social support, and structuring the learning context. According to Schunk (1984), effective modeling can significantly enhance learners' perception of self-efficacy. Regarding social assistance, teacher feedback can facilitate self-regulated learning (Nicol & Macfarlane‑Dick, 2006). Compared with general feedback, which often takes the form of appraisal, specific comments on learners' linguistic performance are theoretically more constructive to self-regulated (Nicol & Macfarlane‑Dick, 2006). Empirically, Whipp and Chiarelli (2004)'s study showed that with teacher feedback, learners could reflect constructively on their learning, therefore playing a crucial role in fostering productive self-judgment. Additionally, peer feedback is an indispensable "means for internalization and development" for knowledge acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978).

Studies on instructional strategies to foster self-regulated learning in the context of second-language acquisition

The attempts to nurture a generation of self-regulated learners have been well-documented in the literature. Notable instructional strategies to develop self-regulated learning include scaffolding, social support, and reflective practice.

Direct instruction and modeling

On the journey to becoming self-regulated learners, modeling plays a crucial role in improving the self-efficacy of learners, especially those who are academically lagging behind (Zimmerman, 1990). Furthermore, when direct instruction is accompanied by peer assessment and cognitive behavior modification, learners are more likely to internalize effective writing strategies (Levy, 1996). This is due to the observation that peer critiquing triggers the need for restructuring newly-acquired knowledge through constructive discussion of strategies with peers, which gradually leads to the capacity to evaluate the appropriateness of strategies employed for a particular task (Levy, 1996). This view on the importance of modeling in self-regulated learning is aligned with the Zone Proximal Development (ZPD) proposed by (Vygotsky, 1978), which strongly emphasizes scaffolding.

Social support

Peer feedback, along with teacher feedback, are two salient forms of social support for self-regulated learning. Noticeably, with the assistance of teacher feedback, learners could reflect constructively on their learning, therefore playing a crucial role in fostering productive self-judgment (Whipp & Chiarelli, 2004); constructive feedback from peers has empirically shown a greater impact on fostering self-regulated learning. Rosalia (2014) 's study focused on the role of online peer comment in developing self-regulation in academic writing. With 21 participants undergoing an empirical study and semi-structured interview, the result indicated that online feedback could encourage students to self-evaluate and adopt more of self-reglated strategies, namely organizing and transforming, seeking information, and social assistance (2014). Similar finding was observed by Li and Zhang (2021) on the interplay of three crucial self-regulating sources: peer, teacher feedback, and revision goals. Data obtained from the qualitative research on the online writing assignment of 70 Chinese EFL students highly supported the greater impact of peer feedback and revision goals in triggering "self-regulated revision on language issues such as grammar, wording, spelling, and sentence skills" (p.12).

In addition to relying on peer assessment, fostering a learning community is crucial. According to Beishuizen (2008), a learning community offers two features conducive to developing self-regulated strategies: "the culture of scientific research and the emphasis on reflection" (p.185). With inquiry learning at the lesson's core, students work collaboratively in their community to solve an issue by researching, searching for information, and exchanging ideas. Firstly, toward the end of a course, students gradually acquire useful self-regulated strategies, including monitoring, planning, seeking information, and self-regulation. Secondly, the ample opportunity for reflection enables students to sharpen their cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Beishuizen, 2008). In practice, the role of this instructional strategy was studied in the research for fostering self-regulated learning through instructional intervention by Sinclair and Watson (2004). The interview at the end of the course revealed that group work allowed students to reflect on and modify their learning strategies through discussion with peers (Sinclair & Watson, 2004).

Self-reflective practice

Self-reflective practices are tailored to fostering the mindset and habit of self-evaluation among students. In this regard, asking students to set goals and self-evaluate their assignments are commonly employed as an instructional intervention. Regarding goal setting, several research studies have shown its importance in improving students' writing performance. Silver (2013) claimed that asking learners to set specific goals during a self-edit stage can improve their writing performance in terms of quality, quantity, and self-efficacy. More specifically, learning goals designed according to writing rubrics are proven to be more effective in improving students' writing performance (Bogolin, Harris, & Norris, 2003). In promoting self-evaluation in writing classes, a portfolio has been perceived as a useful instructional strategy to develop students' capacity to monitor their progress. In their study, Doig, Illsley, McLuckie, and Parsons (2006) investigated the role of e-portfolio in facilitating reflective writing skills. The results evaluated using questionnaires and focus groups showed that e-portfolio could encourage self-evaluation among students. Similarly, the finding from Mak and Wong (2018) in the portfolio also proved its positive impact on developing self-regulated learners. Data was collected through interviews with teachers and students, classroom observation, and field notes. It is worth mentioning that the study provided useful suggestions on how to facilitate self-evaluation, including sharing the assessment criteria prior to the writing task, keeping track of errors using an error log, and using coded feedback instead of an explicit one.

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The study was conducted at Van Lang University with the participation of 35 conveniently-selected teachers, most of which have at least three years of experience teaching English at the tertiary level. In particular, all participants have gained hands-on experience teaching writing skills online via MS Teams and LMS Moodle.

Design of the Study

With the purpose of gaining the breadth and depth of the research problem, the study employed a mixed research method of both quantitative and qualitative research. The collection and analysis of qualitative data were conducted after those of quantitative data to provide insight into the underlying causes and solutions to notable challenges.

Data Collection & Analysis

In terms of quantitative data, a Google-form questionnaire consisting of two main parts was used to gather the participants' background information and their perception of the challenges of implementing self-regulated learning. The first part elicited the participants' teaching experience, particularly their online teaching in writing skills. For the participants to express their viewpoints about the challenges, a 5-point Likert scale was employed.

Regarding the qualitative data, a semi-structured interview was conducted after the survey. The main purpose was to further explore the hindrances to successfully implementing the

desirable instructional strategies for SRL. More importantly, the interview also set out to elicit feasible, practical solutions for EFL teachers to overcome these hurdles. With the consent of the participants, all of the online interviews were video recorded (Van Lang MS Teams channel), which were transcribed and translated into English for data analysis. The preference for the online interviews was mainly due to the convenience of the data collection in regard to the busy schedules of the interviewees

The quantitative data from the surveys were processed using SPSS descriptive analysis, version 20. Descriptive statistics like Means and Standard Deviations were used to analyze the participant responses.

As for the strengths and limitations of the data collection methods, while the questionnaire solely reveals the surface of the respondents' viewpoints, the results show a certain level of reliability as they are collected from many respondents. About the second method, although the flexible nature of the semi-structured interview may lessen its validity, this data collection method enables the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of the participants' viewpoints and experiences in this subject of study.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Questionnaire's results and discussion

Table 1. Teachers' perception of the challenges of modeling and scaffolding

Practices possibly deemed challenging	N	Mean	SD	Percentage (%)				
				Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Presenting a variety of model essay	35	2.31	0.63	0%	77.1%	14.3%	8.6%	0%
2. Modelling crucial steps of composing a new essay genre	35	2.54	0.70	0%	57.1%	31.4%	11.4%	0%
3. Analyzing the structural and language features of a new essay genre	35	2.63	0.64	0%	45.7%	45.7%	8.6%	0%

According to Table 1, modeling and scaffolding on online learning platforms seemed attainable on online-learning platforms, with all of the practices receiving relatively low mean scores. Possibly, this is due to the fact that modeling and scaffolding are traditionally teacher-controlled and knowledge-presented stages; hence the switch to a learning platform has little effect on it.

Table 2. Teachers' perception of the challenges of promoting peer and self-evaluation

Practices possibly deemed challenging	N	Mean	SD	Percentage (%)				
				Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly disagree
1. Asking for self-evaluation before teacher feedback	35	4.17	0.56	0%	0%	9%	66%	25%
2. Asking for peer feedback before teacher feedback	35	4.26	0.56	0%	0%	5.7%	62.9%	31.4 %

While modeling and scaffolding remained pedagogically achievable in an online classroom, promoting peer and self-evaluation seemed more challenging. In this regard, it was challenging for the teachers to encourage self-evaluation and peer assessment in an online writing class. Table 2 shows that the mean score for both practices was noticeably high (M= 4.17 and 4.26, respectively).

Table 3. Teachers' perception of the challenges of fostering a learning community

Practices possibly deemed challenging	N	Mean	St.D	Percentage (%)				
				Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Encouraging individual learners to share ideas	35	3.34	0.87	0%	22.8%	22.8%	51.4%	3%
2. Encouraging learners to give constructive comments	35	4.03	0.78	0%	9%	2.2%	66%	22.8%
3. Organizing collaborative writing activities	35	2.71	1.01	0%	63%	8.5%	22.8%	5.7%

Interestingly, a mixed result was observed in Table 3. While organizing collaborative writing activities was feasible in online learning classrooms (Mean=2.71), giving constructive feedback ("Feedback" is uncountable.) presented a challenge for the teachers (Mean =4.03). In addition, an average mean score of the first practice (Mean =3.34) implied a split in opinion. Given the result, fostering an online learning community appears promising, yet the community may not be as deeply connected given the fact that sharing ideas and constructive feedback have not been ingrained in our students' mindsets.

Table 4. Teachers' perception on the challenges of developing a critical and reflective learner

Practices possibly deemed challenging	N	Mean	SD	Percentage (%)				
				Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Asking learners to identify their own learning goals	35	4.57	0.50	0%	0%	0%	42.8 %	57.2 %
2. Asking learners to self- monitor their own learning progress	35	4.4	0.49	0%	0%	0%	60 %	40 %

Similar to Table 3, table 4 indicated another major obstacle to fostering self-regulated learners: developing a critical and reflective learner, with mean scores being 4.57 and 4.4, respectively. This hindrance could probably lend itself to the deeply-ingrained mindset of both teachers and students, which considers evaluation and goal setting a part of teachers' responsibilities.

Interview Results and Discussion

Drawing on the interviewees' hand-on experiences in fostering self-regulated learning during an online writing course, the interview provides an insightful interpretation of why online learning creates opportunities and poses challenges for the attempts to nurture self-regulated learners. The discussion on the underlying reasons behind challenges was accompanied by relevant solutions offered by the interviewees.

Modeling and scaffolding

Most of the interviewees addressed the absence of in-person interaction as the major hindrance to this strategy. Given the importance of facial expression in reflecting our thought and feeling, it should not come as a surprise that four out of six interviewees found it challenging to evaluate online learners' comprehension at the modelling and scaffolding stage of a lesson, especially when most of them were unwilling to turn on their cameras for both technical and personal reasons. To make the matter worse, one interviewee also pointed out: "I tended to ask my students open-ended questions to check on their understanding, but only a handful of them responded."

Three interviewees suggested games for strengthening newly-acquired knowledge to overcome this persistent challenge and increase the level of engagement. As one interviewee suggested: "I think games like Kahoot or Quizizz are quite useful in checking students' understanding because these tools are specifically designed for educational purposes, and they also create a sense of competition". This benefit of games in encouraging more class participation was also highlighted in Tu and Luong (2021)'s study. Last but not least, one interviewee also drew attention to the importance of discussing the communicative purpose associated with each linguistic feature so that students will be more purposeful with their choice of grammar and vocabulary for composing.

Promoting peer and self-evaluation

Critical as giving feedback on students' writing for fostering self-regulated learning, it is regarded as one of the most difficult practices to be integrated into online learning.

The interviewees identified a number of problems pertaining to feedback giving. Firstly, the public nature of online feedback can negatively affect feedback receivers, as one interviewee explained:

> The social aspect of the forum on LMS makes peer assessment possible, but as everyone can access it, negative comments may lower the self-esteem of feedback receivers, especially low-leveled students, consequently affecting their self-efficacy.

Secondly, peer feedback or self-evaluation can cause an increased workload for both teachers and students. Most of the interviewees agreed that it would be overwhelming for teachers to keep track of every single self-evaluated form in consideration of the large class size, a typical feature of education at the tertiary level. Furthermore, three of the interviewees pointed out that not all students eagerly spent time assessing their peer writing, and the quality of peer feedback is another unresolved problem dragging itself from offline to online classes. Lastly, the interviewees expressed concern over the possibility of misinterpretation regarding the absence of immediate discussion between feedback receivers and givers, as stated in the interview: "They (students) may interpret feedback from their teachers and peers differently. Unlike online class, confused feedbacks are often discussed immediately during an on-class lesson".

In terms of practical solutions, the interviewees highly recommended designing a checklist including desirable features of an essay due to its dual benefits in reducing workload and resulting (resulting in?) more constructive feedback. As stated by one interviewee, "provided that the criteria are concise, achievable, transparent and well-explained, this would reduce the risk of misunderstanding created by ambiguous comments". Furthermore, the increased workload may no longer hold teachers and students back, as a well-designed checklist can solve this problem. Besides, as teachers take control of the language used in feedback, negative comments could be expressed in more encouraging terms so that the public nature of online feedback hopefully no longer has a negative psychological effect on feedback receivers. This suggestion of using the checklist in peer feedback is similar to the idea of using teacher-prepared questionnaires to facilitate constructive peer feedback in Levy (1996)'s discussion on "Method for teaching analytical writing"**.** This self-regulation questionnaire is given credit for providing "a structure necessary to help them acquire and maintain effective analytical writing skills" (Levy, 1996, p. 100)

Promoting a learning community

While most interviewees said organizing cooperative activities was promising thanks to the social aspect of break-out rooms in Teams meetings, they still faced difficulty in encouraging students to actively share ideas, and the online learning platform seemed to worsen the situation. Reflecting on personal experience in teaching online writing class, two of the interviewees shared that weak learners (or "low achievers") were suddenly given good excuses for their lack of engagement in a discussion, with typical reasons including problems

with internet connectivity or the microphone or the noise at place of study. Consequently, as stated by these interviewees: "this online learning community may exclude academically-struggling learners."

To encourage more learners' engagement, it is suggested that tasks for group work should present a problem rather than just a list of questions for discussion. This emphasis on the role of inquiry learning is similarly mentioned in Beishuizen (2008)'s study on the correlation between learning community and self-regulated learning. Moreover, divergent questions are also highly recommended so that every contribution would be given credit, and acknowledgment can incentivize students of all levels to voice their opinions. Another suggestion is to discuss the task's purpose with students in advance. As two interviewees stated, "As far as I am concerned, students tend to participate more in group work when they understand how the task helps them make progress".

Developing critical and reflective learners

Setting goals and encouraging self-evaluation are predominantly addressed by all of the interviewees as challenging to implement online. The former was derived from the learners' attitude toward goal setting, which was "mostly doubtful and confused". This attitude is explained by two interviewees: "In fact, goal setting is not a well-establish habit of our learners, so they may not see the point of doing it, and not all learners are good at setting goals", "Most learners often find online learning stressful, so if their expectation is not fulfilled at the end of the course, they will develop a negative attitude toward goal setting". As for self-observation, learners traditionally hand this responsibility over to teachers. Online learners seem to lean more heavily on their teachers than usual, so asking them for self-evaluation may be wishful thinking.

One possible suggestion shared by four of the interviewees was to design a list of learning goals aligned with the learning outcomes of the writing course. One interviewee shared, "By doing this, these learning goals will be more specific and achievable to most students given their level at the time". Another interviewee also pointed out, "Teachers also find it easier to evaluate students' progress regularly thanks to the list of transparent, measurable objectives every week". Theoretically, the importance of goal setting during the editing stage is enthusiastically supported by many researchers in this area (Bogolin et al., 2003; Silver, 2013).

Conclusion

It is evident that self-regulated learning lays the foundation for nurturing academically-successful learners. Given its significance, the study aims to identify the persistent challenges and propose several practical suggestions for fostering self-regulated learners in an online writing class at Van Lang University. The findings revealed that each practice to nurture self-regulated learning entails its own challenge, but promoting peer feedback, self-evaluation, and self-reflective manners encountered the most obstacles. The hindrances were mainly derived from psychological aspects and the lack of well-defined criteria aligned with the learners' language proficiency. This could encourage more research into the design of criteria for peer

and self-assessment in writing skills, especially under the context of EFL online learning and teaching. Additionally, EFL teachers may find the suggestion section useful for addressing challenges to fostering the other aspects of self-regulated learning incurred by the nature of online learning platforms.

Acknowledgment

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Biodata

Hong Ngoc Truong has been working as an EFL teacher for almost five years. She is currently teaching at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Van Lang University. Her research interest mainly focuses on TESOL.

APPENDIX
QUESTIONAIRE

Part A: Background infromation

Years of teaching writing skills for EFL students.

    a. Less than 3 years

    b. From 3- 5 years

    c. More than 5 years

The number of online writing course you have taught.

    a. Fewer than 3

    b. From 3 to 5

    c. More than 5

Part B: The teachers' perception on the challenges of fostering self-regulated learning

Practices possibly deem challenging	The teacher's perception				
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally agree
Presenting a variety of model essay					
Modelling crucial steps of composing a new essay genre					
Analyzing the structural and language feature of a new essay genre					
Asking self-evaluation before teacher feedback					
Asking peer feedback before teacher feedback					
Encouraging individual learner to share ideas					
Encouraging learners to give constructive comments					
Organizing collaborative writing activities					
Asking learners to identify their own learning goals					
Asking learners to self- monitor their own learning progress					

Preliminary Investigation into the Affordances of Evaluative Resources in Multimodal Texts of an Established Textbook Series in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Appraisal, Visual Appraisal, attitudinal expressions, multimodal texts, textbooks

The paper aims to initially examine the deployment of Attitude in multimodal reading texts in *Solutions* (Falla & Davies, 2013), an English textbook series being used as textbooks in most universities in Vietnam. To reach its aim, it first deployed the Appraisal framework proposed by Martin and White (2005) to examine evaluative resources in the fifteen verbal texts of the five genres of Anecdote, Biographical recount, Exposition, Narrative, and Review (Rose & Martin, 2012). A closer examination of how images contribute to articulating evaluation is then conducted on five of these multimodal reading texts in light of the Visual Appraisal frameworks suggested by Economou (2009) and White (2014) and the terms Convergence and Divergence proposed by Painter, Martin and Unsworth (2013). It was found that various aspects of Attitude are exploited with a range of frequency in different genres. It was also indicated that Convergence tends to be more frequently deployed than Divergence. In the same multimodal text, both cases of Convergence and Divergence may occur or only one of the two types. In any way, they all have the function of co-articulating attitude. The paper concludes by highlighting the necessity of selecting appropriate images in textbooks among editors and deploying images in effectively teaching multimodal texts among lecturers and teachers.

Introduction

It is undeniable that learning how to express attitude efficiently is a concern to most language teachers and learners. The issue is even more significant in the context of Vietnam's participation in the World Trade Organization (2006), the ASEAN Economic Community (2015), and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (2016), where critical thinking and expression are frequently required. However, it has been observed that most Vietnamese learners of English, despite their academic language proficiency, have a limited attitudinal language repertoire to appropriately express their opinions, attitudes, or even their normal feelings (Ngo, Unsworth,

& Feez, 2012; Nguyen, 2017, 2020).

One important aspect of enhancing English teaching renovation in Vietnam is to focus on expanding English learners' evaluative language repertoire through the improvement of textbooks to foreground evaluative resources (Ngo, Unsworth, & Feez, 2012, Nguyen, 2017, 2020). This study was conducted with the aim to preliminarily examine the deployment of Attitude in *Solutions Pre-Intermediate, Solutions Intermediate,* and *Solutions Upper-Intermediate* textbooks, which are designed by Tim Falla and Paul Davies and published by Oxford University Press (2013) and are being used and the main teaching materials to English majors and non-majors at some universities in Vietnam, including Quy Nhon University.

Literature review

Genres

Originating from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1994), genre theory was developed by a group of linguists at The University of Sydney led by Martin (Martin & Rose, 2008; Rose & Martin, 2012). The language choices employed to make meaning in any specific text are shaped by the immediate context of the situation and the more global context of the culture in which the language is being employed. The context of the situation (*register*) refers to what the text is about (*field*), the people involved and their relationship (*tenor*), and how the text is structured (*mode*). The context of culture consists of the values, beliefs, or behaviors of a particular culture, which affects how people shape texts. Text types or *genres* were developed to help people achieve social purposes (Martin & Rose, 2008), and different genres achieve different purposes. For example, the purpose of an anecdote is to share an emotional reaction to a story, whereas the purpose of an exposition is to argue for a point of view. Each genre is a "staged, goal-oriented, social process" (Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 20).

For the last three decades, Australian scholars have established a table of genres in schooling contexts, which consists of 7 groups with 22 different genres (Rose & Martin, 2012). Each genre includes different phases aiming to achieve different purposes. A procedure, for instance, comprises three phases of Purpose, Equipment, and Steps, while an anecdote starts with Orientation, then Remarkable event, and Reaction. Language users need to master particular language resources to control a particular genre because different genres are achieved through different language features (Humphrey, Droga & Feez, 2012; Humphrey, Love & Droga, 2011; Martin & Rose, 2008; Rose & Martin, 2012). The procedure genre, for instance, involves the employment of key grammatical features such as imperative clauses for interaction, action processes in theme position and circumstance, and dependent clauses as marked themes for creating cohesion, etc.

The Appraisal Framework

Initially proposed by Martin and White (2005) and refined by Hood (2010), the Appraisal framework offers resources for interpersonal meaning analysis under the three aspects termed *Attitude*, *Engagement,* and *Graduation*.

Attitude deals with our feelings, including emotional reactions (*Affect*), judgments of behavior (*Judgement*), and evaluation of inanimate phenomena (*Appreciation*). The attitudinal resources can be implicitly (invoked) or explicitly (inscribed) realized in a positive or negative way. Attitude can be explicitly expressed via a wide range of grammatical resources. Affect, for example, can be realized in various grammatical functions such as Epithet, Attribute, Circumstance, Process, Modal Adjunct, Subject, or Object. Attitude can also be implicitly expressed by three types of invocation termed Provoke, Flag, and Afford (Martin and White, 2005). Provoked Attitude is realized by lexical similes *(*e.g., *"like entering a cage"* = *"imprisoned"*) and metaphors (e.g., "a new horizon" = "a land with hope and happiness"). A flagging Attitude may be realized by a non-core vocabulary that infuses intensification into a core word that has a similar lexical meaning (e.g., *whisper* and *scream* and *say*). As the most open to interpretation, Afforded Attitude is assessed by co-textual information (e.g., The attitudinal meaning of *"My dad will be here tonight"* might be interpreted as happiness, surprise or security depending on the position of the reader or listener.)

Engagement is about the play of voice, which enables readers to identify the extent of subjectivity and objectivity of an attitude and choices of monoglossic or heteroglossic resources.

Graduation includes language resources for intensifying Attitude. Attitudinal expressions can be assessed on a scale ranging from low to high via the application of Graduation resources. The Graduation system includes two scales labeled Force and Focus. Force is a means of assessing the degree of intensity (Intensification) and the amount (Quantification), whereas Focus is a non-gradable language resource that adjusts "the strength of boundaries between categories, constructing core and peripheral types of things" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 37).

The Visual Appraisal framework

Several studies have been conducted to deploy the interpersonal metafunction of SFL in construing non-verbal meaning systems in images (Bednarek & Caple, 2012; Caple, 2008, 2010; Economou, 2009, 2013; Macken-Horarik, 2003, 2004; Macken-Horarik & Isaac, 2014; Martin, 2001, 2004, 2008; Painter, Martin & Unsworth, 2013; Unsworth, 2015; Unsworth & Mills, 2020; Unsworth & Ngo, 2015; White, 2014). However, only a few of these take the verbal Appraisal framework as the point of departure to examine evaluative meaning in the visual-verbal text.

Economou (2009) claims that attitudinal meanings can be provoked by various choices in interaction, content, and composition in photos in the news from an Australian paper and a Greek paper. Realizing the potential of images to express attitudinal meanings, Economou argues that the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) can be employed to analyze visual images similarly to verbal texts. In the photo, attitude can be afforded by visual ideational tokens, flagged by visual graduation, provoked by visual ideational metaphor, and it can also be inscribed through a depiction of embodied attitude.

White (2014) also takes the verbal Appraisal framework as the point of departure to analyze all types of journalistic images ranging from journalistic photo images to pictorial arrangements, political cartooning, and illustrative artwork, seeking visual-verbal attitudinal analogues. He

argues that there are "visual analogues of verbal inscription and of verbal invocation of attitude" and "there are visual analogues of the more delicate sub-categories of verbal invocation, specifically of the mechanisms by which attitude is provoked, flagged and afforded" (White, 2014, p. 40). Based on such referential criteria as the salience of the author as an attitudinal agent, the stability of the expression in conveying a viewpoint across different contexts of use, and the degree of the reader's involvement in drawing attitudinal conclusions from the material included, he proposes a taxonomy of options for communicating attitude in images, which includes ways of inscribing, provoking, flagging or affording attitude (White, 2014, pp 38-39).

In a discussion of the relationship between image and language in articulating attitudes in children picture books Painter and her colleagues suggest the two terms of *Convergence* and *Divergence* (Painter et al., 2013). Convergence refers to the case when language and image work together to multiply the corresponding meaning. Divergence, on the other hand, occurs when the meanings of language and image differ, but it may also create new meanings at the intersection of image and language.

This study deploys the Appraisal framework developed by Martin and White (2005), the Visual Appraisal frameworks proposed by Economou (2009) and White (2014), and the notions of Convergence and Divergence suggested by Painter and her colleagues (2013) to examine how evaluative resources are deployed in some genres in the multimodal reading texts in the *Solutions* textbook series. In particular, it was seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent are evaluative resources deployed to convey evaluation in different genres in the reading texts of the *Solutions* textbooks?

2. How do image and language co-work to express attitudinal meanings in some of these multimodal reading texts?

Methods

Data sources

The data sources to answer the first research question are the fifteen reading texts from the three *Solutions* textbooks, including *Solutions Pre-Intermediate*, *Solutions Intermediate* and *Solutions Pre-Intermediate* (Falla & Davies, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). The fifteen texts belong to five different genres, including Anecdote, Biographical recount, Exposition, Narrative and Review. The focus on these five genres is because of their quite high frequency of adopting the language of evaluation to achieve the writer's social purpose (Derewianka & Jones, 2012; Humphrey et al., 2012; Humphrey et al., 2011). The units for analysis are 568 sentences, which are coded from S1 to Sn in the order of the texts. The texts are coded in accordance with the abbreviation of the genres, such as A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, E1, E2, E3, N1, N2, N3, R1, R2, and R3. Thus, E2S3 means the third sentence in the second reading of the Exposition genre.

The data for answers to the second research question are five of the fifteen multimodal reading texts, randomly selected based on the criteria of representing five different genres across the

three textbooks. The five texts for analysis are A3, B3, E1, N1 and R1, which represent the third text of Anecdote, the third of Biographical recount, the first of Exposition, the first of Narrative and the first of Review, respectively.

Data analysis

Analysis of evaluative meaning in verbal texts was conducted using the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) with the support of UAM Corpus developed by O'Donnell (2008). The results were coded with colors (e.g., red representing Affect, blue Judgement and Purple Appreciation) and could be extracted with the display requested, as shown in Figures 1 and 2 below.
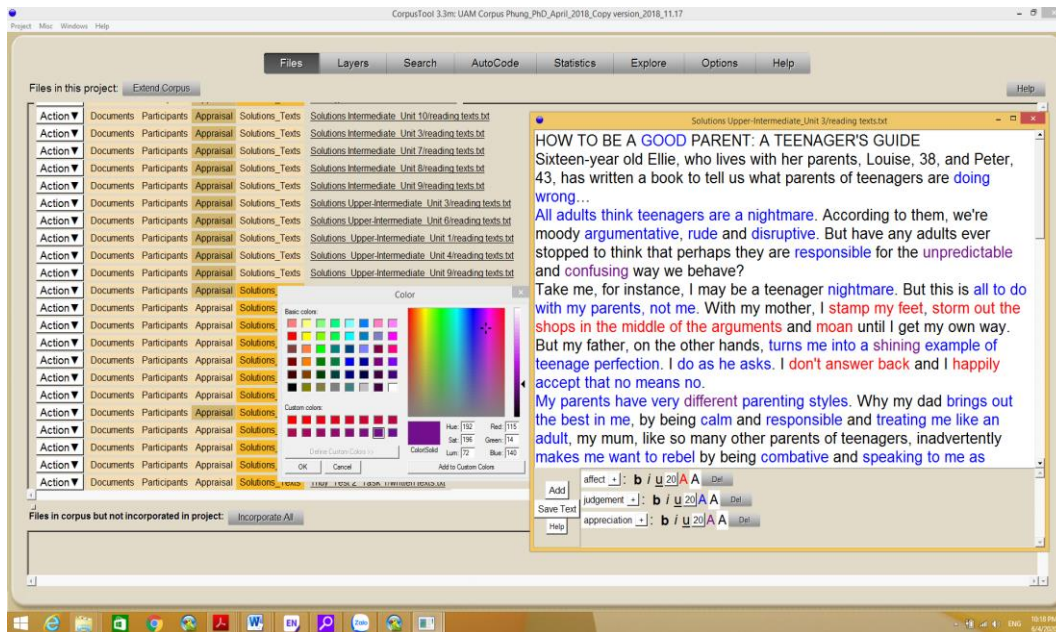

Figure 1. Colors displaying Affect (red), Judgement (Blue), and Appreciation (purple)
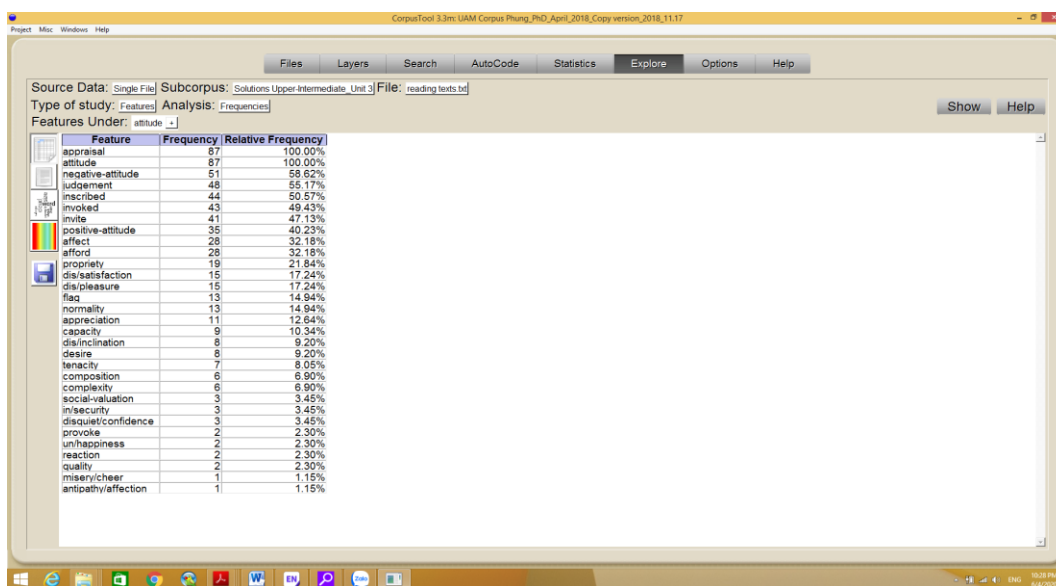

Figure 2. Statistics revealing numbers of Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation

In image, Affect can be realized through facial expressions, gestures and stance whereas Judgement of Social esteem can be evaluated via iconic gesture or stance (i.e. clapping hands with a smile maybe understood as an approval). However, there are very few ways of revealing explicit inscription of Judgement of Social sanction and no evaluation of Appreciation (Economou, 2009). To deal with this issue, Judgement of Social sanction and some cases of Judgement of Social esteem were examined regarding evaluative meanings implicitly understood through representation (Economou, 2009; White, 2014). Analysis of evaluative meaning in the accompanying images in the five selected multimodal texts proceeded to apply the frameworks suggested by Economou (2009) and White (2014). To conduct the analysis, a table was set up with five columns as demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Example of Attitude analysis of images in the extract from Text E1 "How to be a good parent: A teenager's guide" (Falla & Davies, 2013c, pp. 18-19)

	Visual Item	Representation	Composition	Interaction	Attitude carried & afforded by representation
	Three people in one round, but while the man is attending to what the woman is saying with satisfaction, the woman is looking at different direction but straining to turn her head as far as she can to attend to the man from her original position to show consideration and worry to something, and the girl is showing ignoring of the man and woman's behaviours and feeling.	Material-Behaviorial process Circum: manner	Material (inter) action between Man-Woman is made salient Behavioural of Woman is made salient Behavioural of Girl is made most salient	Highest involvement with Girl's Reaction, followed by Woman's behaviour, then Man's emotion	JUDGEMENT: **Relationship among three people – target, Viewer – appraiser** Evoked - Propriety: (conflict) and (discord). Although the man and the woman are attentive and interest in what they are talking about, the woman does not look the man. The girl does not look at the man and the woman

The final step was to examine evaluative meaning at the interface of language and image in multimodal texts. Table 2 displays the result of the analysis of Convergence and Divergence in one extract from Text E3.

Table 2. Convergence and Divergence between evaluative meaning constructed by language and image in the extract from Text E1 "How to be a good parent: A teenager's guide" (Falla & Davies, 2013c, pp. 18-19)

Image and co-occurring evaluative meaning in language		Visual evaluative meaning	Image-language relation
	Language: My dad brings out the best in me, by being calm and responsible and treating me like an adult. Dad was fine with the idea of me going alone (to take a train to Portsmouth to see a friend), but it took two weeks of arguments before Mum agreed. **Attitudinal meanings in language:** Invoked Judgement of + Propriety	**Body and facial expressions:** gentle look on his face **Attitudinal meanings:** Evoked Judgement of +Propriety ('considerate' and 'attentive')	**Convergence** Both language and image deal with Judgement of +Propriety in relation to his satisfactory/ considerate thought towards the girl's idea of going to Portsmouth alone and his attentive gestures towards his wife in trying to persuade her to approve the girl's decision.
	Language: My mum inadvertently makes me want to rebel by being combative and speaking to me as though I'm still a child. **Attitudinal meanings in language:** Invoked Judgement of - Propriety	**Body and facial expressions:** looking to other direction with chin leaning on right hand, (maybe she is thinking of/ interested in an incident between herself and her daughter or her husband) **Attitudinal meanings:** Inscribed +Affect: (satisfaction: interest)	**Divergence** Language invokes Judgement of -Propriety whereas Image inscribes +Affect: consideration (interest) and -Affect: insecurity (worry)

Findings

Question 1: To what extent are evaluative resources deployed to convey evaluation in different genres in the reading texts of the Solutions textbooks?

The results of data analysis indicate that attitudinal expressions occur with higher frequency in Exposition (i.e., 223 instances) than in the other four genres (i.e., from 122 to 157 instances). Details of instances of attitudinal expressions deployed in each particular genre are demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Instances of attitudinal expressions in each genre

	Anecdote	**Biographical recount**	**Exposition**	**Narrative**	**Review**
Affect	33	29	58	79	15
Judgment	50	88	115	30	33
Appreciation	52	40	50	33	74
	135	157	223	142	122

A closer investigation into Table 2 revealed that there are broad differences among the number of instances conveying each particular type of Attitude in each genre. For example, Affect appears with the highest frequency in Narrative (i.e., 79 instances); Judgement is most favored in Biographical recount (i.e., 115 instances), whereas Appreciation tends to be most deployed in Review (i.e., 74 instances). Anecdote is the only genre with a quite approximate deployment of the three types of Attitude.

Deployment of Affect

The results of data analysis, as displayed in Table 4 demonstrate quite balanced employment of evaluative language of the four sub-types of Affect in Narrative and the most frequent use of attitudinal expressions of Dis/satisfaction across the five genres.

Table 4. Instances of four sub-types of Affect in each genre

	Anecdote	**Biographical recount**	**Exposition**	**Narrative**	**Review**
Un/happiness	6	6	4	21	4
Dis/satisfaction	21	18	24	24	8
In/security	3	4	9	13	1
Dis/inclination	3	1	21	21	2

Some expressions of Dis/satisfaction which can be found across the five genres are as below:

- *As a baby, Bethany liked to splash in the shallow water. (A3S20)*
- *In the legend, Robin Hood was angry at the injustice and decided to fight against it. (B3S9)*
- *With my mother, I stamp my feet, storm out of the shops in the middle of arguments and moan until I get my own way. (E2S6)*
- *Mr Usher was disappointed with the price, but he accepted it. (N3S9)*
- *And many actors prefer to do their own stunt. (R3S22)*

Deployment of Judgement

The number of expressions of Judgement in the fifteen texts is demonstrated in Table 5.

Table 5. Instances of five types of Judgement in each genre

	Anecdote	**Biographical recount**	**Exposition**	**Narrative**	**Review**
Normality	14	26	31	8	29
Capacity	26	52	14	2	2
Tenacity	5	8	15	5	1
Propriety	5	2	52	15	1
Veracity	0	0	3	0	0

As can be seen in Table 5, different aspects of Judgement are exploited with various frequencies in different genres. In particular, Judgement of Capacity and Normality is employed in the largest number of Biographical recounts and Anecdote to illustrate the ability and outstanding features of the characters being described. For example, to demonstrate the talent of a maths genius named Cameron which was recognized at the age of four, several attitudinal expressions of Capacity or Normality are in use, such as *"The test was out 140; Cameron scored 141."* *(B2S4) "I broke the system." (B2S5), "He passed two GCSEs at the age of eleven and then got the highest grade in his maths A-level before the end of that same academic year." (B2S7),* or *"He is now fourteen years old and studying for a degree in maths, a remarkable achievement bearing in mind his age." (B2S8).* These expressions work together to create prosody in evaluation, intensifying Cameron's special talent. This finding aligns with previous studies by Derewianka and Jones (2012), Hood (2010), and Humphrey et al. (2011).

Also taken into consideration is the dominant number of instances of Normality in Exposition and Review. Expressions of these two types are favored to judge whether the descriptive characters are normal, abnormal or outstanding, etc. The extreme fortune of an eighty-one-year-ole man called Selek, for instance, is conveyed via a series of evidence, starting from *"Throughout his long life, he has survived 7 disasters, all of which could have killed him" (R1S2)* and ending with *"He won the lottery, and he met his fifth wife". (R1S31).* The finding also resonates with previous studies conducted by scholars from the SFL Sydney school (Derewianka & Jones, 2012, Hood, 2010, Humphrey et al., 2011).

It is also noteworthy that expressions of Judgement of Propriety are outnumbered in Exposition to make Judgment of the people in description. To indicate her mother's improper behaviors, the sixteen-year-old girl named Ellie deploys plenty of expressions that express her Judgement of the mother's actions, such as *"She is responsible for the unpredictable and confusing way we behave." (E2S3), "My mum inadvertently makes me want to rebel by being combative and speaking to me as though I'm still a child." (E2S8), "Dad was fine with the idea of me going alone, but it took weeks of arguments before Mum agreed." (E2S21),* or *"She instantly banned me using the Internet, and we ended up having a huge row." (E2S24).*

Deployment of Appreciation

It is interesting to note from the data analysis presented in Table 6 that there are a few considerable differences in the number of expressions of three sub-types of Appreciation across the five genres. Perhaps the only distinguishing feature is the outnumber of attitudinal

expressions of Valuation in the genre of Review (i.e., 43 instances) to evaluate the value of issues under examination.

Table 6. Instances of three types of Appreciation in each genre

	Anecdote	**Biographical recount**	**Exposition**	**Narrative**	**Review**
Reaction	15	20	6	18	15
Composition	19	11	14	12	16
Valuation	18	9	30	3	43

Examples of some expressions of Appreciation are as follows.

Expressions of Reaction:

- *If it isn't stopped, it will crash into the Pacific Ocean, creating a <u>devastating</u> tsunami. (E3S3)*
- *The really <u>incredible</u> thing about Bethany is that only ten weeks later she was surfing again in a competition. (A3S24)*

Expressions of Composition:

- *When a British 16-year-old paid £95 on eBay for a <u>second-hand</u> PlayStation 2 console and two games, he wasn't sure if it was a bargain. (N3S23)*
- *My parents have very <u>different</u> parenting styles. (E1S9)*

Expressions of Valuation:

- *<u>The impact would cause massive destruction</u> – imagine colliding with a rock as big as a mountain that is travelling at 20km/s. (E3S9)*
- *<u>Nobody has lived in the town for years</u>. (N3S21)*

Question 2: How do image and language co-work to express attitudinal meanings in some of these reading texts?

The data analysis of the five selected multimodal texts demonstrates eleven image-language relations in constructing evaluative meaning. It is interesting to note that the number of Divergence accounts for approximately half of the cases of Convergence. Details of the analysis can be seen in Table 7.

Of special interest in the analysis is the finding that Convergence and Divergence do not necessarily occur at the same time in a particular text.

Table 7. Relation between image and language in the construction of evaluation in multimodal texts coded A3, B3, E1, N1, R1 (Falla & Davies, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c)

Text	Title	Main Content	Evaluative meaning in language	Evaluative meaning in image	Image-language relation
A3	Surfing superstar	The 13-year-old girl Hamilton won first place in a surfing competition in Hawaii after a serious accident in which a tiger shark bit her left hand	Inscribed positive Judgement of Capacity, Invoked positive Judgement of Capacity	Evoked positive Judgement of Capacity	Convergence
			Inscribed positive Judgement of Capacity; Invoked positive Judgement of Tenacity	Evoked positive Judgement of Capacity and Tenacity	Convergence
B3	The legend of Robin Hood	The brave legend Robin Hood led his band of outlaws to fight against injustice	Inscribed positive Judgement of Tenacity	Evoked positive Judgement of Tenacity	Convergence
			Inscribed positive Judgement of Capacity	Evoked positive Judgement of Capacity	Convergence
E1	How to be a good parent: a teenagers' guide	The 16-year-old girl Ellie is judging parents' behaviours to teenagers	Invoked positive Judgement of Propriety	Evoked positive Judgement of Propriety	Convergence
			Invoked negative Judgement of Propriety	Inscribed Affect of Satisfaction	Divergence
			Inscribed negative Affect of Satisfaction	Inscribed Affect of Dissatisfaction	Convergence
			Inscribed Affect of Girl's Satisfaction toward Father; Inscribed Affect of Girl's Dissatisfaction toward Mother; Invoked negative Judgement of Propriety among the family members	Evoked negative Judgement of Propriety (conflict and discord) among three people	Convergence
N1	Travelling with friends	Young people may face some potential problems when they are travelling with friends instead of with families	Inscribed Affect of Unhappiness	Inscribed Affect of Happiness	Divergence
			Invoked Affect of Insecurity	Inscribed Affect of Happiness	Divergence
R1	The world's luckiest man	The 81-year-old man Selak is known as the world's luckiest man, but winning the lottery does not necessarily make him happy	Inscribed Affect of Dissatisfaction	Inscribed Affect of Satisfaction	Divergence

Convergence only in the same multimodal text

The first case is when only Convergence occurs in multimodal texts. In the text *"Surfing superstar"* (Tim & Falla, 2013a), for example, several sentences are used to judge the talent of a 13-year-old Hamilton, such as *"By thirteen, she was one of <u>the best surfers</u> in the world"* (inscribed positive Judgement of Capacity), *"Before the accident, a lot of professional surfers thought that Bethany was going to be <u>the women's world champion</u> one day"* (invoked positive Judgement of Capacity). These verbal evaluative meanings are convergent with the evoked positive Judgement in the accompanied image (Image 1 in Figure 3) where Hamilton with determined facial features, is surfing and stretching postures of limbs to keep balance on waves. The second image (Image 2 in Figure 3) evokes readers' positive Judgement of Capacity and Tenacity to Hamilton when it displays her surfing on very high waves with postures of two legs and only one hand together with much more determined facial features. These visual evaluative meanings are again convergent with the verbal Judgement of her positive capacity and tenacity in the texts such as *"Less than a year later, she <u>won first place</u> in a surfing competition in Hawaii"* (inscribed positive Judgement of Capacity) and *"After the accident, they (a lot of professional surfers) <u>haven't changed their minds (thought that Bethany was going to be the women's world champion one day)</u>"* (invoked positive Judgement of Capacity and Tenacity).

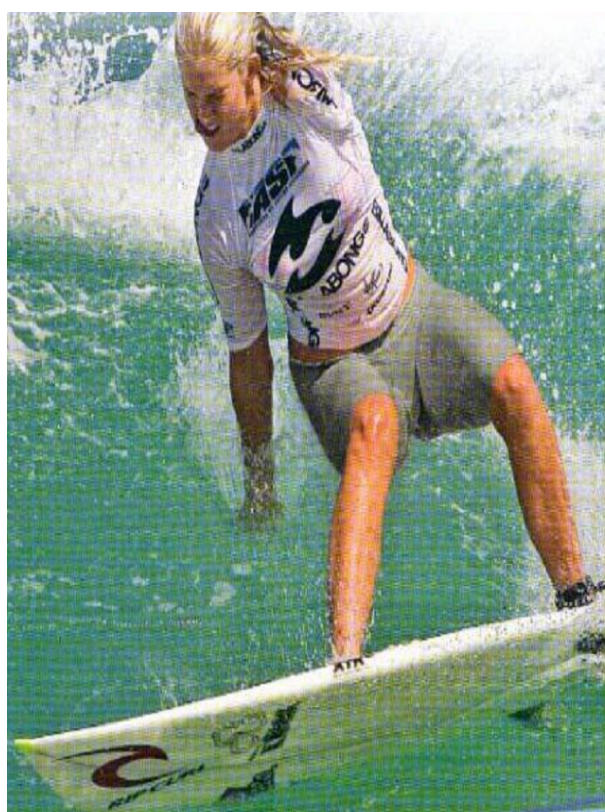**Image 1**   **Image 2**

Figure 3. Images in Text B3 "Surfing superstar" (Tim & Falla, 2013a, pp. 18-19)

Divergence only in the same multimodal text

There is another case when multimodal texts afford only Divergence, which is clearly illustrated in the text *"Travelling with friends"* (Tim & Falla, 2013b). The verbal text explains potential problems facing young people when travelling with friends instead of family with a number of sentences such as *"Disagreements can often happen"* (Invoked Affect of Insecurity), *"This might be the first time you've had lots of money to spend on yourself. But don't forget that this money is supposed to last your whole holiday"* ((Inscribed Affect of Happiness, Invoked Affect of Insecurity), *"Personal hygiene still matters - and if it doesn't matter to you, it will to your friends"* (Invoked Affect of Insecurity), *"Right now you might not think you'll miss home, but you may feel differently when you are hundreds of miles away"* (Invoked Affect of Insecurity). However, the images that accompany the verbal text include no affordance of the meaning of insecurity. Instead, they inscribed the evaluative meaning of happiness and worry-free or care-free feelings of the two young couples in Images 3 and 4 in Figure 4. It can be concluded in this case that the images are divergent with the verbal text in articulating the overall evaluative meanings of Insecurity that the author is aiming at throughout the text (Painter et al., 2013).

Image 3   **Image 4**
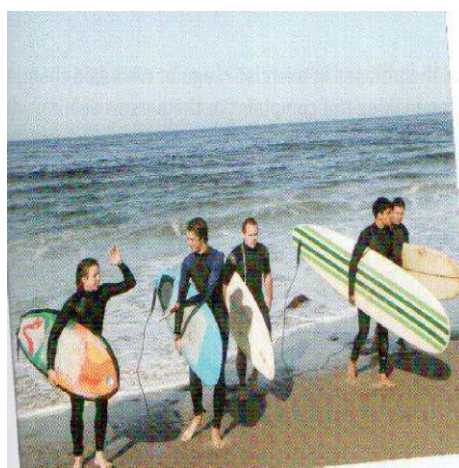
Figure 4. Images in Text N1 "Travelling with friends" (Tim & Falla, 2013b, pp. 78-79)

Convergence and Divergence in the same multimodal text

Interestingly, there still exists a special case when Convergence and Divergence both occur in the same multimodal text. When a 16-year-old girl Ellie, for example, is judging her parents' behaviours, she is trying to express her positive attitude to her father and her negative attitude to her mother. The positive attitude to her father is thanks to his consideration and attention to her. The positive Judgement of Propriety towards the father can be evaluated via such sentences in the verbal text as *"My dad brings out the best in me, by being calm and responsible and treating me like an adult"* (Invoked positive Judgement of Propriety) or *"Dad was fine with the idea of me going alone (to take a train to Portsmouth to see a friend)"* (Invoked positive Judgement of Propriety). These are convergent with the image showing the father's care and consideration in Image 5 (Figure 5 below).

Image 5

(Father)

Image 6

(Mother)

Image 7

(Daughter: Ellie)

Figure 5. Images in Text E1 "How to be a good parent: A teenager's guide" (Tim & Falla, 2013c, pp. 30-31)

The negative attitude to her mother is due to the negative Judgement of Propriety towards her mother, which can be invoked from sentences in the verbal text such as *"My mum inadvertently makes me want to rebel by being combative and speaking to me as though I'm still a child"* or *"it took two weeks of arguments before Mum agreed (to allow me to take a train to Portsmouth to see a friend)*. Although the verbiage invokes negative Judgement of Propriety toward the mother, the image of the mother in Image 6 (Figure 5) explicitly express positive Affect of Satisfaction. This type of Affect is inscribed via the mother's body and facial expressions such as her look to other direction with chin leaning on hand; perhaps, she is interested in an incident between herself and her daughter/husband about the daughter's suggestion about taking a train to Portsmouth to see a friend. The visual evaluation from image is, therefore, divergent with the evaluative meaning invoked from the accompanying text.

With regard to the daughter's feeling, Convergence is adopted to articulate evaluation in image and language. As can be seen in Image 7 (Figure 5) showing the girl with chin leaning against her left hand staring, showing ignorance of her parents' behaviours and feelings, the girl Ellie is expressing her dissatisfaction toward the conflict in her family. This aspect of evaluation is convergent with the accompanying texts such as "*They (parents) are responsible for the unpredictable and confusing way we behave*" (invoked Affect of Dissatisfaction) and *"I may be a teenager nightmare. But it is all to do with my parents, not me"* (invoked Affect of Dissatisfaction).

Discussions and Conclusions

The findings of this study shared many commonalities with previous ones. It can be seen that Anecdote, Biographical recount, Exposition, Narrative and Review are the genres is in which evaluative language is deployed with high frequency (Derewianka & Jones, 2012; Humphrey et al. 2012; Humphrey et al., 2011). However, the scopes and sub-categories of Attitude are not delicately covered.

In terms of evaluation in language, various aspects of Attitude are exploited with a range of frequency in different genres. This echoes previous studies of Humphrey and her colleagues (Humphrey et al. 2012; Humphrey et al. 2011). Moreover, some evaluative resources work together prosodically to build up and intensify the evaluative stance that the author is aiming at (Hood, 2010, Humphrey et al., 2011).

With regard to the relationship of language and image in shaping evaluation, Convergence tends to be more frequently deployed than Divergence. Of particular interest is the finding that both cases of Convergence and Divergence may occur in the same multimodal text or only one of the two types. In any way, they all work together to build up and intensify an evaluative stance (Painter et al., 2013, Nguyen, 2020) and have the function of co-articulating attitude (Martin, 2001).

It is hoped that the results of this study will provide linguists, educators, lecturers, teachers, and students with an overview of Attitude sub-types and resources which are frequently deployed in a particular genre. The study also highlights the role of images in working with language in articulating attitude, thus emphasizing the necessity of using appropriate images in textbooks among editors and efficiently exploiting images in teaching multimodal texts among lecturers and teachers.

Despite positive contributions, this study remains a couple of limitations. Within the limit of an article, it is impossible for the study to encompass all aspects of evaluation in all genres. The aspects of evaluation not included are Engagement and Graduation. Additionally, the data for analysis include only fifteen out of thirty multimodal reading texts in the three *Solution*s textbooks. These limitations shed light on suggestions for further research, which is expected to be conducted by the author and/or others in the future.

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Biodata

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An investigation of the relationship between students' self-discipline and their language performance in an online learning context at a Vietnamese university

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ABSTRACT

Having recognized the difference in the implementation of English lessons in physical classrooms and distant classrooms, which possibly influence learners' performance, the authors are interested in examining the impacts of students' self-discipline on language performance in an online learning situation. In this study, the authors employed two main research instruments, including (1) a widely used survey questionnaire aiming at investigating participants' level of self-discipline and (2) a database from English Occupational Purposes, a web-based English learning system to assess learners' language performance. Research results have shown a direct correlation between subjects' level of self-discipline and their English language performance, in which a low level of self-discipline is a partial contributor to poor learning performance and vice versa. Also, the findings of the research showed an inconsiderable difference in the learning outcomes of the high group and the medium group in several aspects.

Introduction

Given the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which prohibits teachers and students from taking face-to-face classes, online learning has become a new norm in education (Shivangi Dhawan, 2021). Simply put, learning is no longer confined to the four walls of the classroom but can happen at any time and place as learners wish (Le & Nguyen, 2022). It is undeniable that innovative teaching and new learning system has stimulated learners' and teachers' creativity. This resulted in adapting the teaching-learning process, such as the teaching method, management system, and learning strategies, to name a few. Teaching has shifted from face-to-face classes to distant classes, which is synonymous with the increasing application of technological teaching and learning tools. Unsurprisingly, this has required teachers and learners to acquire relevant skills so that they can cope with the prevailing learning context.

Moreover, learners are advised to facilitate their self-study capacity due to its significant role in almost all online courses.

In summary, due to specific characteristics of the online environment, challenges caused by online teaching and learning cannot be avoidable (Pham, 2022), which inevitably influences learning outcomes. Although students seem to be more accessible to learning recourses, and this has brought about undeniable advantages for students, distance learning highly acquires students' ability to get familiar with all course materials, follow a recommended learning route, adhere to time constraints, and complete all needed tasks (Gorbunovs, Kapenieks, and Cakula, 2016). In other words, self-discipline is an essential skill in the era of online learning (Shivangi Dhawan, 2021). Given that, self-discipline can be regarded as a contributor to brilliant academic performance. Despite this, research on this area is in its infancy.

In line with the prevalence of remote learning, Hanoi University of Industry has integrated online learning courses in teaching English for non-majored students for 7 years. This language teaching policy not only reduces the time of face-to-face lessons but also strongly increases learners' self-study capacity and facilitates their self-discipline given the course requirements. With this, Hanoi University of Industry English teachers have gained greater familiarity with remote teaching. However, the practice of productive language skills took place in physical classrooms. Therefore, in order to adapt to the new teaching-learning circumstance in the Covid-19 pandemic, physical lessons have transformed completely with the utilization of innovative teaching tools and remote classes, which is assumed to come along with difficulties in managing the classes. Hence, teachers can reflect on their students' level of self-discipline and plan teaching tactics to increase learning efficiency based on the findings of this study.

Literature review

Self-discipline

Self-discipline is regarded as the ability to resist desires, regulate emotions, control one's mind, and adjust their behaviors for the long-term goal (de Ridder, Lensvelt-Mulders, Finkenauer & Stok, 2012). Also, Hagger (2013) emphasized that self-discipline characterizes various forms, for example, perseverance, endurance, thinking before acting, and finishing things. Other features of self-discipline are the ability to carry out one's plans regardless of hardships and inconveniences and resist the temptations that might cause repercussions (Sasson, 2016). Given that, a high level of self-discipline is believed to facilitate success, better achievements, and reaching goals. Baumeister and Tierney (2011) concluded in their paper that students' level of self-discipline could help predict their achievement in university.

In digital learning, students must access websites and use a wide range of technological tools to take lessons and interact with others. Not being within the boundaries of schools and classes, students are vulnerable to bad distractions, and the Internet itself is a big temptation. Obviously, any distractions and temptations can deteriorate the learning process and decrease learning

efficiency. Therefore, it is essential for students to keep themselves regulated so that their academic performance can be intact.

Online learning in a digital age

Many terms define the situation in which students attend lessons digitally from home, including online learning, e-learning, remote learning, and distance education (Gelles et al., 2020). Although distance learning has been commonplace for a long period of time, its significant importance has never been emphasized until the outbreak of COVID-19. Given that, research in this field has been increasing dramatically.

Among four determining factors, namely online work skills, online learning efficacy, self-discipline, and socialization that are considered to have profound impacts on students' learning outcomes in e-learning (Joosten & Cusatis, 2020), self-discipline is believed to have a positive relationship between online learning effectiveness and play a pivotal role in the success of online courses (Waschull, 2005). However, this conclusion needs further backup research findings due to the diverse online learning methods which underlie this study.

Language performance

According to Chomsky (1965), language performance, or linguistic performance, is the actual use of language in concrete situations. The term refers to both the production and the comprehension of language. Unlike linguistic competence, which is regarded as learners' theoretical knowledge of a language, language performance is understood as learners' practical knowledge of the language. That means linguistic performance can degenerate in quality because of the errors, corrections, or hesitations that speakers tend to make when producing sentences. When asked to perform a hands-on task, language performance is assessed using clearly defined criteria to evaluate how well students achieved the application specified by learning targets (Nitko, 2001). Two language aspects can be examined, including the students' product and the process they use to complete the product (Nitko, 2001). Besides, performance assessment measured candidates' ability to perform a particular task that was usually relevant to jobs or study requirements. (Davies et al., 1999).

In this research, the authors explored participants' levels of self-discipline and investigated the correlation between self-discipline and language performance. In order to examine participants' language performance, the authors have collected data from a web-based English learning system which included their language products and provided details of their English studying progress. To be more precise, their productive language work was uploaded on the website. Together with the number of completed tasks, the average scores of unit tests that students were required to take after each unit and their score on the final test, which took place at the end of the course, were collected and went through analysis to answer the research's questions.

English Occupational Purposes (EOP)

EOP is a web-based English learning platform developed by the Hanoi University of Industry. This English learning website not only promotes students' self-study but also keeps lecturers informed about their student's learning results by checking out the system's reports and providing them with details about their learning process. More importantly, lecturers can deliver their feedback and scores on students' work remotely.

Studying on EOP is a compulsory task for all students before attending English lessons in either remote or physical classrooms. In fact, students are required to complete a wide range of language tasks with relevant topics. After finishing each unit, students must take a unit test that aims at assessing what they have learned in the unit. Also, the learning resources put emphasis on the productive skills that are speaking and writing, whose products are marked in every unit. Moreover, the system allows teachers to keep track of their student's learning progress through weekly online reports.

Self-Control Scale (SCS)

Originally, SCS contained 36 items rated on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly agree; 5 = strongly disagree). With five dimensions, including general capacity for self-discipline, deliberate/non-impulsive action, healthy habits, work ethics, and reliability, the questionnaire examines respondents' ability to override or change responses, interrupt undesired behavioral tendencies and refrain from acting on them (Tangney, Baumeister and Boone, 2004). In this study, given the research's rationale, which is measuring participants' level of self-discipline in e-learning, there are only 26 items, including 11 items referring to general capacity for self-discipline, ten items referring to deliberate/non-impulsive action, and five items referring to reliability in the questionnaire. The detailed survey was attached to the paper's appendix. Tangney et al. (2004) believed that the level of self-control has a close relationship with academic performance. Specifically, higher scores on self-control correlate with a higher grade point average; meanwhile, the opposite result can lead to several interpersonal problems. Therefore, the development of self-discipline is strongly encouraged (Uziel & Baumeister, 2017). Unlike primary school and high school educational environments, tertiary education involves no parental control, and the curriculum is much more flexible in the online learning era. Hence, low self-control in college students is likely to generate negative consequences (Stephenson, Heckert & Yerger, 2020). In this regard, the role of self-discipline in the life of university students should be examined and emphasized. With this, the authors aimed to explore participants' self-discipline levels and compare different groups of self-discipline regarding their language performance.

Research Questions

This paper aims to seek the answers to the following questions:

What is the participants' level of self-discipline?

How does self-discipline affect participants' language performance?

Methods

Design of the study

The authors employed a quantitative method of research in this study. At first, the questionnaire was distributed to 120 participants to investigate their level of self-discipline. After collecting the data from a questionnaire, the authors carried out the analysis and categorized the participants into three groups. Accordingly, the learning results of each group on EOP were assessed and sorted out using mainstream tools: Excel.

Participants

The study was conducted at the end of the first semester of the academic year 2021-2022, in which all lessons were conducted in a virtual setting due to the outbreak of a respiratory virus, COVID-19. To be more specific, it involved the participation of 120 freshmen studying different majors such as Information Technology, Business Administration, or Hotel Management at Hanoi University of Industry. Among them, there were 40 females and 80 males. And the participants' language proficiency was equivalent to level A2 in CEFR.

All of the participants took English lessons from the authors, so the authors have been authorized to access their studying process and results in EOP. Moreover, the study involved 120 participants to ensure the reliability of quantitative research.

Questionnaire

The authors employed Brief Self-Control Scale (Tangney, 2004) to investigate participants' level of self-discipline. The questionnaire was designed on Likert Scale with 5 degrees from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). As mentioned earlier in this paper, the Self-Control Scale is widely used for investigations of the association between self-control and various outcomes (Ferrari, Stevens, & Jason, 2009). However, with the purpose of exploring the relationship between different groups of self-discipline and their language performance, the authors tailored the original Scale by erasing three items related to generic nature and seven items related to impulsivity.

Items of the Brief Self-Control Scale were attached to the appendix of the paper. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants remotely through Google Forms. Next, collected data was then calculated, sorted out, and grouped up into three main categories by the authors. Results would be illustrated in graphs in the later part of this paper.

Database from EOP

Data from EOP includes four categories which are: (1) the total number of tasks that each participant completed at the end of the course, (2) their average grade on speaking and writing work which was their speaking recordings and writing documents, (3) their average scores of unit tests, a test that they took after every unit and (4) their score of the final test were collected to investigate participants' learning outcomes. Data was collected through online reports of the system, then calculated by the authors. The results proceeded to be illustrated in a table and a graph in the following section.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Students' level of self-discipline

Chart 1. Participants' level of self-discipline
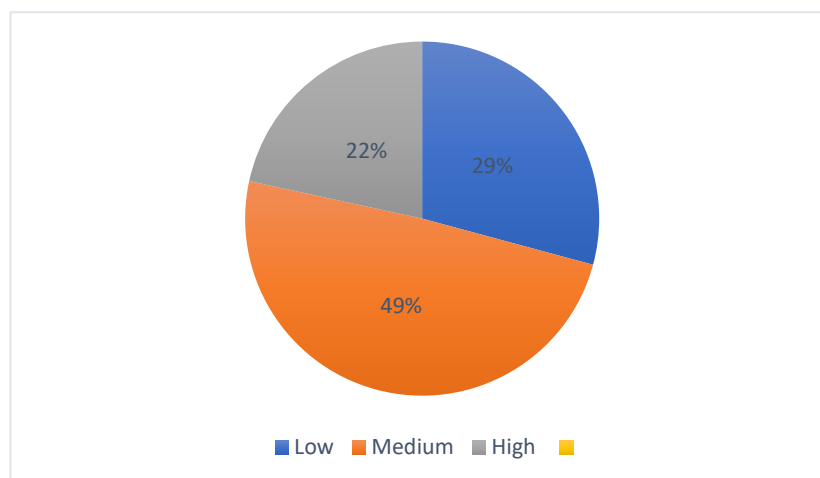
The questionnaire was designed on Likert Scale with 5 degrees: 1(strongly agree), 2(agree) 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4(disagree), and 5(strongly disagree). Therefore, the maximum score that can be obtained from the Scale is 130, and the minimum score is 26. Scores ranging from 26 to 77 indicate a lower level of self-discipline. Scores ranging from 78 to 103 indicate a medium level of self-discipline, and a score higher than 103 indicates a high level of self-discipline.

Results from the questionnaire indicated that the majority of participants identified themselves as ones with a medium level of self-discipline (their scores varied from 81 to 101). It can be seen in Chart 1 that almost half of the participants (49%) belong to the medium-level of self-discipline group; meanwhile, the percentages of students having a low and high level of self-discipline are similar to 29.2% (the scores varied from 50 to 70) and 21.6% (the scores varied from 110 to 115) respectively.

The relationship between students' level of self-discipline and their English learning outcomes

After identifying the participants' self-discipline level, the authors compared the language performance of every group based on their learning results from the web-based English learning tool (EOP) using Excel to explore the relationship between their level of self-discipline and their language learning results. The results were demonstrated by the following charts.

Chart 2. Number of online completed tasks
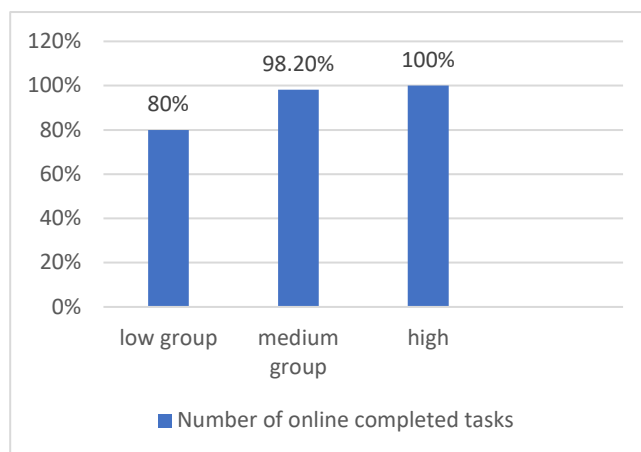
A database from EOP explored the relationship between three groups of participants and their language performance. First of all, chart 2 shows that there is a slight difference in the total number of completed tasks. To be more specific, participants with a high level of self-discipline accomplished all of the tasks; whereas participants in medium groups missed a few tasks. Especially, the percentage of the low group is the lowest of the three in this category.

Chart 3. The average scores of participants in three categories
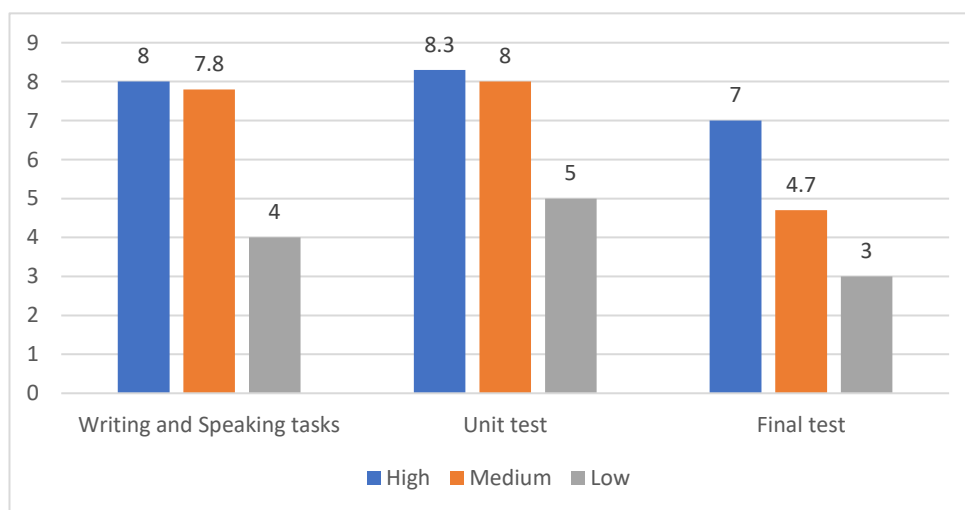
As for the average scores, it is interesting to note that when analyzing the data in writing and speaking tasks, the authors explored that the difference in the high and medium groups is insignificant. Both students in the two groups achieved around 8 points, which students' average score in the high group was slightly higher. In contrast, data of the low group is in the opposite trend; that is, participants' average scores are 4 and 5 in writing and speaking tasks and unit tests, respectively. Clearly, the results have shown a significant distinction between the low group and the others. Finally, Chart 3 shows that the scores of the final test are in correlation with the level of self-discipline, that means participants with high self-discipline completed the course with the highest point (around 7), and those in the low group got the lowest point with 3 points; meanwhile, students in medium groups got average point (around 5). In this research,

the results have shown that self-discipline relates closely to language performance. In fact, this finding was mentioned in Michalis's research in 2021 on self-discipline. She concluded that "self-discipline is oriented towards successful performance outcomes by overcoming impediments". Self-discipline can predict success in academic performance since learners with high self-discipline can overcome the temptation of recreational forms such as TV programs or games and choose the learning despite boredom and frustration. Also, in a study on self-discipline as a key indicator to improve learning outcomes (Gorbunovs, A, Kapenieks, A, Cakula; 2016), they found that a choice of information system, tools, technology, and methodology did not impact learner achievements so much as they depend on self-discipline. However, the study did not give comparisons between different groups of self-discipline.

Although the distinction between the high and medium groups in almost all aspects examined, except for the final test score, is insignificant, the research has shown that participants in the high group delivered the best language performance of all. Furthermore, participants in the medium group did not perform well in the final test. On the contrary, participants in the low group did not perform adequately to be recognized as completing the course, and all of them must retake the course. In particular, the research results have indicated that students in this group were not awarded average points for their work and their tests despite the fact that they finished almost all of the online tasks. This is because they are obliged to complete the online tasks before attending the lessons which have been mentioned earlier in this paper. However, due to the serious deficiency of self-discipline, which means they were unable to resist distractions and temptations, their studying results have been affected immensely.

The findings of this research have indicated the correlation between learners' level of self-discipline and their language outcomes in the online learning context. To be more specific, participants of the study were categorized according to the result of the questionnaire. 22% belonged to the low group of self-discipline, 49% belonged to the medium group of self-discipline, and the rest belonged to the high group of self-discipline. Results from the analysis of a database of EOP have shown that students with high self-discipline delivered the highest language results and completed all of the online learning tasks; meanwhile, their peers in the low group of self-discipline merely achieved the average scores for the test and their language output assessment despite the considerable accomplishment of online tasks. This finding has profoundly justified the direct correlation between learners' self-discipline and their language outcomes.

Suggestion for Further Research

This study only focuses on the comparisons between the level of self-discipline and English learning outcomes. The authors hope that professionals will conduct more similar studies on larger sample sizes with different contexts and participants to reinforce the outcomes of this research in the future. Furthermore, it would be great for teachers and lecturers to carry out in-depth studies on the impacts of self-discipline on other aspects of learning and the characteristics of learners. It is also highly recommended that research on a group of students with poor self-discipline is emphasized for the purpose of helping them to increase their self-

discipline, which in turn generates effective learning. In addition, research instruments should be varied using surveys, interviews, and observations. Teachers should be involved in the research to provide their perspectives.

Conclusion

The authors found that most of the students had a medium level of self-discipline (around 50%), and 29.2% of participants had a low level of self-discipline. Only around 20% of participants had a high level of self-discipline. Also, the study showed the relationship between the level of self-discipline and language performance. Students in the high group performed the best, and there was a slightly inferior in the medium group. Meanwhile, participants in the low group had the lowest studying results, which was discussed earlier. To sum up, the research's findings might help teachers plan useful teaching strategies to tackle students with low level of self-discipline and recognize the importance of self-discipline capacity and the roles of teachers in e-learning.

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Appendix

Items in Self-Control Scale

I am good at resisting temptation.

I have a hard time to break bad habits.

I am lazy.

I say inappropriate things.

I never allow myself to lose control.

People can count on me to keep on schedule.

Getting up in the morning is hard for me.

I change my mind fairly often.

I blurt out whatever is on my mind.

People would describe me as impulsive.

I refuse things that are bad for me.

I keep everything neat.

I am self-indulgent at times.

I wish I had more self-discipline.

I am reliable.

I do many things on the spur of the moment.

People would say that I have iron self-discipline.

I have worked or studied all night at the last minute.

I'm not easily discouraged.

I'd be better off if I stopped to think before acting.

Pleasure and fun sometimes keep me from getting work done.

I have trouble concentrating.

I am able to work efficiently towards long-term goals.

Sometimes I can't stop myself from doing something, even if I know it is wrong.

I often act without thinking through all the alternatives

Biodata

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Teaching and Learning Morphology in the English Language Curriculum: An Exploration into Belief and Reality in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Language study includes different branches such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Morphology is one component that has proved supportive of learning vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing. However, earlier studies have mostly focused on morphology as an integrated aspect in language classes, and not much has been done in the context of its being a separate academic subject in the English language curriculum. Therefore, this article aims to explore teaching and learning practices in Morphology classes and ascertain teachers' and learners' beliefs toward the subject. The study used semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data from ten English major students just completing their Morphology course and four teachers of the subject at a university in Vietnam. The findings show that both learners and teachers have positive attitudes toward Morphology, affirming it is challenging but worth studying and emphasizing the importance of its inclusion in the English language curriculum. This research argues that teaching and learning Morphology should prioritize explicit instructions in learners' utilization of their mother tongue accompanied by tasks and discussions.

Introduction

The study of a certain language, for example, English, includes different branches, some of which are phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics (Syarif, 2016; Yule, 2020). Indeed, these elements are not necessarily studied by learners studying English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL). Instead, it is common that students of English majors should or have to experience classes of such components. Phonetics and phonology deal with pronunciations, sounds, and patterns of sounds (Collins, Mees, & Carley, 2019; Roach, 2009). Morphology is about studying forms of words (Andrew, 2002; Claravall, 2016; Yule, 2020), and the term refers to a narrower notion, i.e., morpheme – the smallest unit

of word carrying a certain meaning (Anwar & Rosa, 2020; Claravall, 2016; K. Yadav & S. Yadav, 2021; Ng, P. Bowers, & J. Bowers, 2022; Yule, 2020). Among those, one critical aspect teachers have ignored in their teaching is morphology (Anwar & Rosa, 2020), even though it is considered important to the acquisition of literacy among learners (Ng et al, 2022). Syntax studies structures and arrangements of sentence elements (Yule, 2020). Semantics analyzes meanings (Yule, 2020).

Researchers have termed "morphological awareness" or "morphological knowledge" (Anwar & Rosa, 2020; Claravall, 2016; K. Yadav & S. Yadav, 2021; Templeton, 2012) to describe the fact that learners are knowledgeable of morphological constituents and apply them in their language learning. More specifically, learners with an awareness of morphology can improve their reading skills (Claravall, 2016; Nagy, Diakidoy, & Anderson, 1993; Templeton, 2012; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2019), writing skills (K. Yadav & S. Yadav, 2021; Templeton, 2012), spelling skills (Templeton, 2012), grammar accuracy and vocabulary use (K. Yadav & S. Yadav, 2021).

Previous research shows that morphological awareness is vital to learners learning a new language, especially successfully confirming its correlation with reading comprehension (Ghasemi & Vaez-Dalili, 2019) and vocabulary (Yousif, 2016). However, the teaching of morphology is just an integration into language classes in general, and there has been no exploration into a class where morphology is the subject itself, which English majors do. Moreover, no research has been done into what learners and teachers think about the subject or what they really deal with in the classroom. For this reason, the author will discover the teaching and learning practices of Morphology and students' and teachers' beliefs when they take it as a separate academic course.

Literature review

Morphology

Different languages have different forms and meanings, leading to difficulty in learning (Auni & Manan, 2023). Morphology is a branch of linguistics (Anwar & Rosa, 2020). According to Yule (2020), morphology is about "the study of forms" (p. 76). Andrew (2002) refers to it as words and their parts. In that sense of "form", it is closely related to the structures and meanings of words (Claravall, 2016). However, these structures must be understood as "internal" (Hammarström & Borin, 2011; Virpioja, Turunen, Spiegler, Kohonen, & Kurimo, 2011), which requires background knowledge to understand and analyze.

Morphemes

In order to examine the internal structures of words, scholars term "morpheme" as an element belonging to morphology (Anwar & Rosa, 2020; Claravall, 2016; K. Yadav & S. Yadav, 2021; Ng et al, 2022; Virpioja et al, 2011; Yule, 2020). It is the smallest unit of word which has a certain meaning or a grammatical function (Yule, 2020). Andrew (2002) suggests that morphemes and structures of words are closely related to the notion of roots and affixes, which have been agreed by different researchers in their study of morphology (Ghasemi & Vaez-Dalili,

2019; Templeton, 2012; Yousif, 2016). The classification of morpheme types and examples can be seen in the following figure.
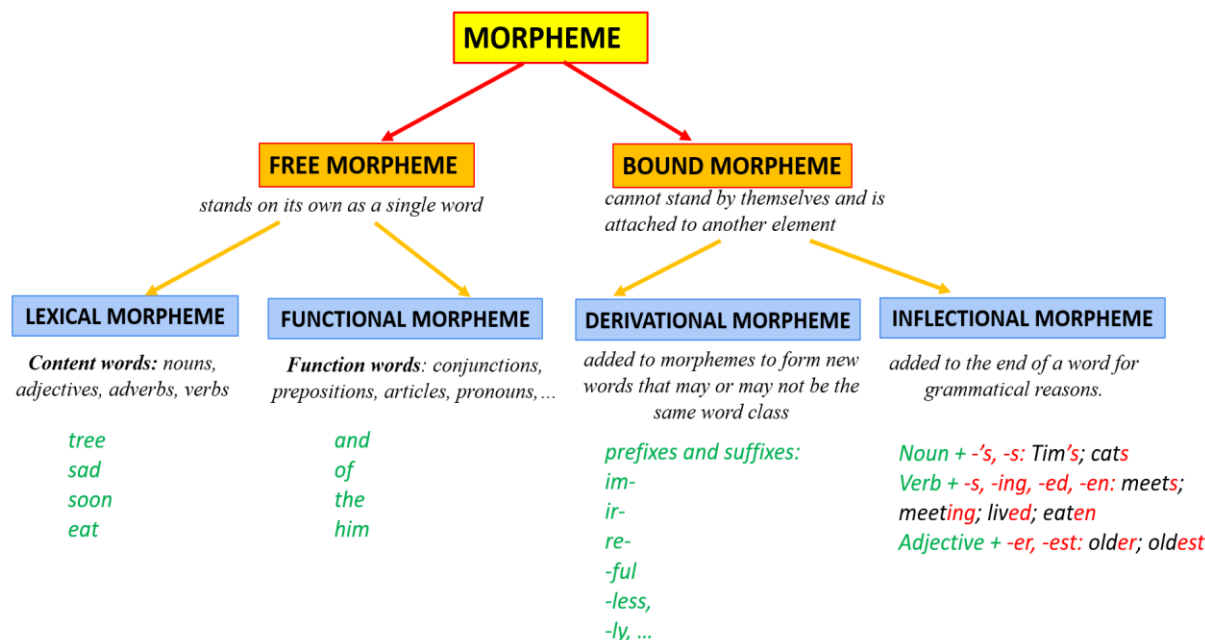

Figure 1. Types of morphemes

Morphology and its Role in Language Skills

Washburn and Mulcahy (2019) suggest that morphological awareness is critical to students, especially to would-be teachers. Ghasemi and Vaez-Dalili (2019) affirm that many empirical studies have inspected the correlation between morphological knowledge and reading comprehension. The training in morphology can help improve reading skills. Indeed, this correlation has been found by Templeton (2012) and was later proven evident by K. Yadav and S. Yadav (2021). This is because reading involves the process of interpreting forms of language that include morphological elements (Verhoeven & Perfetti, 2003).

One of the reasons for better reading is the mastery of vocabulary, thanks to morphological knowledge (K. Yadav & S. Yadav, 2021). Yousif (2016) conducted a study at Sudanese University with English-major students and recommended including vocabulary study connected to morphology to improve students on this aspect, which led to enhancing reading comprehension. Templeton (2012) finds that students' study of morphology aids learners in English and other languages as long as they have the opportunity to explore and analyze morphological structures deeply.

The improvement in vocabulary repertoire and reading skills benefits writing skills (Templeton, 2012). K. Yadav and S. Yadav (2021) assert that it improves critical and original writing. More specifically, inflectional morphology improves learners' grammar, and derivational morphology improves their vocabulary in writing (K. Yadav & S. Yadav, 2021).

The above advantages of mastering morphology should be taught in four English skills, viz. listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Anwar & Rosa, 2020).

Teaching and Learning Morphology

According to Syarif (2016), English language teaching and learning should take linguistics components into consideration. Therefore, the inclusion of morphology in the curriculum is advisable, especially for English majors. The teaching and learning of Morphology can be done in different ways. For example, teaching morphology can take place in implicit or explicit ways (Ghasemi & Vaez-Dalili, 2019), so the learning can be passive or active.

Explicit instructions involve teaching morphology directly, including the teaching of the word formation process and affixes, which helps learners enhance their decoding ability and spelling, from which they can understand the inner content of morphological concepts easily (Claravall, 2016). Different studies have conclusively proven this (Anwar & Rosa, 2020; Ghasemi & Vaez-Dalili, 2019; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2019). Nevertheless, implicit ways have also been chosen as the better ones (Ghasemi & Vaez-Dalili, 2019). In this method, learners infer from the given constructs and find other similar associations themselves. Therefore, any element concerning morphology should be explored by students either implicitly or explicitly. This can be done by analyzing, not by learning by heart (Pham & X. Nguyen, 2022).

Ng et al. (2022) introduced two tools for instructions of morphology: base-centric matrix and affix-centric matrix, in which the former proved to be more effective than the latter. The illustrations can be seen in Figure 2 below.
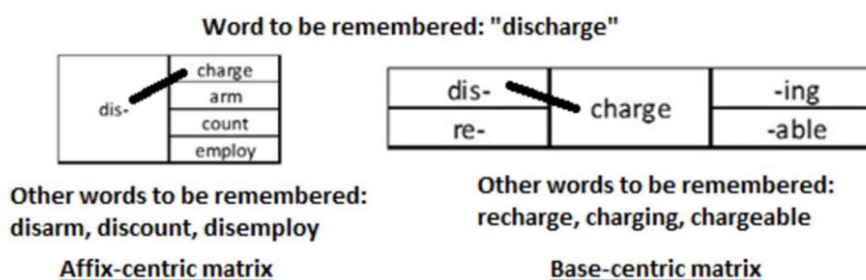
Figure 2. How the matrices were used to form the to-be-remembered word. Adapted from "A promising new tool for literacy instruction: The morphological matrix," by Ng, M. M., Bowers, P. N. and Bowers, J. S., 2022, PLoS ONE, 17(1), p. 8. Copyright 2022 Ng et al.

The Vietnamese Context

In the context of university Vietnamese English majors, morphology courses in the curriculum may be integrated into linguistics classes that cover many linguistic aspects, such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics (Cao & A. Nguyen, 2018; T. Nguyen, 2018). Cao and A. Nguyen (2018) praise the translanguaging approach in which both Vietnamese and English are utilized to understand the examined concepts better. According to the authors, learners should even be asked to give feedback in Vietnamese, and there is an English-Vietnamese switch for better terminology explanations from the teacher. T. Nguyen (2018) conducted a study in English linguistics courses at a university in Vietnam, and found some innovations in the process of teaching and learning such components. To elaborate, the teaching of linguistic elements includes explicit instructions and project-based teaching, while the learning involves facilitating students' activeness and shifting from a teacher-centered approach

to a learner-centered one. When it comes to the focus on students' activeness and learner-centered approach, a linguistic classroom can consider games, especially mobile-based games, for a phonetics class. One typical example of such games is found in the Blue Canoe application to prove pronunciation, which has been proven to be effective in mastering vowels by learners (C. Nguyen, H. Nguyen, & Le, 2021).

The learning of morphology in general, and English morphology in particular, would be challenging. This is due to the fact that the Vietnamese language does not carry inflectional elements, which an inflected language like English does (Ngo, 2001). Therefore, the differences may lead to a negative transfer from Vietnamese to English (Tang, 2007; Vu, 2017). Besides, Vietnamese learners may not take into consideration morphological features in their expressions (Tang, 2007).

Research Questions

To achieve the purposes of the study, the researcher is going to address the following research questions:

1. What do students think about Morphology as a separate academic subject?

2. How do they deal with the subject during the Morphology course?

3. How do teachers feel about Morphology as a separate academic subject?

4. How do teachers teach Morphology?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The participants in this study are English-major students from a foreign language faculty at a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. They study English as their major at university and are to get a bachelor's degree in the English language on a four-year curriculum. There are around 3000 students in the faculty. The students take linguistics courses in their curriculum, including Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, and Semantics. Among those students, there are around 400 students who have recently completed the course "Morphology". This course covers theoretical introductions to morphemes, inflection, derivation, word formation, and word part analysis.

The author called for student participants in the classroom and for teacher participants by oral invitation in the faculty office. Ten students met the nature of the study, and four teachers of Morphology accepted the interview. All students are juniors (4 males and 6 females), all of whom have more than 10 years of learning English. Four teachers (2 males and 2 females) taking part in the study have three or four years of teaching Morphology as an academic subject, and each of them has more than 9 years of teaching English to EFL and ESL students. Two of them have a master's degree in TESOL, and the other two are in Applied Linguistics.

The research employed convenience sampling to collect the data due to the fact that it is easy to access the participants who reflect the nature of the study regarding teaching and learning

Morphology. The author coded the participants and referred to them as codes (T1, T2, T3, T4 for teachers; S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10 for students).

Design of the Study

The study employed a qualitative method, using a semi-structured interview as an instrument to collect data. According to Mann (2016), this kind of interview creates an opportunity to negotiate, discuss and expand the responses from the interviewees. It can generate a deep understanding of people's perceptions, beliefs, and experiences, which is impossible with questionnaires (Richards, 2009).

The questions of the interview were created based on morphology concepts by Yule (2020), matrix base by Ng et al. (2022), and the concept of explicit instructions by Anwar & Rosa (2020), Claravall (2016), Ghasemi & Vaez-Dalili (2019), and Washburn & Mulcahy (2019). The questions for students focus on asking about their feelings towards the subject before and after completing it, what they learned, how they learned, and what aspects in which they could apply their learning. The questions for teachers include exploring their teaching practices and their beliefs about Morphology.

Data Collection & Analysis

After getting acceptance from the learners and teachers, the author scheduled the meetings with each of them through Zoom – a popular platform for meetings. Each one-on-one interview lasted for twenty to thirty minutes, and all questions were asked and answered successfully. Before the interview started, the author asked for recording permission and explained that all the data collected served research purposes only. The entire process of collecting data lasted for one month.

The responses from the participants were then transcribed into Word Processor. Then, the author continued with coding and theming the scripts using Excel. At this stage, thematic analysis was employed. Thematic analysis is popular in analyzing qualitative data, for it secures the process of coding and theming the data content as well as the flexible and accessible nature (Braun & Clarke, 2012). It took one month to code and theme the data.

Results/Findings

Research question 1: What do students think about Morphology as a separate academic subject?

From Negative Assumptions and Sense of Curiosity

All students agree that they had a negative feeling towards the Morphology course even before they really took the course. Specifically, these negative feelings came from the "myth" about it established by seniors.

> S1: […] I heard that this subject was a nightmare to students of English majors, and it would be really challenging to survive the course. I would say I was lost at the time I signed up for the course, fearing that I would never make it.

Before taking it, their feelings towards the course were closely related to "rumors", which reflected their morphological awareness and fearness.

Before students took the course, most of them expected that it was going to be really about sophisticated terms and associated it with grammar.

> S2: [..] This subject would be really complex, for I had done some research before I studied about the subject and realized that I could not make out what it was about.

> S10: […] I would associate the subject with grammar, for I understood that we were going to explore the word structures and grammar of words, but I was not sure whether this would be correct.

Learners' expectation of the course is also vague, for they would not figure out exactly what they were going to explore.

> S5: […] Actually, I did not know anything about this, except for the fact that I would have to take it, and it is required in my curriculum.

Even though some are uncertain of what they are going to explore, they are curious and get ready for it.

> S6: […] I don't have any basic background information about it, but I still would welcome it, though, for I love to explore something new.

Basically, before taking the course, learners seemed to have no clue of what they would explore and somehow were affected by rumors from the elders. They generally would love to study the subject and were eager for it.

To Positive Feelings and Deserving Experience

Students' perspectives about the subject changed substantially after the course. The vast majority of them agreed that the course was not as hard as they had imagined. Actually, most of them found the course interesting.

> S7: […] I would not believe that morphology was so interesting to me. I love to discover new things, and this subject is just right for me […] I can learn new things about word formation, and morphemes, and these would help me with other aspects of language in the future, i.e. learning vocabulary, grammar and so on.

They all agreed that, upon completing the course, they could easily understand the morphological terminologies. Some of the terms include what morpheme is, the process of forming words, and the analysis of the internal structures of words.

> S4: […] I must admit that some of the terminologies were hard to understand at first; however, with the comprehensible and well-organized lectures, I could state confidently that the easiness outweighs the challenge.

Generally, they are aware of what morphology is and confident they would apply it in analyzing words, thus improving their grammar accuracy and vocabulary repertoire.

Inclusion in the Curriculum as a Separate Academic Subject

Even though most students feel this subject is hard to master, especially in analyzing morphemes and their meanings, they still love to explore the subject deeply and conclude that it should be included in the English language syllabus. There are some reasons for this.

S3, S4, S6, and S7 agree that it is useful for English majors when it is necessary to sharpen and deepen their knowledge of linguistics elements. S1, S9, S10 added that learning morphology means learning all about advanced grammar and increasing vocabulary repertoire. This means morphology does support them in other areas of language learning.

> S9: […] I must admit that morphological knowledge can help me pay more attention to my use of grammar and vocabulary. I will take into consideration the word class I choose based on affixes attached to them, and may use different word forms in the sentence I write […] I also find reading skill less challenging, for I can guess words' meanings better.

S2, S6, and S8 explain that the inclusion of morphology in the English language curriculum is right for getting students to have an insight into the language and its internal nature. They also agree that morphological awareness is a base for other elements like syntax and semantics.

> S6: […] Understanding morphemes and affixes help me to identify the correct word class, and put them in the correct position of a phrase or a sentence, and of course, I know its exact meaning and the message I want to convey.

In conclusion, learners have changed their attitudes from being curious, doubtful, and unaware to being excited, confident, and satisfied. This proves that what they have experienced from the course is positive, which rejects bad rumors about the course. Overall, the subject is indispensable in English majors' curriculum due to the linguistic benefits it brings to students concerning vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing.

Research question 2: How do they deal with the subject during the Morphology course?

What to Learn Morphology as an Academic Subject

All learners mention morphology in their separate courses in the curriculum studies morphemes and word formation process. More specifically, learning morphemes also involves learning related terms, namely inflection, derivation, affixes (prefixes and suffixes), and different processes of word formation like compounding, conversion, backformation, and so on.

Learning Morphology in an Explicit Way through Lectures

All learners reported that they were taught morphology as a separate subject with different complex terminologies concerning morphemes, free morphemes, bound morphemes, inflectional morphemes, derivational morphemes, word formation processes, structures of words with prefixes and suffixes. All of them said that they learned morphology in an explicit way, which is teachers give lectures about the terminologies and let them practice with exercises like identifying morphemes and analyzing morphemes and their meanings.

> S8: […] My lecturer always gave lectures about certain terminologies and let us ask questions as well as discuss complex points […] In each lesson, the lecturer tried to explain the nature of morphology and its related elements concerning morphemes as well as word structures. From this,

we could understand the lesson better.

Vietnamese as a Means of Instruction

All learners suggested that the lesson always take place with Vietnamese instructions. It means that teachers and students spoke Vietnamese instead of English in their morphology class. However, the materials and the lesson notes and slides were in English. To explain the use of Vietnamese, although they were supposed to use English, they affirmed that using their mother tongue made the subject less challenging and easier to understand.

> S5: […] With Vietnamese instructions, we get what is taught at once […] With the complexity of morphological elements, the use of our first language is a must, and we feel it helps us to get the point straight away and find our lesson simpler.

Preference to Use Base-Centric Approach

70% of the learners find it easier to learn morphemes by learning "base" first and then looking for any affixes which can be combined with such "base", while the other 30% prefer to start with affixes and then tries to match these affixes with English words. They mentioned certain advantages to each method.

> S1: […] I think learning the base first, and then looking for different prefixes and suffixes attached to it is easier for me. By this way, I can take control of the number of words I absorb and compare the differences among the affixes.

> S10: […] I would start with prefixes and suffixes to get its meaning, and then I would try to match them with the words I know. I can learn more affixes through this way.

The Importance of Tasks and Activities

For activities used in the morphology class, learners all agreed that having some exercises related to the lesson is important. This is the time when they can review the lesson and get a deeper understanding of morphology. For example, S1, S5, S7, and S10 said that their teachers normally gave them exercises in analyzing morphemes of a certain English word or getting them to work in groups to find out English words with a certain number of morphemes.

> S10: […] We were usually given tasks about analyzing morphemes. One example is the teacher gave us a list of words and asked us to identify the morpheme and figure its meanings. After that, we presented our understanding to the teachers and to other groups […] We could learn from this activity from the teachers' comments and the debates from other groups.

Presentation from Students not Working

Whatever teaching method or activities, nine out of ten interviewees stated that giving presentations by students was not a good way for this subject. They said the fact that students give a presentation helps them to explore the subject, but the exception is applied to morphology. They admitted that the materials given to them were in English and extremely complicated. If they presented their findings to other students, they were afraid they would convey the wrong message or misunderstand the nature of the terminology and waste class time.

> S4: […] I think learning by giving presentations could be applied in other subjects, not in morphology. First, the presenters do not understand the concept as well as the teachers do. Second, they cannot explain it well to the audience, which causes distraction and confusion. Third, it wastes time in the classroom because the teacher will have to explain it again.

Overall, students' learning experience was gained explicitly through lecturers, activities, and discussions in the Morphology classroom. Moreover, the means of instruction have to be in the mother tongue, and there is no need for presentations by students.

Research question 3: How do teachers feel about Morphology as a separate academic subject?

Why to Learn Morphology

Four teachers shared the same notion that morphology should be a separate academic subject in the English language curriculum for those whose first language is not English. They confirm the necessity and the benefits the subject brings to students.

The first reason students learn this subject is its close connection to the target language. Particularly, English language students need to know the internal nature of word structures, for this analysis helps reflect their learning and gives background to learning other branches of linguistics, viz. syntax, and semantics.

> T1: […] A student of the English language should and must in some cases, learn about linguistics components, one of which is morphology. It is one branch of linguistics, and having an awareness of the subject can assist learners in understanding the internal structure of words and learning other aspects like syntax and semantics.

Another benefit teachers mention is the subject helps students learn better in other skills of English. For example, learning of word structures and its formation means learning some aspects of grammar and increasing a certain amount of vocabulary.

> T4: […] Learners can apply morphological knowledge to analyzing word forms and can select correct forms when writing a sentence. They also use a wider range of vocabulary in their writing and speaking, with an attempt to use complex words – words holding affixes.

The final gain from this subject is getting interest from students when they explore new things.

> T2: […] My students love to learn the subject, and many of them get interested in it from the very first day. They said that morphology was new to them, and there was a lot to discover from the subject. It is fascinating for them to analyze and explore the internal structures of words and identify the origin and a family of words.

A Barrier to Learning Morphology

Even though Morphology is necessary for learners, teachers still admit that it poses challenges to them. The challenge comes from the complexity of terminologies concerning morphology, the teaching methodology of teachers in charge, and the amount of knowledge students have to absorb in their lessons.

> T3: […] Morphology includes different complicated aspects regarding morphemes, derivation, inflection, word formation which are sometimes alien, and these things require students' patience

and high level of concentration on the lesson.

> T1: […] Teachers in charge are the ones who decide on the level of complexity. If she or he had a good teaching methodology, or at least an easy-to-understand method, the subject would be easier.

> T4: […] The amount of knowledge on the subject is also an issue. The subject itself contains a lot of aspects to master in a certain time. Therefore, getting this intensive knowledge can be hard.

Basically, teachers' views on Morphology reflect what students feel in their learning. The inclusion of this linguistic branch in the curriculum is vital thanks to the benefits it brings, even though it is not always simple to deal with the subject.

Research question 4: How do teachers teach Morphology?

Vietnamese as a Means of Instruction

All teachers used Vietnamese as the main instruction in their morphology class. They explained that this saved time and made the lesson more comprehensible.

> T2: […] We had about two hours each lesson, and covering all the content in a limited time was like a race. That's why we spoke Vietnamese instead of English.

> T1: […] I think I spoke Vietnamese in order that my lecture was absorbable, and it was also reasonable not to use English because morphology was a completely new world to students.

Explicit Instructions through Lectures

T1, T2, and T3 conduct the lesson explicitly, giving lectures and explaining the concept to students. After that, the students would be given some exercises to practice for better understanding. The teachers explained this way was better than letting students discover the terms themselves and deducing the rules. T4, however, sometimes conducted the lesson implicitly. He felt learners could learn more from this. So, he offered them the chance to give a presentation about a certain concept of morphology. T4 admitted that this way was not always successful, but he would love his students to be as active and autonomous as possible. T1, T2, T3 never agreed with this, for they did not favor student presentation as an effective way of approaching the concept.

> T3: […] I believe we should be the ones who give the lectures and should never ask students to do research themselves into the concept and present their understanding in class. This is time-consuming, for teachers still have to explain again […] I once offered them the chance to do so, and I was very disappointed with the result.

Activities in the Morphology Classroom

One common technique the four teachers used is discussion. Giving lectures should be followed by a discussion between students and teachers. This can be done through tasks or exercises the lecturers give to students.

> T4: […] Delivering discussion is a good way for students to explore more about our lecture. Sometimes, the discussion can take place through activities like word-class analysis and morpheme identification.

It can be seen that explicit instructions done in Vietnamese were commonly used by teachers of

Morphology. This is accompanied by any tasks or activities assigned to students other than presentations.

Discussion

Learning Morphology: Challenging but Deserving

Auni and Manan (2023) claim that the difficulty in learning a language can be due to different forms among languages, especially the word structures or their internal nature. The difference explains the fact that students find morphology challenging to master at first. However, morphological awareness or knowledge plays a vital role in learners (Washburn & Mulcahy, 2019), so learners still find the attractiveness of the subject. As learners mentioned, they could apply morphological knowledge to improve their vocabulary repertoire and their grammar accuracy, which agrees with K. Yadav and S. Yadav (2021). This is beneficial for learners who may have problems with grammar, especially related to the use of correct inflectional morphemes (Burhansyah, Aziz, & Yusuf, 2020). As a matter of fact, good grammar and vocabulary lead to better performance in reading (Claravall, 2016; Nagy et al., 1993; Templeton, 2012; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2019) and writing (K. Yadav & S. Yadav, 2021; Templeton, 2012). Furthermore, to students, the mastery of morphology reflects their reading ability thanks to the interpretation of language structures, which is part of morphological awareness. The reflection can be explained by the intercorrelation between the skill and the interpretation process (Verhoeven & Perfetti, 2003). Therefore, Morphology learning in the curriculum is justifiable.

Morphology Learning Practice

Responses from learners reflect the consistency between what morphology includes itself and what is included in the real course. These include morphemes, word structures, and word formation, as mentioned earlier. Specifically, the morphology course includes elements suggested by a large body of researchers, namely Andrew (2002), Anwar and Rosa (2020), Claravall (2016), Ghasemi and Vaez-Dalili (2019), K. Yadav and S. Yadav (2021), Ng et al. (2022), Virpioja et al. (2011), Yousif (2016) and Yule (2020).

Explicit instructions used in morphology courses with Vietnamese instructions as a means and lectures as a teaching method are similar to those suggested by Claravall (2016). This way of instruction has been proven effective (Anwar & Rosa, 2020; Cao & A. Nguyen, 2018; Ghasemi & Vaez-Dalili, 2019; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2019). However, this approach also needs to consider the opportunity for language analysis (Pham & X. Nguyen, 2022).

The study found that learners prefer the base-centric matrix more than the affix-centric matrix, which supports Ng et al.'s model of teaching and learning morphology (2022). Learners love learning, memorizing, and analyzing morphemes from the base first and then combining them with related affixes. This is similar to the learning of the word family.

The research explores some other new Morphology learning beliefs and practices. The first is the means of instruction used in the morphology class, which is the learners' mother tongue. As they mentioned, this can help them understand the terms easily and saves time. Another is the

addition of activities or tasks to the lesson. This is the time for students or learners to apply what they have learned to real analysis and gain new insights into the language. Finally, presentations from learners should be avoided to reduce confusion and increase efficiency in terms of time, convenience, and effort.

Teaching Morphology: From Necessity to Reality

The fact that teachers praise the necessity of teaching and learning Morphology as an academic subject agrees with students' views. It also supports previous researchers on the critical role of morphological awareness (Washburn & Mulcahy, 2019). Accordingly, teachers link learners' performance in other areas of language skills with morphology, which also confirms the learners' positivity towards the subject. Some areas include vocabulary use, grammar accuracy, writing skills, and reading skills. Obviously, their view reflects exactly the positive correlation between skills of language and knowledge of morphology, which was empirically confirmed by different researchers (Claravall, 2016; K. Yadav & S. Yadav, 2021; Nagy et al., 1993; Templeton, 2012; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2019).

Teachers share the same view as learners' when they all state that it is really important for English majors to deeply analyze the internal structure of the target language when they learn it academically. This can be done even though the involvement in the process of interpreting the target language is challenging due to the differences in the first language (Auni & Manan, 2023; Verhoeven & Perfetti, 2003).

There is one new finding from the study where teachers believe the learning of morphology also sets the background for studying other aspects of linguistics components: syntax and semantics. Their view is reasonable and supports learners. First, for morphology, it has something to deal with affixes (Andrew, 2002) which shows the part of speech of a word, and using correct word class to form phrases and sentences with meaningful arrangements is what syntax covers (Yule, 2020). Second, to semantics which deals with meanings (Yule, 2020), morphology has something to do with morphemes that have the smallest unit of meaning (Anwar & Rosa, 2020; Claravall, 2016; K. Yadav & S. Yadav, 2021; Ng et al., 2022).

Morphology Teaching Practice

Teachers' teaching methods are found to be explicit. Explicit instructions are a necessity for teaching morphology (Anwar & Rosa, 2020; Ghasemi & Vaez-Dalili, 2019; T. Nguyen, 2018; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2019). The fact that teachers use Vietnamese instructions is also one way to show the explicit nature of their teaching. It is undeniable that teachers and learners share a similarity in their views on the teaching and learning method of the subject. The teaching process must start with lectures, proceeds with tasks and activities, and ends with a discussion. There is also a consideration towards using student presentation to approach and analyze Morphology. In fact, teachers do not favor this way, and they save time for lectures and tasks in the classroom, which is in line with learners' expectations. However, this study neither finds the emphasis on the center of learners who are expected to play an active role, which would not support T. Nguyen (2018), nor shares the finding that learners should be taught in a dynamic classroom with the application of mobile-based games as suggested by C. Nguyen et al. (2021).

Conclusion

It is found that there are positive perceptions towards teaching and learning morphology as a separate academic subject for both learners and teachers. To them, morphology is difficult due to differences between their mother tongue and the target language, but it is interesting and deserving of exploration. Indeed, they regard it as vital in the curriculum of English majors. Therefore, syllabus developers should include this subject in the English language curriculum.

The study concludes that teaching and learning morphology should take place explicitly, in which clear instructions in the first language and lectures are made. This finding raises the importance of careful consideration in task designs and explicit instructions in a linguistics class where its knowledge is a new world to learners. In order for the course to be effectively conducted, it should consist of tasks and activities as well as discussions but not allow for student presentation.

The research has a limitation which lies in the sample the author chose. The student participants are the ones who have just completed the course recently, so they can describe the subject clearly and share their excitement right after completion. There should have been an inclusion of learners who had completed the course for a longer period in order to explore whether their feelings have changed much and to see what kind of applications of the subject they have. For future research, this problem should be considered.

The findings add to the literature review on students' and learners' perceptions of Morphology – one of the branches of linguistics- and their teaching and learning practices in the context of a separate academic subject for English-major students in Vietnam.

Acknowledgments

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Biodata

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The Application of Critical Thinking to Short Story Analysis: An Experiment on a New Teaching Process

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ABSTRACT

Attempts have been made to integrate critical thinking into many disciplines to improve thinking quality and enhance learning outcomes. Although many studies have indicated positive effects when applying critical thinking to teaching literary works in varied ways, further research is needed to develop practical approaches that solve the problems of students' passive learning and low interest in literature courses. The author of the study developed a process named R.A.I.S.E-U.P, transforming critical thinking qualities into a practical procedure for teaching short stories at the tertiary level. The aim of the current study is to measure the effects of the experiment on this teaching process conducted in a literature class of 35 English major students at Nong Lam University. Qualitative data were collected through interviews for content analysis. The results showed positive feedback on the experiment both in students' engagement in class activities and improvement of critical thinking quality. The findings consolidate the teaching approach to apply critical thinking to literary analysis.

Introduction

Literature courses are introduced as compulsory in the curricula of many foreign language faculties in Vietnamese universities with the aim to provide their majors with an overview of cultural background and the abilities to appreciate literary works, discover humane values, and improve language and thinking skills. The significance of literary studies is well-perceived by most students in Hasan and Hasan (2019) and Tran (2022). This view reflects the three approaches to literature teaching suggested by Carter and Long (1991): language-based approach, cultural approach, and personal development approach. Al-Mahrooqi and Roscoe (2012) added that the study of literature study can improve critical thinking by comparing practices, values, and traditions of diverse cultures.

Important as it is recognized, instructing literature to English majors has been a challenging task due to students' problems with vocabulary, structures, and concepts and their frequent

practice of searching for pre-existing online analyses and memorizing interpretations for essays. This way of learning can hinder students' creativity, critical thinking, and capacity to appreciate literary artistry, making literature classes most tedious and unproductive.

The first problem that students face is their limited language proficiency and lack of background knowledge related to literary texts, which can seriously affect their full engagement in literature courses, as concluded in the study by Tran (2022). This claim is consistent with Carter and Long's (1991) emphasis on the necessity of familiarity with native language literature, and knowledge of the world, people, and life experience. It is also noted in Phạm's (2019) study that high school students have been acquainted with only listening to the teacher's lectures and remembering notes for later essays, which might be insufficient for competence development.

The second problem of literary study results from conventional teaching methods. Bui and Nguyen (2018) argued that teaching literature in Vietnam only focuses on imparting knowledge while neglecting to enhance students' abilities. As a result, the academic programs lose their connection to authentic tasks and ignore students' interests. Phạm (2019) also remarked that Vietnamese teachers of literature tend to apply the only method of lecturing and impose their own opinions on literary texts. Besides, in the context of teaching literature for English majors at tertiary level, Nguyen (2022) noticed lecturers' mindset of using EFL rather than a lingua franca, which also affects the ways of teaching and assessment. Lecturers, therefore, tend to avoid classic works from British and American literature in their syllabi, and incline to assess students' comprehension and grammatical quality rather than their appreciation of literary works.

Attempts to solve these issues are varied. First, some syllabus designers and lecturers may introduce literary texts as reading materials with the aim at improving comprehension and raising language proficiency, as noticed by Nguyen (2022). Other researchers try different methods to make literature classes more interactive and appealing. Bui and Nguyen (2018) suggested varied solutions for teaching literature on a competence-based approach. Pham (2018) introduces the application of critical thinking through Socratic discussion. Hiner (2013 a) develops her approach to include critical thinking elements in the literature classroom.

The author of the current study attempted to apply critical thinking to literature teaching with the purpose of developing students' sense of discovery and appreciation of literary works, and thus raising their interest and critical thinking. Different from Hiner's (2013 a) approach, the author focused on analysis of short stories and changed the elements of critical thinking into a process of teaching literature. An experiment of the innovative approach was conducted on a literature course, hypothetically increasing more interaction and interest, developing a sense of discovery in literary appreciation, and forming a practice of critical thinking.

Literature review

Definitions of critical thinking

The concept of critical thinking has been defined by numerous authors, not all of whom share the same definitions. However, there is some basic consensus on the process, components,

standards, and purposes of critical thinking. According to Scriven and Paul (1987), critical thinking is "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action". It is supposedly founded on universal criteria: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, evidence, good arguments, depth, breadth, and fairness. Paul and Elder (2008) defined critical thinking as the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking to ameliorate it. In essence, critical thinking requires us to activate our ability to observe, investigate, analyze, evaluate, and solve problems instead of relying on our intuition or instincts.

Tools and strategies to train critical thinking.

Many studies develop tools and strategies to train and improve critical thinking. Critical thinking does not only refer to a mere appraisal of arguments or "the correct assessing of statements", as defined by Ennis (1962), but also includes processes, strategies, and attitudes that can be trained. Guleker (2015) introduced several strategies to promote critical thinking. Nosich (2012) provided tools to guide the development of critical thinking in many fields, integrating the teaching of critical thinking into the subjects. Paul and Elder (2006) formulated three components: elements of thought, intellectual standards, and intellectual traits that can be achieved as a result of the consistent and disciplined application of the intellectual standards to the elements of thought. Guleker (2015) emphasized the importance of training critical thinking skills, making learning more effective and livelier.

Application of critical thinking in teaching literature

Studies on integrating critical thinking into literature teaching can be divided in two different directions: teaching critical thinking through analysis of literary works, and teaching literature with the application of critical thinking. For the first direction, Khatib and Mehrgan (2012) concluded that teaching short stories enhances students' critical thinking. Similarly, Minhsun (2009) and Gulsah and Esin (2015) suggested developing critical thinking through teaching fiction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Chapple and Curtis (2000) also introduced several ways to increase critical thinking skills in foreign language classes through lesson content.

The second trend is to improve literature teaching through the application of critical thinking. Esplugas and Landwehr (1996) recommended that teaching literature should not only stick to traditional teaching, where students simply follow the teacher's suggestions, but should help students apply critical thinking to analyzing literary texts. By this way students their own critical interpretations of the work based on solid arguments. Hiner (2013) proposed a model of applying critical thinking to teaching literature, including the elements of thought raised by Paul and Elder (2006), and standards of critical thinking by Nosich (2012).

Hiner (2013a) transformed these elements of thought into classroom activities with lists of questions combined with cooperative activities. These activities help students explore literary texts more deeply and practice qualities of critical thinking as well. This approach to integrating critical thinking into literature classroom is illustrated in Part II of her paper (Hiner, 2013 b) where she analyzed Dickens's Great Expectations to show a person's transition from an

unqualified thinker to a reflective, metacognitive critical thinker, thereby emphasizing the role of concepts of critical thinking.

Several recent studies in Vietnam have applied critical thinking to teaching literature in high schools and universities. First, the study by Nguyen (2019) built critical thinking questions and cooperative activities based on the steps in Bloom's Cognitive Assessment Framework. According to this approach, the lecturer deploys Bloom's taxonomy to ask questions and design activities for students to analyze literary texts. Students were reportedly engaged in discussing questions, especially questions at the higher levels of Bloom's cognitive scale, such as analysis, synthesis, and creativity. Another attempt to apply critical thinking is the study of Pham (2018), who applied the Socratic method, the method of questioning and discussing to discover the meaning of the text. This method helps learners develop critical thinking and independent thinking.

Research Gap

Although these studies are breakthroughs in teaching and learning innovation, a lack of sufficient analysis of students' feedback on experiments is still lacking. Another question is that students in these classes still rely on the lecturer's prepared questions and guidelines, meaning students have low autonomy during the learning process. Finally, there is a practical need for guidelines for applying critical thinking to an actual process of classroom activities.

Conceptual framework

The author of this study attempted to develop an approach to integrate critical thinking into teaching short stories for undergraduates of English majors at Nong Lam University. Exploring the elements of thought devised by Paul and Elder (2006), the aspects of critical thinking with analysis, inference, evaluation, induction, and deduction (Phillips et al., 2004), the author developed the process with 7 steps: Reading, Asking, Inferring, Searching, Expanding, Uniting, Personalizing, acronymically coined R.A.I.S.E-U.P., which can be introduced in the procedures of classroom activities.

Figure 1. The R.A.I.S.E-U.P process
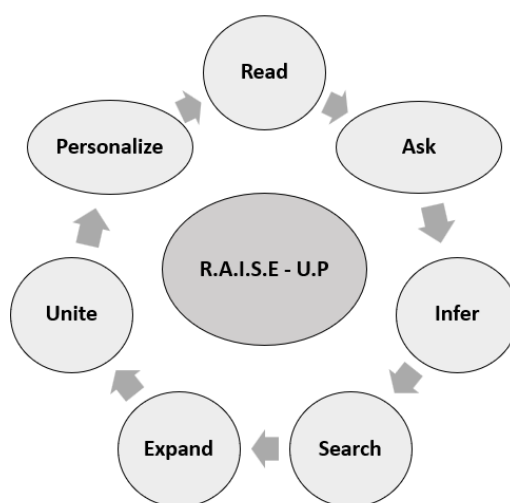
The implications for each step are explained in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The description of R.A.I.S.E – U.P process

Steps	SPECIFICATIONS for each step in R.A.I.S.E-U.P process.	Compared with concepts in critical thinking.
Step 1	**Reading** for a purpose. A literary text is given to read in class or in advance. Groups are assigned with different purposes, e.g, characters, conflicts, plot, synopsis, etc.	Analyzing the issue or tasks, identifying purposes.
Step 2	**Asking** questions from the text for anything strange, new, or intriguing with high-order questions: Why? What does he/she think/feel then? What if? Who is behind the scenes? Really, is it true? What next? What other solutions? Homework: Questions are collected in topics and sent to the groups in charge of particular topics, e.g plot, and characters. The questions are posted in Google Classroom.	Questioning prejudices, challenging assumptions, and identifying problems.
Step 3	**Inferring** from texts and questions. Each group answers the questions related to the topic assigned earlier and gives their first claims (inferences) on their topic: plot, characters, conflicts, or themes.	Making Inferences, Raising hypotheses, Drawing preliminary conclusions.
Step 4	**Searching** for facts, and information from texts, or from the internet. Each group reads the text more closely and or searches facts and comments from the internet to support or eliminate their claims made earlier. It is done as homework.	Searching for evidence, facts, etc. to reason for or support their claims.
Step 5	**Expanding** understanding through exchange with others. Jigsaw activities can be used for group debate. Simultaneously, groups exchange members for presenting and be challenged by others, and then get back together in their home group and discuss for consensus and class presentation.	Discussing and Challenging each other's schemes, Evaluating arguments and Evidence.
Step 6	**Uniting** all for conclusions. Each group presents its points and arguments in front of the class. The lecturer helps students put all together, considering them in different contexts, and perspectives, drawing out different messages with different contexts. The lecturer may give more background or theories for further understanding.	Synthesizing, conceptualizing, evaluating, and checking hypotheses through different contexts, giving implications.
Step 7	**Personalization** of the messages. Each individual writes their reflections, creating new endings or solutions, looking at current issues from their actual life. Reflections are published in google classroom for further comments from peers and the lecturer.	Problem-solving, sharing different points of view, and creating solutions.

The process emphasizes students' engagement in the learning activities, their motivation for self-discovery, group discussion, and personalized reflections, thereby enhancing their autonomy. According to Tran and Vuong (2023), students develop their learning autonomy

when encouraged to draw their own conclusions or challenged with questions. Critical thinking can be developed through this process, in which students ask questions by themselves, form their hypotheses or inferences, search for evidence, and argue for their points, which assembles an authentic inquiry process.

Purposes of the research

This study aims at assessing the effects of the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process on students' engagement in class activities and critical thinking quality. An experiment of this approach was conducted in one course of Introduction to Literature and a structured interview via email was applied to collect data for qualitative analysis.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the experiment was seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. Does the application of the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process to the analysis of short stories result in more interest and interaction among students?
2. Does the experiment help qualitatively improve students' critical thinking through the process of literary analysis?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting& Participants

There are three literature courses, all compulsory, in the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Technical Education, Nong Lam University. After finishing Introduction to Literature, students take British Literature and American Literature. The subjects of the experiment were 35 students in one class of Introduction to Literature, out of the three classes the author was in charge of. The course comprises 30 credit hours, regularly taken by sophomore English majors. After the experiment, eight students were selected for an interview via email, answering questions on their participation and their experience in the new approach.

Design of the study

The researcher conducted the experiment through these stages:

- First, offering one class of 3 hours to introduce the RAISE-UP approach and practice the steps by analyzing a short story, Uncle Tommy's Visit by Writal, posted on Reddit.
- Second, applying the approach for five weeks, with two short stories: The Last Leaf by O. Henry, and A Very Short Story by E. Hemingway. Table 1 above illustrates the procedures of teaching one short story, which lasted 2 weeks, with 2 class sessions of 3 hours, and homework on google classroom. Class session 1 covered Steps 1, 2, and 3, with homework in google classroom for Step 4 (Table 1). Session 2 covered Steps 5 and 6, with homework for Step 7 (Table 1).

Data collection & analysis

After the experiment, 8 students were randomly selected from the numbered alphabetic name list of 35 students, picking one every 4 numbers, starting from number 3. The selected students include one male and 7 females, somewhat representing the proportion of males and females in the English major class. After agreement of research participation, these 8 students answered the 5 questions in a structured interview via email, which, as Dahlin (2021) suggested, can provide adequate and essential data for significant research tasks, and is considered an alternative to traditional in-person methods. The five questions were sent to them with a deadline of 2 weeks for their responses, supposedly adequate for their reflections on the experiment. The questions were structured but open with "Why or why not?", and "Give examples", focusing on students' perceptions of the five categories: interaction, questioning, debating changes of thinking, and possible application of the process.

All the students sent their feedback in due time. Responses in Vietnamese were allowed to ensure comfortable expression of their ideas and feelings and thus translated by the author. Their responses were quite long; therefore, some parts of the response content were removed due to irrelevance or repetition; negative responses were retained, however. To ensure anonymity, the names of the students were encoded into St.1, St2., and so on.

The responses were sorted into relevant tables based on interview questions. A descriptive analysis of response content was undertaken with respect to the research questions.

Results

Research question 1: Does the application of the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process to literature teaching result in more interest and interaction among students? Responses to interview questions 1, 2 and 3 show how students were engaged in classroom activities: interaction, asking questions and debating.

Students' engagement in interaction: First, as shown in Table 2, most responses (6/8) agreed that the new method engaged them in interaction with others, which helped them to learn from different perspectives. Some of them contrasted it with traditional ways of studying literature from high school and concluded that the new one was more interesting and motivating. Students 4 and 7 did not answer. Student 5 found this method unfamiliar at first, but found it really beneficial later. Students 1, 2, 3 and 6 showed strong support for interactive activities.

Table 2. Responses to Question 1.

Q 1	Did you enjoy the interaction in the class? Why or why not?
St. 1	*I did enjoy the interaction with the teacher and partners in class. First, It makes classes become more vibrant and brings more interest to students; talking and debating continuously help me not to feel sleepy. Second, I can have various interesting perspectives from others about one issue and somewhat learn something new from those perspectives.*
St. 2	*I found this method very new, and very interesting. [...] made each class very exciting and engaging, [...] Unlike before, when I only studied the old way, [...] really disheartened because [...] so boring and [...] no motivation. [...], this new method, my group, and others debated and helped me discover many issues, new perspectives [...]*
St. 3	*I really enjoyed having interaction in class like this. Because it helped me understand more about my classmate, about the fact that the ideas we have in our heads are not the same and each one of us has different ideas about one problem. It also improved my skill in listening and working with other people*
St. 4	*No answer.*
St. 5	*I personally like this method very much, this is my first time learning this method. Although it may not be familiar at first, but after only a few times exchanging with friends in the group, it has stimulated my exploration of thoughts, making it easier to understand and remember longer.*
St. 6	*Personally, I feel that this new method was much more interesting and attractive than the old method where the teacher is centered, I enjoyed the interaction in the class. [...] required me to "brainstorm" more, read and drew out what I understood first, then consulted more from the teacher and other students.*
St. 7	*No answer*
St. 8	*[...] interaction with questions and answers among teacher and students makes me feel that everyone can state their own understanding, [...] raising interesting insights.*

Students' engagement in asking questions. Table 3 below indicates all the students enjoyed asking questions, which they believe brought about surprising new insights, triggering more discussion and searching for further understanding. Some of them gave examples to illustrate how they were stunned by questions from others, leading to curiosity and interest in discovery. Student 4 contrasted the old way of learning by which students passively listened to presentations with the asking technique, which encourages original thinking rather than being too dependent on searching on the internet for everything.

Table 3. Responses to Question 2.

Q. 2	Did you like asking questions about literary works? Why or why not?
St. 1	*Yes, I did. Raising questions helps me to realize many things about details and stories, especially critical questions, bringing more interest and curiosity about the story.*
St. 2	*I felt like this new way of learning was really interesting. We were given chances to discuss and challenge each other with questions. We really engaged ourselves in discovering new ideas and were surprised at new ideas […].*
St. 3	*I was very surprised because the questions were very diverse. They asked questions to express their personal views, thoughts, and opinions. This leads to my changes in thinking about character judgment and character emotions. For example, the character Luz, at first […]*
St. 4	*Instead of presenting and passively listening, students will be actively preparing questions and responding to any questions from other groups, so we learn to think first and not depend too much on searching the internet for answers.*
St. 5	*I find asking questions about literary works very interesting, because it helps me continuously think of appropriate answer options, and stimulates exploration and analysis of the lesson.*
St. 6	*I was quite surprised when someone from another group challenged, "Do you think the nurse in A Very Short Story is older than the soldier?" And the teacher said, "Maybe!", and we searched and checked more info on the Internet.*
St. 7	*Asking questions is really fun and resourceful. For example, to the question, "Why didn't Hemingway give the character "he" a name?", different groups suggest different ways, which bring in different, new, and surprising ideas […].*
St. 8	*When we read questions from the other groups, I recognize many new things. For example, one group raised a question about the "relationship" between Sue and Johnsy in The Last Leaf, we were quite stunned at the different answers, especially after checking more facts on the internet about artists in* Greenwich Village,

The findings from Ho and To (2022) emphasized the importance of questioning techniques in improving students' critical thinking. Asking questions is an important technique in critical thinking, as concluded by Cojocariu and Batnaru (2014)critical thinking technique, as Cojocariu and Batnaru (2014) concluded. In the traditional way, students just try to answer the questions given by the teacher, thereby experiencing a passive and unproductive learning environment.

Engagement in debating: Table 4 shows the students' opinions on debating activities. All of them approved of the benefits of debating in gaining more interest and seeing opposite views, thus figuring out the writer's intentions. Through debating, they recognized new ideas and new perspectives they never thought of before. Students 3, 5, 6 and 7 gave examples of how debates yielded some hints that helped them understand surprisingly more about the characters in the stories. For example, they recognized that the nurse in A Very Short Story is more mature, and perhaps biologically older than the soldier. More importantly, they all reported that they actively participated in debating activities and were so excited to see different views on any single

incident in the stories.

Table 4. Responses to Question 3.

Q. 3	Do you think debating in your group or with other groups gave you more interesting or surprising ideas? Give examples.
St. 1	*Yes, debating gave rise to more interesting ideas from other groups, e.g. we challenged arguments about Luz's possible reasons for breaking up with the soldier. And learned more ideas when viewing from different perspectives.*
St. 2	*Debating increases interest and gave rise to new ideas, even silly or not good sometimes, but even so they really elicit others' insights and help limit making similar mistakes. [...] debates, interactions, and criticism contribute to making the class more fun, interesting and active. For example, when studying A Very Short Story, we got surprised by many good things from both sides of the debate.*
St. 3	*Yes, debating with other groups gave me new ideas. For example, in discussion with other group's members, I have learned that Behman in The Last Leaf must be totally awake from the drunk when he drew the leaf in the snow [...]*
St. 4	*In my opinion, when we debate or argue about something with each other, most people will try to support their available ideas and find out some gaps in the ideas of the opposition.*
St. 5	*Debating between groups makes me feel more excited to learn more [....], the groups give a lot of good ideas and sometimes it surprises me. for example: is Luz's love with the major by accident or on purpose? [...]*
St. 6	*When debating, I could hear many different opinions, and felt that I hadn't thought deeply enough when looking at things. At first, I ignored some sentences from A Very Short Story, and thought they were so simple. But through debate, I found that I had missed so many "hints". After that, I focused on re-reading the article more carefully and gradually discovered the author's intentions.*
St. 7	*Yes, I think discussions with our group and others are effective and intriguing. They provided us with some different and interesting perspectives about details from the literary works that we've studied, or even about characters' psychology. For example, our group once discussed the sacrifice of Berhman in The Last Leaf through different views: his behaviors, silent job, 'masterpiece', inspiration, and hope for Sue and Johnsy's bright future.*
St. 8	*I really enjoy group discussions [...] I really love to express myself through the process of debating whether the character is good or not, and what nonsense about the story, [....] Moreover, I can get some hints about what their personality is. One example I found intriguing is when we debated the character Luz and discovered that everything around her is so mature and sophisticated [...]*

Research Question 2: Does the experiment help qualitatively improve students' critical thinking through the process of literary analysis?

This research question aims at assessing whether the new method positively affects their thinking quality and reasoning habit. This can be seen through students' tendency to ask questions, look for evidence for their claims, look at things from different perspectives, and accept different views. First, it can be seen from Table 5 that all the students gave positive responses to the new method, highlighting some improved thinking qualities. It is noted that most of them said they learned to look at things with different views and would give careful judgement with tolerance. The examples showed how they learned to be sympathetic with characters after analyzing different contexts and perspectives. They also started to "doubt the first impressions" and ask more critical questions about necessary details.

Table 5. Responses to Question 4.

Q. 4	Do you think studying with this method really changes you in some way? The way you think about life, for instance?
St. 1	*I think I have some changes. I tend to ask questions and pay careful attention to details and have enough facts before I give judgment.*
St. 2	*I started to think more tolerantly when it comes to give judgments about someone. I must think twice and try to get more information about that person. […]*
St. 3	*Working with others and asking questions helped me to think more carefully. I think I need to doubt first impressions or avoid jumping to conclusions so quickly.*
St 4	*No answer.*
St. 5	*I really feel that I can empathize with the characters more after analyzing them from many perspectives, because then we will see the issue more broadly, have more reason, and also understand why they are so important.*
St. 6	*I find myself somewhat in love with the character "he" in "A Very Short Story" after being cheated by Luz, however when I put myself in Luz's place, a woman seemingly older than "he", […] Therefore, I feel pity and sympathy for Luz.*
St. 7	*I am not sure. I like classes with more interaction. I hate listening to long lectures and learn by hard in a boring way. I think asking questions helps us to actively participate in class. I love questions like Why not? What if? Really? Who stands behind the scenes? They are very challenging.*
St. 8	*I find myself more sympathetic. As for Johnsy, I can understand why she would have such stupid thoughts and accept those thoughts. But I will not agree with and support her negative, unscientific thoughts like "when the last leaf falls, I will die".*

Secondly, to answer the research question, interview question 5 (Table 6) investigates the students' intentions to apply critical thinking in the future. This is an open question to elicit general opinions about the new method, and intentionally not mention any particular thinking

qualities to avoid bias. Remarkably from Table 6, all students, except Student 4, shared the same desire to apply the techniques in the future, namely raising questions and thinking critically, expanding their views on issues, building more knowledge through discussion, and reflecting on the application in real life. Most of the students do not answer the question directly but show the reasons for their choice.

Table 7. Responses to Question 5.

Q. 5	Do you want to apply this way of learning to literature study in the future?
St. 1	*Definitely yes. Learning in this way helps me to improve my skills which is raising critical question and critical thinking. […] Besides, interacting with teacher and friends also helps me to learn more new things as well as gain more knowledge.*
St. 2	*… It made me feel the characters more deeply thanks to … questioning and analyzing the characters through small details in the work. [….] From asking questions, I felt the character from many different perspectives. […] more sympathetic for some characters […].*
St. 3	*I really felt more interested in your new teaching method. Because it helps me see all the different sides and scenarios of a problem. In addition, the discussion between the groups helps to improve our ability to reflect and absorb knowledge.*
St. 4	*No answer.*
St. 5	*This method makes me feel more interested, makes me and my classmates feel the most at ease, […] because it allows us to interact with each other. […] be enlightened about many interesting things, seeing things from different perspectives.*
St. 6	*I feel like I learned more than just literature. […] After all, literature is also about life. This new method helped me improve the way I think now, and will apply it to my life later. Instead of passively listening and agreeing, we should think for ourselves first, have our own opinions, and then argue and present the arguments to contribute ideas and show more respect for each person's own opinion.*
St. 7	*I myself am totally satisfied with the new technique. It is undeniable that the lessons could be more appealing when students have their own interaction actively. Generally, I'm truly keen on the new way.*
St. 8	*Absolutely without a question, I would die for a chance to have the same class like this one in the future.*

In conclusion, with regards to research question 2, it can be noted from Tables 6 and 7 that the students reported their belief in the benefits of questioning, debating, checking the evidence for judgement, viewing issues from different contexts, and their intention to apply them in the future. This feedback proves that they are forming some basic dispositions of critical thinking such as skeptical thinking, open-mindedness, respect for evidence and reasoning, and different points of views, as stated in Beyer (1995).

Discussion

The students' feedback on the experiment positively responded to the research questions on students' participation and thinking quality. The responses to the first research question show students' high appreciation of the RAISE-UP process. Nearly all the students from Tables 1, 2, and 3 really enjoyed class activities of interaction, asking questions, and debating. This result echoes that of the study by Nguyen (2019), in which students are reported to enjoy critical thinking activities based on Bloom's taxonomy, with questions of various levels.

For the second research question, the results also indicate some improvements in the students' thinking which can be seen through their favor for asking questions, interacting for shared ideas, searching for facts and evidence, sharing, and accepting perspectives, etc. Most students agree they now think more carefully or search for facts or evidence before giving judgment, which shows some standards of accuracy and logic as described in Nosich's (2012) terms. In addition, they start to think "more tolerantly", "empathize with the characters", "put me in Luz's place", and "analyze things from many perspectives" or "see issues more broadly", which reflects another critical thinking standard, namely "Encompassing multiple viewpoints" defined by Nosich (2012), and "Point of view" by Paul and Elder (2006).

The first part of the RAISE-UP process highlights the technique of asking questions and challenging prejudices or rigid interpretations. In conventional ways, students are often given guiding questions and hints that lead them through analysis under the direction of lecturers and have no opportunities to utilize their higher cognitive functions: inquiring, reasoning, evaluating, judging, etc. In the experiment, students were trained to raise critical questions by themselves and reportedly used them to gain unexpected ideas. With these questions as an empowerment tool, students start their journey of inquiry and get excited at their own discoveries. This step shares similar approaches suggested by Hiner (2013) who transformed the critical thinking standards into questions, and Nguyen (2019) who devised questions based on Bloom's cognitive domain taxonomy.

The following steps in the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process foster critical thinking. Stapleton (2012) suggested that when students are put into a "disagree" position, they reveal their tendencies toward critical thinking. In the Expanding step, debating helps them to challenge their own schemes (Piaget's Disequilibrium process) and accommodate new schemes from observing issues from different perspectives or contexts. Lecturers are supposed not to impose their conclusions or delay their interference but join the students' discovery journey instead. The final step of "personalization" is the opportunity of creativity for students to put things all together and express their ideas and feelings through different perspectives or personalizing the writer's messages in applying them to real-life issues. Hiner (2013) also noted her students' improvement of writing quality with respect to critical thinking and creativity.

Conclusion

Despite the short term of application, the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process gained positive feedback from students. Most of them are considerably excited at the activities. The process is an empowerment process that allows students to "raise up" their own voice in the inquiry process,

thereby raising more motivation, triggering better reasoning capacity, and incorporating new ideas in specific contexts or perspectives. If successfully applied, students can develop their critical thinking competence and attitudes for daily life and work, and also learn to confidently appreciate a new literary work later by themselves, surely without teachers' guidelines then.

There are some limitations of the experiment with respect to the small size of the qualitative method. For the first investigation into the field, the author focused on content analysis at expense of collecting large data. Because the course Introduction to Literature spares only five weeks for short stories, the brief period of the experiment is not sufficient for better explanation and training of critical thinking, and thus the effect might not be optimized. Another problem could arise from the faculty not including a critical thinking course in the program. Therefore, the experiment is limited to some basic steps and qualities of critical thinking, rather than formal reasoning methods or logical fallacies.

Further research is recommended to assess the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process with quantitative methods on a larger scale, In fact, a new experiment with a control group is being developed with statistical data collection and content analysis of students' papers.

Acknowledgments

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Biodata

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