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# International Journal of TESOL & Education

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## *A Note from the Editor-in-Chief*

Dear beloved TESOLers & Educators,

We are happy to inform you that Volume 5, Issue 3, 2025 of the International Journal of TESOL & Education (IJTE) has been published successfully. This issue brings together a variety of recent research papers that look at important topics in English language education, such as how students feel, new teaching methods, and how to use technology in the classroom. This issue has 11 articles, including studies on EMI and inequality (Mahjabeen), Dictogloss for cooperative learning (Ngo), immersive technology in ELT (Ngo & To), foreign language enjoyment and anxiety (Vo), English films for speaking (Ho & Le), peer assessment (Le et al.), the process approach to writing (Datta), performance tasks in reading (Limbu), consecutive group work (Le & Nguyen), project-based learning in marketing ESP (Ngo & Tran), and a book review on AI-powered education (Rodriguez).

In this issue, Mahjabeen (2025) examines the function of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in intensifying educational disparity at private universities in Bangladesh. The study employs a mixed-method design, incorporating surveys of 50 students and interviews with 10 teachers, to elucidate disparities between Bangla-medium and English-medium learners. The findings indicate difficulties in language proficiency, self-assurance, and classroom equity, while advocating for inclusive practices to alleviate inequality.

Ngo (2025) examines the implementation of Dictogloss as a collaborative learning strategy to improve English language acquisition among non-English majors at a Vietnamese university. The study demonstrates that Dictogloss markedly enhances students' motivation, engagement, and proficiency in listening, speaking, and writing through the utilization of surveys, interviews, and teacher diaries. The results show how important it is to include Dictogloss in lessons to encourage language learning that is collaborative, interactive, and effective.

Ngo and To (2025) examine the function of immersive technologies—Virtual, Augmented, and Mixed Reality—in the development of enriched affordance environments for English Language Teaching. Based on affordance theory and sociocultural perspectives, the study emphasizes increased engagement, communicative competence, and learner autonomy, while also addressing challenges such as cost, accessibility, and teacher training. The review underscores the pedagogical potential and prospective pathways for the integration of immersive tools into English Language Teaching (ELT).

Vo (2025) examines the correlation among Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE), Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), and student performance at HUFLIT. The study of 98 students shows that they enjoy learning a foreign language a lot, are moderately anxious, and that teacher appreciation plays a big role in shaping FLE. The findings indicate that Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) coexist dynamically, affecting academic performance and implying pedagogical approaches to increase enjoyment while mitigating anxiety.

Ho and Le (2025) investigate the impact of English films on the speaking proficiency of 112 English majors at a private university in Vietnam. Through surveys and interviews, they discovered that films enhanced vocabulary, pronunciation, and motivation, although fluency and confidence exhibited minimal improvement. Some of the problems were fast speech, different accents, and cultural references. Teachers and students concurred that films enhance learning when judiciously chosen and facilitated.

Le, Pham, Than, and Nguyen (2025) look into how peer assessment can help EFL students at Tay Nguyen University improve their speaking skills. The study, which used surveys with 80 students and interviews with 12, shows that peer feedback can help with pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and self-awareness. Some of the problems were unclear rubrics and vague feedback. To get the most out of their work, the authors suggest clearer standards, training, and supportive settings.

Datta (2025) examines the effectiveness of the process approach in teaching English writing at universities in Bangladesh. The study employs surveys with 36 teacher-candidates and interviews with 10 participants, demonstrating robust endorsement for pre-writing, revising, and editing as crucial phases. The findings underscore that the process approach cultivates critical thinking, autonomy, and writing quality, advocating for its systematic implementation throughout tertiary education.

Limbu (2025) examines the perspectives of teachers, parents, and students regarding disciplinary issues in Nepalese schools through narrative inquiry involving 11 participants. The findings indicate a transformation in student behavior, a decline in teacher authority, parental disengagement, and profit-oriented school policies that exacerbate blame. The study underscores the necessity for collaboration, explicit disciplinary protocols, and enhanced parent-teacher relationships to elevate discipline, educational outcomes, and EFL classroom environments.

Le and Nguyen (2025) examine the implementation of successive group-work activities in English classes at a Vietnamese public university. The study, which included interviews with nine students and two teachers, found that fixed groups made people more likely to participate, take responsibility, and work together. However, there were also problems, such as unequal contributions and stress. Suggestions stress the need for clear rules, teacher support, and structures that help groups learn in a way that lasts.

Ngo and Tran (2025) examine the efficacy of project-based learning (PBL) in improving oral presentation skills among third-year English majors enrolled in a Basic Marketing course at HUIT. The study shows big improvements in students' confidence, communication, and teamwork by using tests, surveys, interviews, and observations of the classroom. Even though there were problems with time, resources, and group coordination, PBL worked very well.

Rodriguez (2025) writes a review of the book "AI-Powered Education: Innovative Teaching Strategies to Elevate Student Learning," which was edited by Magruder, Cavallo, and Clark. The book presents 13 practical activities that demonstrate how AI tools such as ChatGPT can ethically improve learning across various disciplines. It balances new ideas with caution by promoting responsible integration and focusing on creating rubrics, immersive simulations, and critical thinking. It is very useful and easy to use, so teachers should definitely get it.

These studies reviewed offer significant insights into modern English language education, emphasizing advancements in pedagogy, learner engagement, and the incorporation of technology. A principal theme arising from Mahjabeen's (2025) investigation of EMI in Bangladesh and Vo's (2025) analysis of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and anxiety (FLCA) in Vietnam is the affective dimension of learning. Both studies demonstrate that linguistic proficiency and academic achievement are influenced by students' emotions, with English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) potentially intensifying inequality, while supportive educators and positive peer interactions enhance enjoyment and alleviate anxiety.

Innovations in teaching, like Dictogloss (Ngo, 2025), immersive technologies (Ngo & To, 2025), English films (Ho & Le, 2025), and peer assessment (Le et al., 2025), show that interactive, student-centered methods make students more interested, better at communicating, and more independent. Films and immersive technologies enhance vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural awareness, whereas peer assessment fosters responsibility and collaborative skills, despite challenges related to bias and ambiguous feedback. Likewise, Le and Nguyen's (2025) research on consecutive group work highlights the importance of fixed structures in fostering accountability, while also warning that unequal participation and stress must be managed through meticulous facilitation.

Datta's (2025) study of the process approach in Bangladesh focused on writing development. It showed that drafting, revising, and editing over and over again helped students think critically and become more aware of their own thinking. Alongside Ngo and Tran's (2025) findings on project-based learning (PBL) in a Vietnamese ESP context, the evidence indicates that process-oriented and project-based pedagogies



substantially improve presentation and writing skills, equipping students for workplace requirements. Nevertheless, difficulties such as time limitations, insufficient resources, and initial student reluctance were consistently noted in both PBL and group-work research, highlighting the necessity for scaffolding and teacher support.

Lastly, Limbu's (2025) narrative inquiry into the relationships between parents, teachers, and students in Nepal places language education in a larger social and cultural context. The results emphasize that disciplinary challenges and evolving authority dynamics influence classroom efficacy, serving as a reminder to educators that pedagogical approaches must be integrated with institutional and cultural contexts.

In general, these studies agree that learner-centered, collaborative, and process-based teaching methods, with the help of technology and an awareness of emotional factors, lead to big gains in language skills and soft skills. But for sustainability to happen, there needs to be support from institutions, training for teachers, and an ethical way to use tools, including new AI tools, to make sure that everyone has a fair chance and that students do well in the long run.

All in all, the eleven studies show how learner-centered, process-oriented, and technology-enhanced teaching methods can change the way English is taught. Methods like Dictogloss, peer assessment, project-based learning, and the process approach to writing show clear benefits for speaking, writing, and overall communication skills. In the same way, using movies, immersive technologies, and organized group work can help people become more motivated, independent, and cooperative while also helping them develop soft skills that can be used in other situations. Nonetheless, in various contexts, challenges like unequal participation, ambiguous feedback, limited resources, and emotional barriers highlight the essential need for teacher scaffolding and institutional support. The results also show how socio-cultural factors, like EMI-related inequality and changing relationships between teachers, students, and parents, can affect learning outcomes. These studies demonstrate that enduring enhancements in English language acquisition necessitate not only innovative pedagogical approaches and emerging technologies but also nurturing environments that cater to learners' emotional needs, ensure equitable opportunities, and equip students with both linguistic competence and essential life skills.

We sincerely thank all the authors for their helpful ideas that make scholarly conversation in TESOL and education better. We also want to thank the peer reviewers from the bottom of our hearts. Their knowledge and helpful comments made sure that the published works were of the highest quality. Finally, we want to thank the editorial staff for their hard work and professionalism in getting this issue done. This issue shows that IJTE is still dedicated to encouraging conversation about new problems and ideas in language education around the world. We encourage our readers to read these articles, use them in their own work, and write for future issues.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the International Journal of TESOL & Education. We look forward to bringing you more exceptional content in the future.

Thanks be to God for everything!

Warm regards,




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


## English as Medium Instruction (EMI) and Educational Inequality: Perspectives of Students and Teachers at Tertiary Level in Bangladesh

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** classroom equality, educational challenges, educational system, English language practice, tertiary education

Though English is considered one of the most prestigious languages, reliance on EMI increases educational gaps. Recent studies have shown that EMI is becoming more widespread in universities, but there is a lot we remain unaware of regarding the challenges students and teachers have when attempting to close this gap in knowledge. The purpose of the study is to investigate the perceptions of students and teachers towards educational inequality in classes. A mixed method was adopted, and a survey of 50 students and an interview with 10 teachers were conducted. This study's findings revealed students' acquaintance with educational disparity in English-led learning and teachers' challenges due to inequality among the students. These findings also suggest the need for a better teaching and learning environment by giving recommendations. This research highlights the need to build inclusive EMI classrooms through interventions and instructional practices to close achievement gaps.

### Introduction

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) encompasses the utilization of the English language "to teach academic subjects, other than English itself" (Dafouz & Gray, 2022, p. 163) in contexts where English is considered as a foreign or second language (Pecorari & Malmström 2018: 503). EMI has become a "global, rapidly growing trend" (Marcjanik, 2023, p. 136) because, in multilingual post-colonial societies, the language serves as an "academic lingua franca" (Richards & Pun, 2018, p. 5). The emerging importance of learning English worldwide, particularly for communication, trade and commerce, and the medium of education, has become necessary for personal development and employability (Cickovska, 2015). Learning English is adequately valued as a key to success in commanding all information, which assists people in gaining knowledge (Nashruddin, 2015). Bangladesh is no exception in terms of working, learning, and using English to connect people across cultures and economies (Haque, 2019).

Education in Bangladesh is carefully attached to the construction of a "particular social identity and set of power relations" (Rao & Hossain, 2011, p. 624), where studying the English language is regarded as the crucial step for pursuing higher studies. From a global perspective, "EMI has a strong presence in Bangladesh" (Hamid & Amin, 2022, p. 2). Tertiary level education in this country has become EMI's primary embracer. The colonial control resulted in the establishment of English Medium Instruction (EMI), which is linked to colonialism's objective of educating the populace of the Indian Subcontinent in English. "This colonial legacy has subsequently been reshaped by the forces of globalization, which has established English as a global lingua franca" (Hamid & Amin, 2022, p. 2).

According to the Private University Act of 1992, no instruction has been provided for utilizing the appropriate medium of instruction in the classes. However, "each university has adopted EMI by default" (Hamid & Amin, 2022, p. 6). By employing EMI in the classes, private universities attempted to decrease the flow of Bangladeshi students who wanted to pursue their higher studies in foreign countries. In this process, EMI assists by introducing the "internationalization of higher education in the local context" (Hamid & Amin, 2022, p. 7).

This research aims to address an absence of knowledge by investigating the concerns of private university teachers and students regarding the widespread educational inequity in English-led classrooms. Questionnaires and interview questions have been developed to gain a better understanding of the difficulties encountered by both students and educators, as well as possible answers to these problems. Educational institutions will be able to better address the issue of EMI in the classroom as a result of this research and implement strategies to improve student learning.

## Literature Review

### *Language Planning and Policy in Bangladesh*

Language planning refers to deliberate efforts to determine how languages are acquired, applied, used, and structured (Cooper, 1989). Moreover, it belongs to the "body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices to achieve the planned language change in the societies, or system" (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). Ferguson (2006) portrayed four major issues of language planning such as a) preference of medium of instruction at the different levels of the educational system, b) the role of the native tongue in the educational process, c) the collection of a second or foreign language, and d) the selection of a specific language variety as a standard for educational purpose.

In accordance with the Language Policy Act of 1987, Bangla should be used in all domains (Banu & Sussex, 2001). However, English is being used in legislation, administration, and education; for instance, in 1992, English was taught as a compulsory subject starting from Grade 1. Today, the language inherited from British colonial authority is perceived as a symbol of power and social advancement (Erling et al., 2013).

### *Perceptions of Students' and Teachers' regarding Educational Inequality in Different Contexts*

Perception is described as "the interplay of feelings, beliefs, and thoughts about actions" (Rusch & Perry, 1999, p. 291), which emphasizes its complicated nature. Teachers' perceptions are significant in developing an educational system to conduct the learning process (Sherwani, 2017, p. 192), and students' attitudes influence their success in language learning.

Education is considered one of the significant components that offers an individual a new outlook on society and people. However, the privileged and lower class cannot attain equal educational opportunities based on their monthly emolument (Smith et al., 2016). This highlights the prevalence of educational inequality, which refers to "unequal access to higher education" (Alhamami, 2023, p. 1). Primary, secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary levels are the four educational levels in Bangladesh. Bangla is the primary medium of instruction at all levels up to higher secondary education, with English being an indispensable component of the national curriculum for students in grades one to twelve (Hamid, 2011). Less than 2% of institutions use English as the central medium (Hamid, 2006; Hamid & Jahan, 2015). English-medium students get more priority and are given more importance in terms of applying to and attending universities abroad and exploring more career options (Roy, 2024), which generates division between them and Bangla-medium students (Kader & Salam, 2018). However, at the tertiary level, the majority of the students come from Bangla medium, and the sudden change from Bangla to English as a medium of instruction to study any subject constitutes difficulties in coping with the EMI environment since in private universities, English is solely used as a medium of instruction (Hasan, 2022).

Educational inequality emerges from several factors, such as the differences in sufficient EMI training of teachers, the English language competence of both teachers and students, and appropriate teaching quality (Hu & Duan, 2019; Rose et al., 2020a). However, these comparisons are detected in China because professors encourage students to use English to answer questions and receive higher marks (Fang & Hu, 2022). The Chinese government has launched various higher education internationalization initiatives such as 'Project 985' and 'Project 211' and the 'Double First Class program, which seeks to raise the university's worldwide recognition for establishing 'internationalization' in the curriculum. Yuan et al. (2024) conducted a study on tertiary-level students from a university in Guangdong who are enrolled in EMI programs. They preferred the use of L1 in EMI courses and believed in the usefulness of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy due to their limited English proficiency and desire to obtain better grades in their academic subjects.

The power relation between the lower class and middle class in terms of educational opportunities can be found in the work of Bourdieu (1974), whose work was concerned with the dynamics of power in a society, where he claimed that higher-class people get more education credentials than the poor ones and "social inequalities are legitimated by the educational credentials held by those in dominant positions" (Sullivan, 2016, p. 145). This situation is prevalent in Vietnam's education system, where the EMI-based programs were initiated at the postgraduate level, followed by undergraduate programs in the 2000s (Vietnam International Education Department 2016). It is believed that graduates who are proficient in English will have advantages in life and career opportunities. From the study of Tran and Nguyen (2018), it has been found from the teachers' perspectives that EMI programs create a distinct educational division between disadvantaged groups and higher-class groups, who have adequate competency in English and have the ability to afford tuition fees.

### *Challenges Students and Teachers Face at EMI Classes*

A significant rise has been reported in the utilization of EMI programs in European higher education. In keeping with worldwide tendencies, Asian regions have similarly substantially raised their EMI programs (Tam & Chi, 2024). Here, English has been adopted in diverse educational policies, such as launching EMI to support students in gaining English proficiency (Kym & Kym, 2014). For example, in Indonesia, EMI programs were first introduced in schools to teach Mathematics and Science in order to develop students' English skills (Zacharias, 2013)

and employability (Aguilar, 2017; Floris, 2014). However, from the study of Simbolon et al. (2020), it has been found that numerous challenges have been encountered while implementing EMI in classes, such as the need for bilingual instruction, students' dependence on translation, teachers' language proficiency and teachers' insufficient training which leads to poor teaching performance and learning outcomes (Bax, 2010). These challenges have happened because of the existing distinct socio-economic background between upper-class students who have unlimited access to English learning resources and lower-class students who are unable to get those opportunities (Sofyana & Pahamzah, 2022).

In Vietnam, EMI was introduced at universities across both public and private sectors. Students who are from urban areas are usually self-motivated to study English for better job opportunities and pursue informal learning beyond formal learning since students' English proficiency is assuredly affiliated with learner autonomy (Hanh et al., 2024). Phuong and Nguyen (2019) conducted a study on International Business and Information Technology students who confronted various challenges while using EMI in classes, for instance, a lack of vocabulary to exchange ideas, passive learning styles, difficulty in understanding class lectures, and constant dictionary usage to detect the meaning of complicated words. However, Information Technology students believe that for their betterment in life, they are required to use basic terms in the English language and follow procedures or instructions given in English. EMI classes assist them in finding numerous sources of information written in English and provide them with excellent chances to enhance their language skills. Conversely, International Business students prefer bilingual resources to elevate their comprehension ability and apply terms effectively in their future lives.

The strong belief in English “as a powerful cultural capital and resource for social, cultural, and economic mobility” (Sah & Li, 2018, p. 113) has compelled the diminishing of the local languages of Nepal. Sah and Karki (2020) noted that the people of Nepal consider EMI “as a source of capital generation is further perceived to liberate indigenous peoples from poverty and long-standing social marginalization” (p. 30). However, it brings about innumerable troubles for the minoritized students where EMI was ascribed only to socially prestigious people. A large number of citizens of Nepal are incapable of affording high tuition fees to send their children in English medium. Ricento (2015) argues that “access to quality English-medium education in low-income countries like Nepal is mostly restricted to those with sufficient economic means to pay for it” (p. 1).

There is a growing need for English proficiency to provide access to global prospects, and EMI is becoming prominent in universities around the world. Nevertheless, studies on EMI have shown a number of unanswered questions. Several studies have looked at the benefits of EMI for improving language skills and employability (Aguilar, 2017; Floris, 2014). However, both students and teachers face many challenges when using EMI in different settings. Nevertheless, the difficulties of meeting the different requirements of students in settings with limited resources are not taken into account in these studies. Although there is a study on the historical and socio-political origins of EMI in Bangladesh (Hamid & Amin, 2022), there is less data on the dynamics that arise in private universities' classrooms as a result of educational inequality, where EMI is widespread. To fill these gaps, this study surveys the opinions of teachers and students at private institutions in Bangladesh to determine the nature and extent of educational inequality in these settings. In addition, it aims to find practical ways to make these places of learning more accessible and equitable.



This study aims to investigate the strategies and challenges that the teachers and students of private universities encounter due to the existing educational inequity in classrooms, possible answers to these problems, and their perceptions towards EMI.

#### *Research Questions:*

1. What are the perceptions of students and teachers regarding educational inequality at EMI classes?
2. What types of challenges do students and teachers face due to existing educational inequality in EMI classes?
3. In what ways can these challenges be addressed to ensure better teaching and learning?

## **Research Methodology**

### *Research Design*

A mixed-method approach was adopted in this research because it provides a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than either approach alone (Creswell & Clark, 2007). This method was necessary to detect teachers' perceptions regarding educational inequality at EMI classes, teaching challenges, and possible solutions. For this, a semi-structured interview was prepared. Through the questionnaire survey form, students disclosed their perspectives towards educational inequality and their challenges due to existing inequality.

### *Pilot Study:*

Before conducting the research, a pilot study was conducted with 10 students and two teachers from private universities to ensure the questionnaire was easy to understand and use before the full-scale research began.

### *Participants*

Fifty students from different departments from different private universities were randomly selected to complete the questionnaire, and ten teachers from different departments were randomly selected for the interview session.

### *Tools for Data Collection*

Two types of tools (e.g., questionnaire and interview) were selected for collecting data. Some of the questions were modified from Sah and Fang (2023) and Alam (2022)

- *Students Questionnaire*

A questionnaire was created to obtain tertiary-level students' views regarding educational inequality and their challenges because of the existing educational inequality at EMI classes.

*Pilot Study Integration:* When finalizing the questionnaire items, the pilot study participants' feedback was considered.

- *Teachers' Interview*

This interview was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the authentic experiences of the teachers of private universities. They were asked about their perceptions of existing educational inequality, their experiences implementing their teaching techniques, and their challenges and possible support for struggling students.

*Pilot Study Integration:* The feedback from the pilot study participants was considered when finalizing the interview questions.

### *Instruments*

- *Questionnaire Survey Form*

The questionnaire survey form was created on Google Forms. All of the questions were written in English using simple vocabulary. Some of the questions were made on a Likert scale, where the participants were instructed clearly to click on their desired options for each question, and some questions required short answers. All of the questions were mandatory to respond to. On the survey form, the researcher's introduction, study area, and purpose of creating that form were added to inform the participants.

- *Interview Question Form*

To understand the teachers' perspectives, a semi-structured interview question form was created. In it, teachers were asked about their perceptions of educational inequality and the challenges they face when implementing their teaching techniques in class.

### *Procedure*

For the research, the researcher follows a mixed-method approach to explore a number of research questions from different points of view. Firstly, in terms of the qualitative method, the researcher reviews literature from journals, newspaper articles, books, etc.

Some questions for the interview session were made to learn the teachers' perspectives regarding educational inequality and problems caused by it. Researchers took teachers' interviews in person at their convenience, with an introduction given on the researcher's background, study area, and study purpose.

In terms of quantitative methods, questionnaires were created to obtain students' perspectives regarding educational inequality and its challenges. The questionnaire survey was created on Google Forms and distributed to several participants from private universities, who were encouraged to share the form with their friends and fellow classmates.

### *Ethical Consideration*

It is to confirm that the researcher has consciously abided by the ethics of research by keeping the identities of the respondents confidential. No one except the researcher herself will deal with the data.

### *Limitation*

In this study, there are several limitations:

- Though fifty students took part in completing a questionnaire, they did not represent the entire student population of private universities in Bangladesh
- Ten teachers took part in the interview session but did not represent the entire teacher population of private universities.

## **Data Analysis**

### *Analysis of Students' Questionnaire*

It is important to collect data ethically in order to conduct good research. Some questions were asked to the tertiary-level students through a Google form to find out their perceptions of

educational inequality through a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree, strongly disagree, etc.) and through some open-ended questions. Additional questions were asked about their challenges due to educational inequality.

➤ *Perceptions of Educational Inequality:*

Different questions were asked to the students regarding their perceptions on whether EMI is an advantage for them, if they face any favoritism by their teachers based on their competency of English, their views on the significance of being an efficient English speaker, whether they feel a need as Bangla as a medium of instruction, their comfort around Bangla speaking individuals, their genuine opinions on appropriate medium of instruction and on the reformation of the education system in Bangladesh.

Figure 1

Advantage of English as a Medium of Instruction at the University

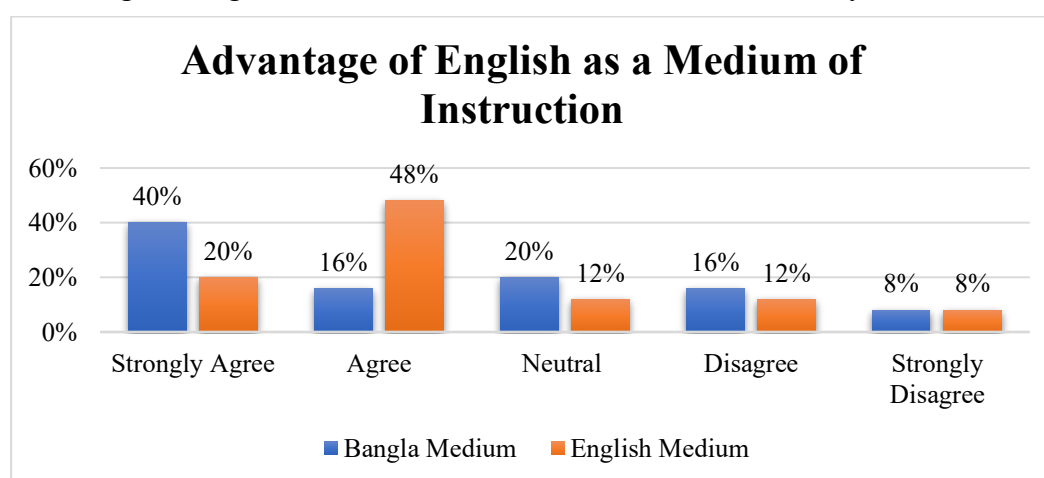


Figure 1 shows that both Bangla-medium and English-medium students believed that EMI was an advantage for them. Ten (40%) BM students strongly agreed, and four (16%) students agreed with the statement. Moreover, five (20%) EM students strongly agreed, and twelve (48%) students agreed with the statement.

Figure 2

Students Who are Good at English are Favored by the Teachers

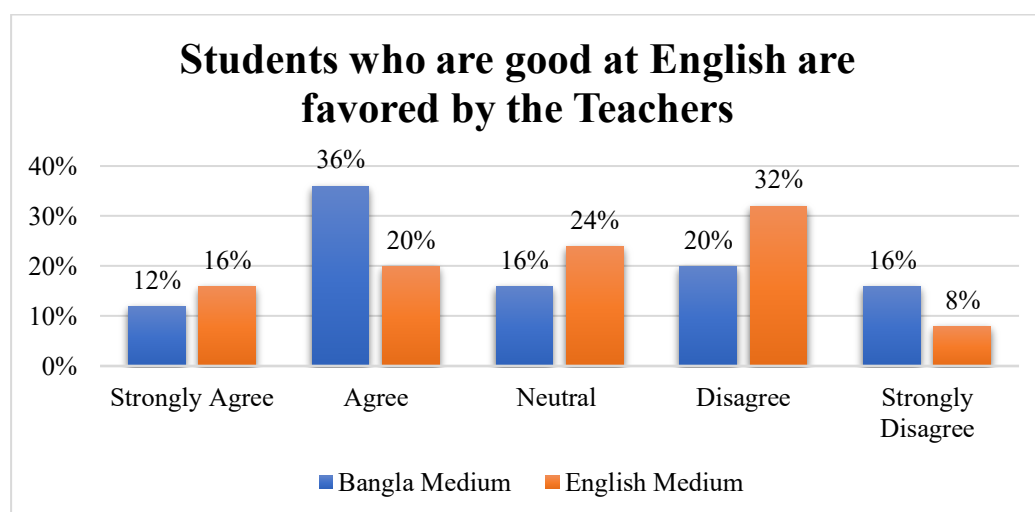


Figure 2 shows that 3 (12%) BM students strongly agreed and 9 (36%) students agreed that teachers favored those who are English-proficient. However, 8 (32%) EM students disagreed, and 2 (8%) students strongly disagreed with the point. Moreover, 4 (16%) EM students and 5 (20%) EM students agreed with the issue.

Figure 3

Being a Good English Speaker is More Important than the Usage of Bangla

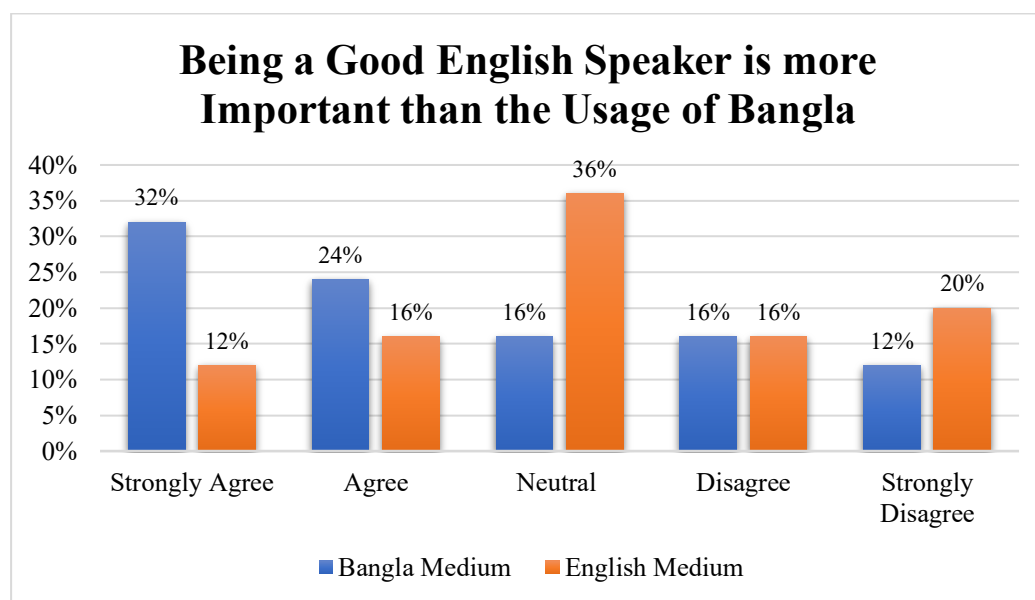
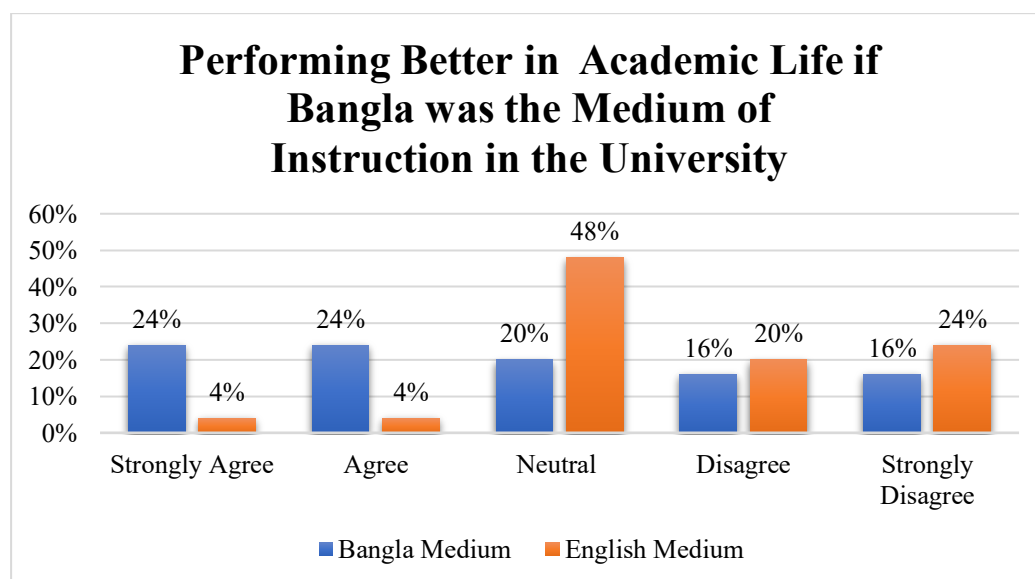


Figure 3 shows that many BM students have come to believe that being a good English speaker is more significant than using Bangla in their day-to-day lives. Eight (32%) BM students strongly agreed, six (24%) BM students agreed with this point, and nine (36%) EM students are neutral in this statement.

Figure 4

Performing Better in Academic Life If Bangla was the Medium of Instruction



From Figure 4, it has been found that 6 (24%) BM students strongly agreed and 6 (24%) agreed that they would perform better in academic life if Bangla was the medium of instruction, while 4 (16%) BM students disagreed and 2 (16%) students strongly disagreed with the point. However, 12 (48%) EM students are neutral in this statement.

Figure 5

Finding Comfort among Bangla Speakers

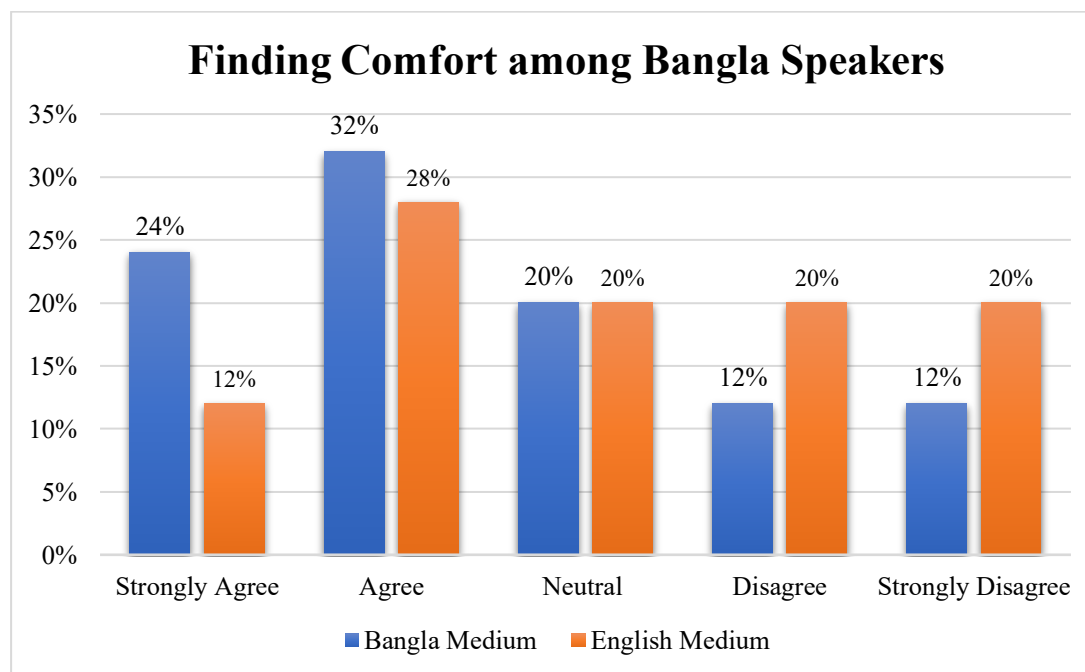


Figure 5 shows that 6 (24%) BM students strongly agreed and 8 (32%) BM students agreed that they found comfort around people who used Bangla in their conversations. Similarly, 3 (12%) EM students strongly agreed and 7 (28%) EM students agreed on this issue.

Some of the open-ended questions were asked to the students through Google form about their perceptions, where they gave their opinions, such as whether they found appropriate medium of instruction in their university, the reformation of the education system in Bangladesh, what types of support the university gave them to enrich their language skills, and whether the university gave enough exposure to the medium of instruction to give new ideas.

#### *Appropriate medium of instruction at Universities in Bangladesh*

Different students have different opinions regarding what the medium of instruction at private universities in Bangladesh could be. The majority of the students (24 students), both from BM and EM backgrounds, wrote that English should be the medium of instruction. One of the students defended why English should be the medium of instruction instead of Bangla by writing this:

*I believe instruction in English is better than Bangla if we only focus on students' comprehension of the lecture. However, English lectures can be helpful if the students want to study abroad in the future (Student 12; October 25, 2024).*

While few of them gave explanations why both Bangla and English should be the medium of instruction at universities, as one of the students wrote:

*English is not taught effectively in our earlier academic lives, especially for students in rural areas who have less opportunity to learn English skills. Thus, many students find it*



*difficult to understand their lessons as all of the course materials are written in English. If these course materials are written in Bangla and English, they will be easier to understand their lessons easily and excel in their studies (Student 4; October 25, 2024).*

#### *Reformation of the education system as far as the medium of instruction is concerned*

The students were asked their opinions about reforming the education system in Bangladesh. The majority (17 students) did not give any opinion by stating that they did not think about this issue yet, while some of the students shared their thoughts on this matter, such as one of the students wrote:

*I think reformation is not necessary. If we get enough lectures and professors in our respective fields, we may not face the complexities of using any language in class (Student 6; October 25, 2024).*

#### *Challenges students face due to existing educational inequality in EMI classes:*

Along with students' perceptions, additional questions were asked about some challenges that the students might face due to educational inequality, such as whether they found EMI was comfortable, felt confident speaking in English in classes, struggled to communicate with others in English, experienced ridicule because of lack of English efficiency and whether instructors provided multiple teaching methods for making the class lecture easily comprehensible, etc.

Figure 6

Unable to Speak in the Classroom Due to Less Confidence in English Skills

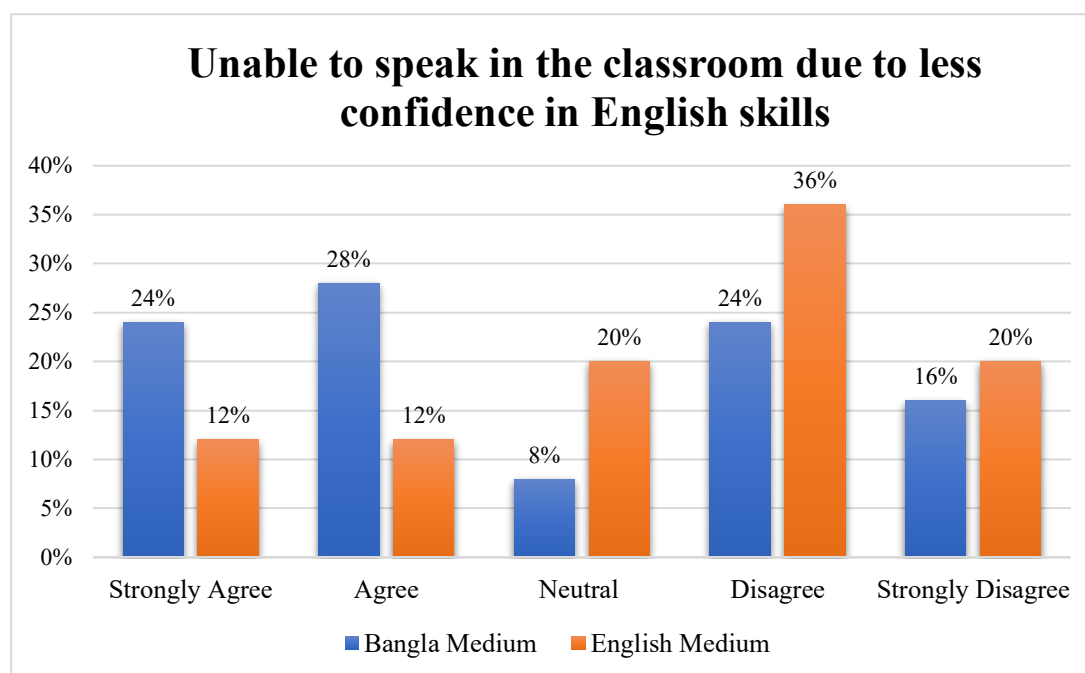


Figure 6 shows that the majority of the students found some challenges while speaking in English because of their lack of self-confidence. For example, 6 (24%) BM students strongly agreed and 7 (28%) BM students agreed that they were unable to speak in the classroom in English, while 9 (36%) EM students disagreed and 5 (20%) strongly disagreed with the point, which meant they were comfortable speaking in English in class.

Figure 7

Finding the use of English as the Medium of Instruction is not Comfortable

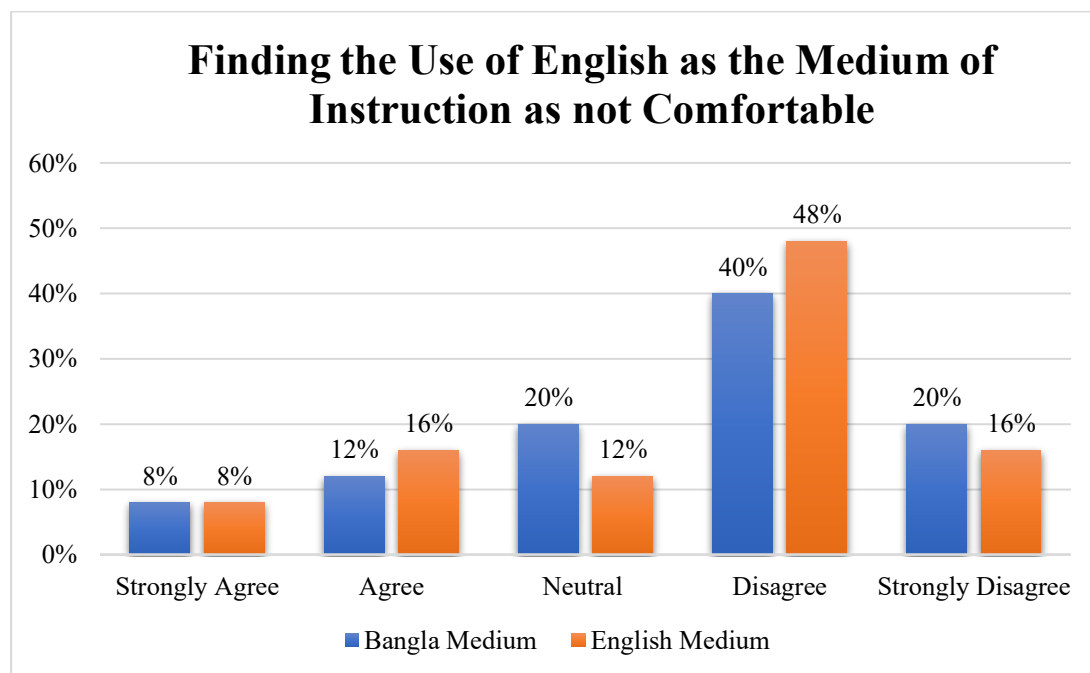


Figure 7 shows that the majority of the BM students disagreed with the point that they did not feel comfortable using English as a medium of instruction. For example, 10 (40%) BM students disagreed and 3 (20%) BM students strongly disagreed, while 12 (48%) EM students disagreed and 4 (16%) strongly disagreed.

Figure 8

Struggle to Communicate with Peers and Teachers

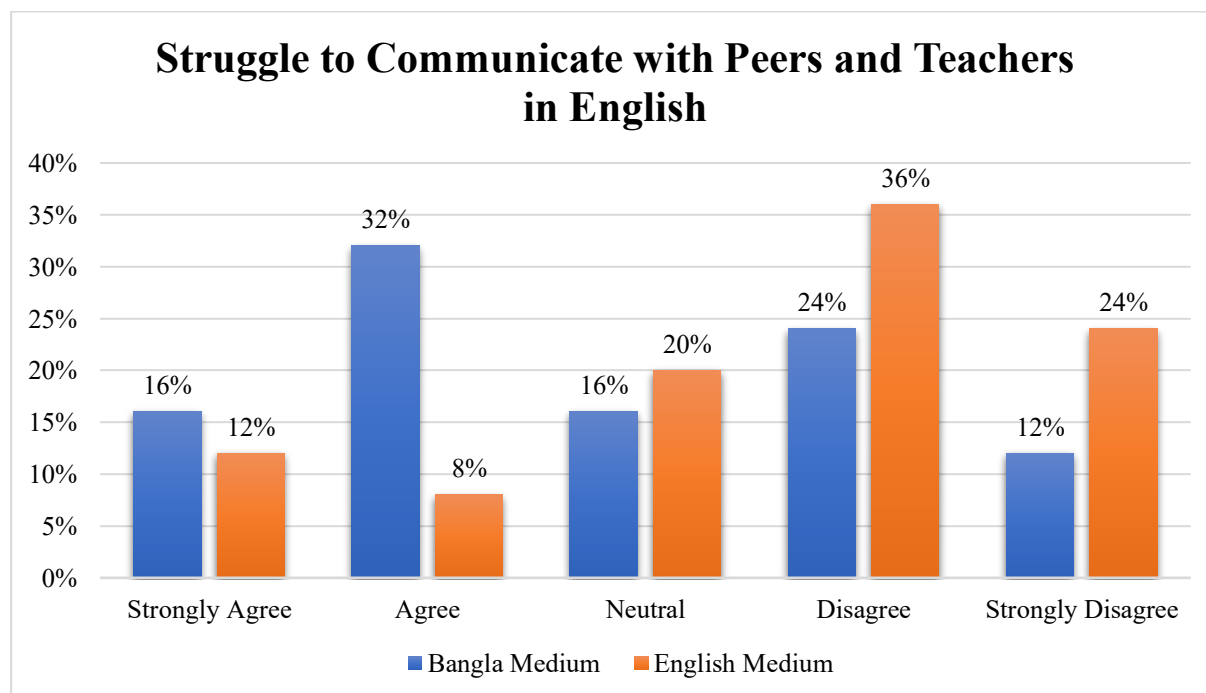


Figure 8 shows that 4 (16%) BM students strongly agreed and 8 (32%) BM students agreed that they found difficulties communicating with their classmates and instructors in English, while 9 (46.67%) EM students disagreed and 6 (26.67%) strongly disagreed with the point.

Figure 9

Difficult to be Friends with Classmates who are Efficient in English

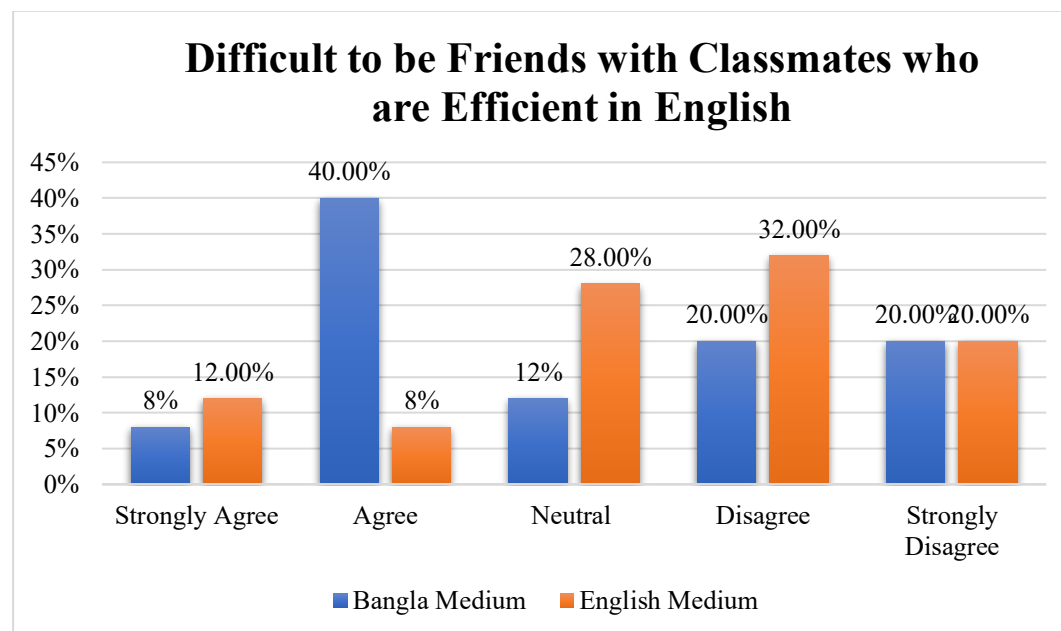


Figure 9 shows that 10 (40%) BM students agreed, 5 (33.33%) BM students disagreed, and 4 (20%) strongly disagreed with the point. In contrast, the majority of the EM students disagreed that they faced any difficulty making friends who were efficient in English, such as 8 (32%) EM students disagreed and 5 (20%) strongly disagreed with the point.

Figure 10

Teased by University Friends due to Poor English Skills

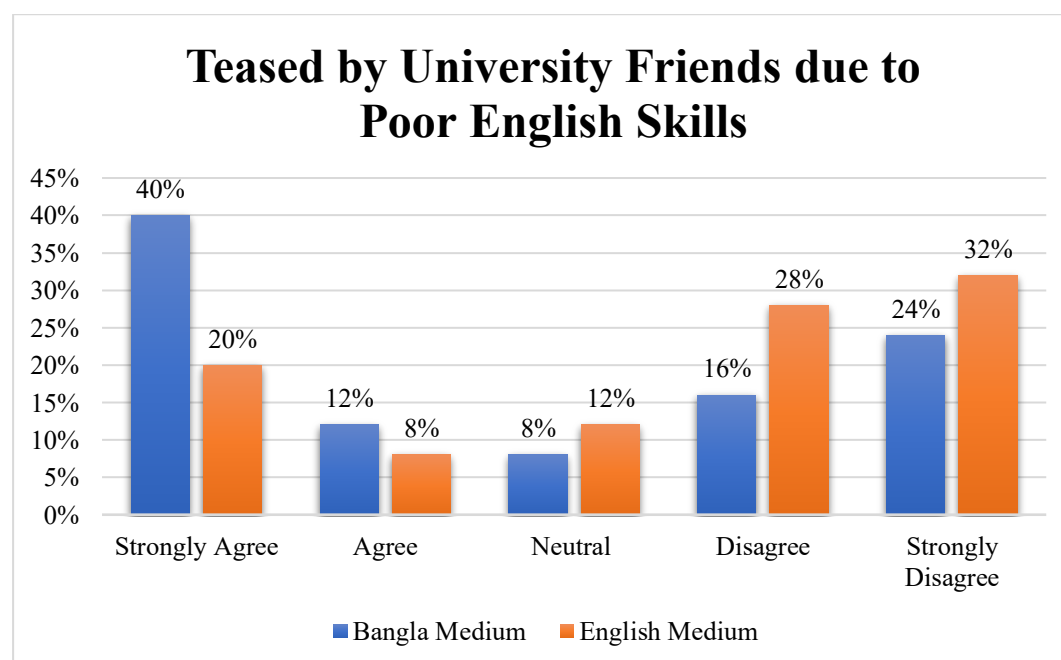


Figure 10 shows that 10 (40%) BM students strongly agreed and 3 (12%) BM students agreed that they were teased by their friends in the university because of their poor English language skills. On the other hand, 7 (28%) EM students disagreed and 8 (32%) strongly disagreed with the point that they did not experience this type of situation.

Figure 11

Instructor Provides Multiple Teaching Methods for Making the Lecture Comprehensible for the Different Medium Students

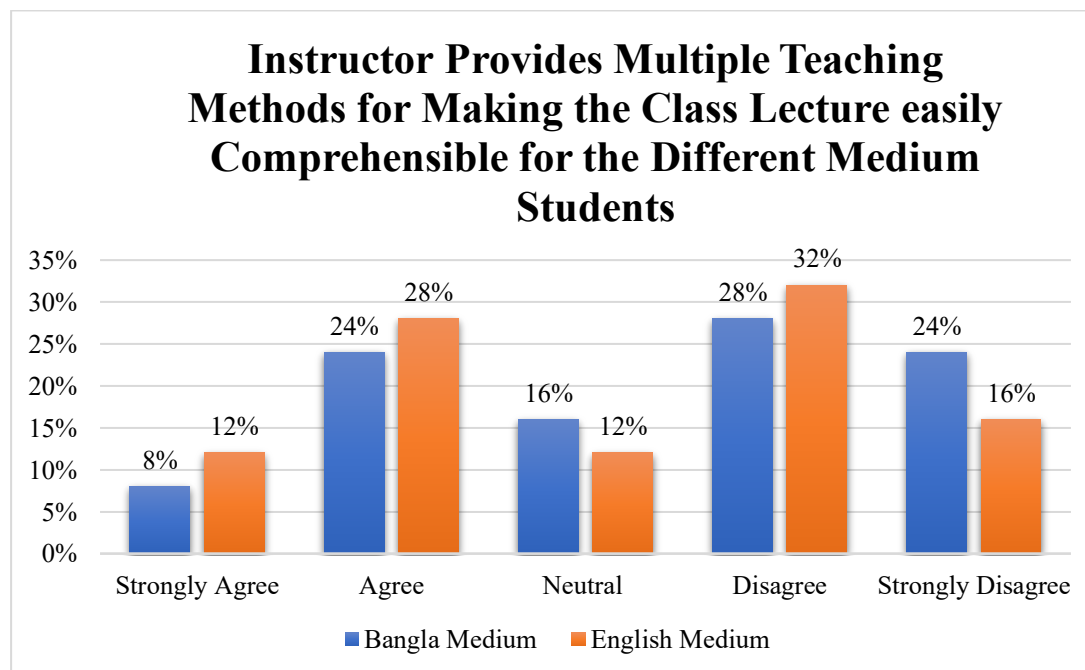


Figure 11 shows that 7 (28%) BM students disagreed and 8 (24%) BM students strongly disagreed that their instructors provide multiple teaching methods to make the lecture comprehensible for the different medium students, while 3 (12%) EM students strongly agreed and 7 (28%) agreed with the point.

Figure 12

Immediately Corrected by Teachers while Practicing English

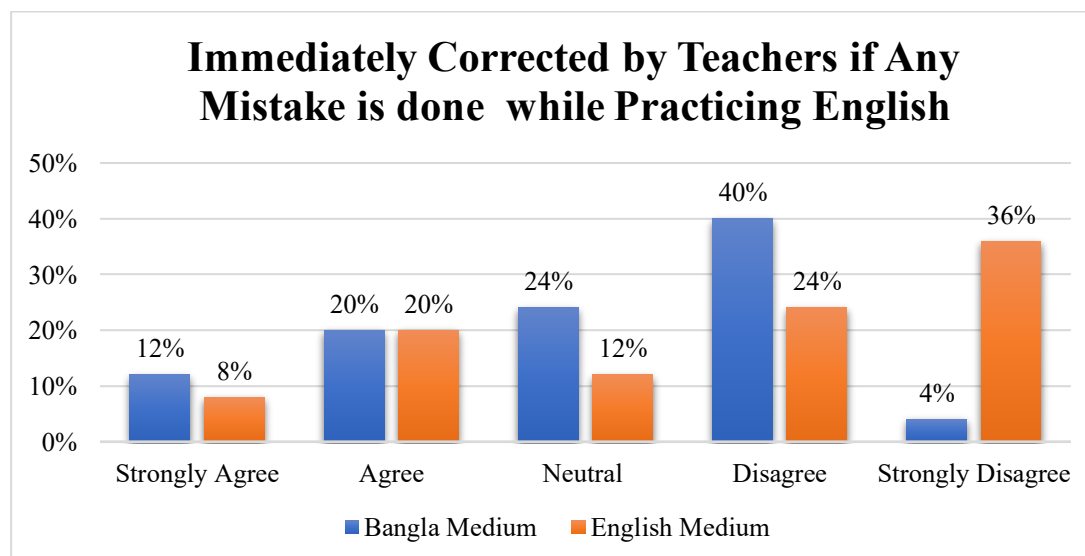


Figure 12 shows that 10 (40%) BM students disagreed and 1 (6.67%) BM student strongly disagreed that they were immediately corrected by their teachers while practicing English. Similarly, 6 (24%) EM students disagreed, and 9 (36%) strongly disagreed with the point.

Figure 13

Encouraging to Read English Newspaper, Journals, or Story Books

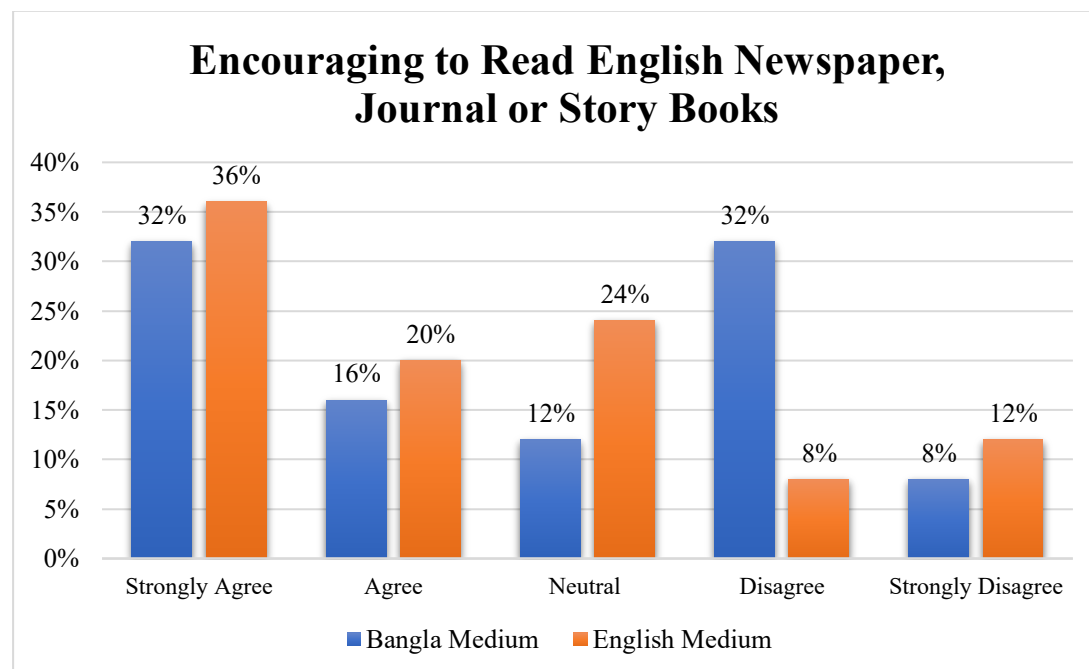


Figure 13 shows that 8 (32%) BM students strongly agreed and 4 (16%) BM students agreed that they were encouraged to read English newspapers, journals, or story books. Similarly, 9 (36%) EM students strongly agreed and 5 (20%) EM students agreed on this point.

Figure 14

Well-Prepared and Organized Course Contents

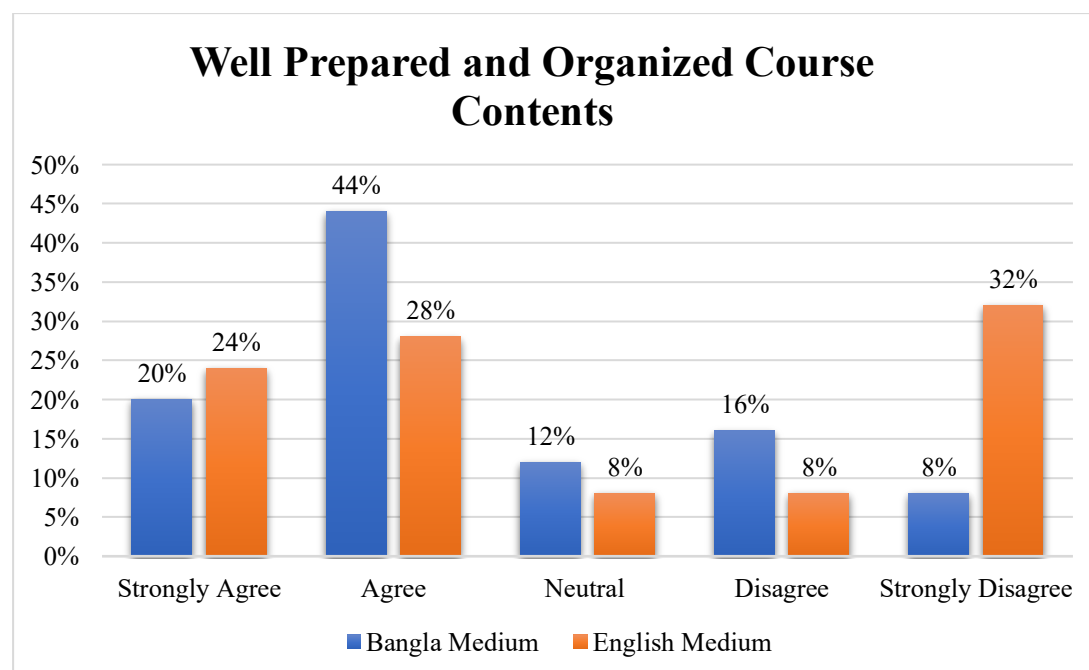
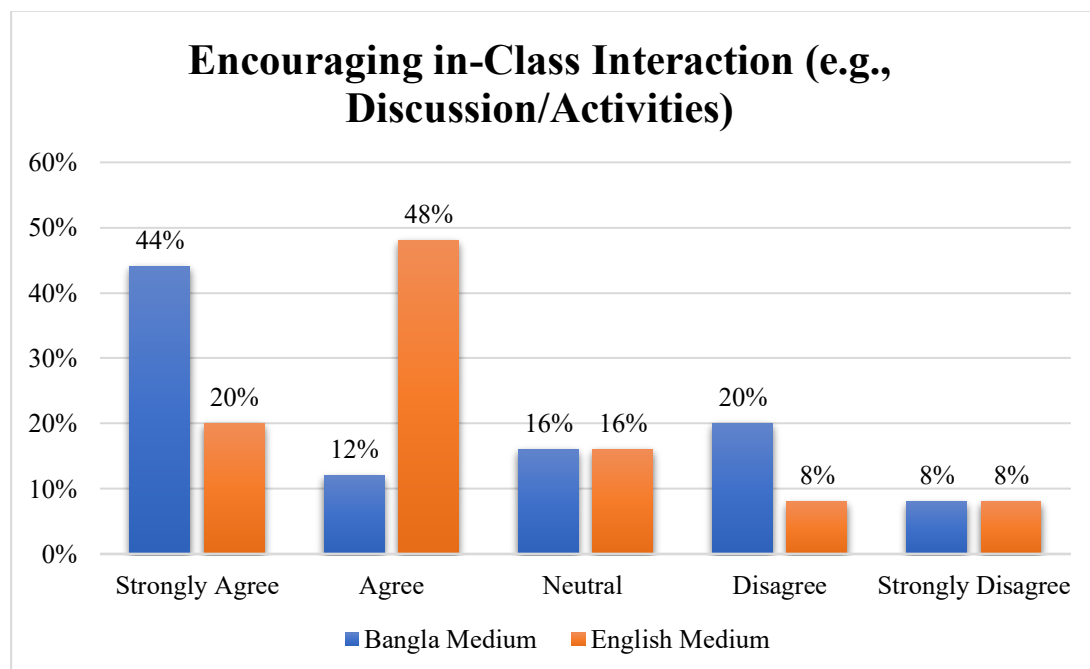




Figure 14 shows that 5 (20%) BM students strongly agreed and 11 (44%) BM students agreed that the course contents were well prepared and organized by the teachers. Moreover, 6 (24%) EM students strongly agreed, and 7 (28%) agreed with the point.

Figure 15

Encouraging in-class Interaction (e.g., Discussion/ Activities)



From Figure 15, it has been ascertained that 11 (44%) BM students strongly agreed and 3 (12%) students agreed on this point that their teachers encouraged them in-class interaction, such as making them participate in the discussion or any speaking activities. Moreover, 5 (20%) EM students strongly agreed, and 12 (48%) EM students agreed with the point.

Figure 16

Providing Constructive Feedback

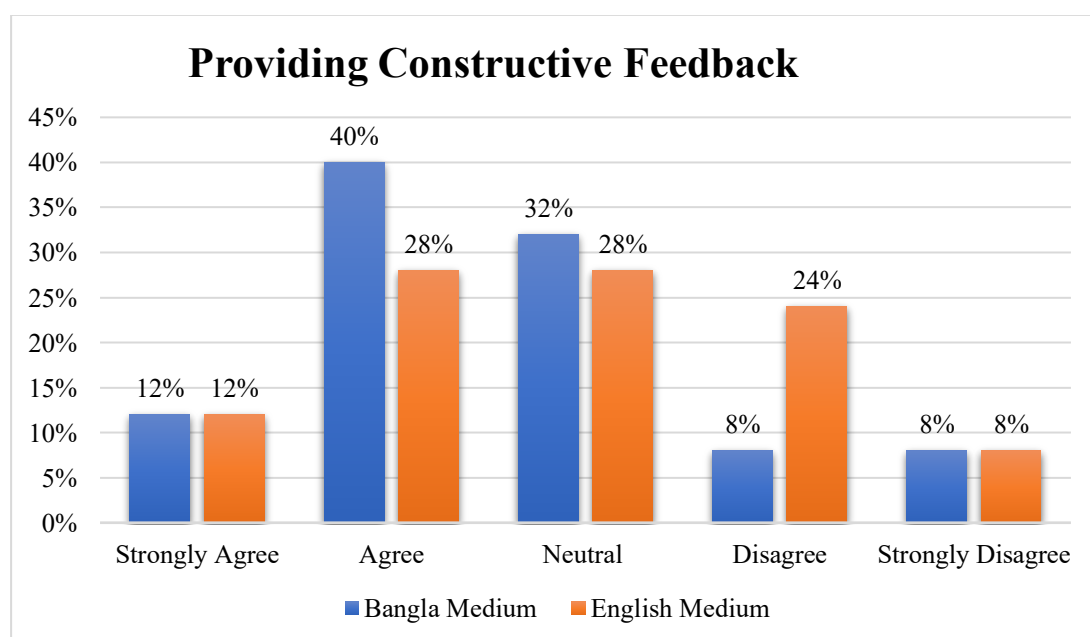
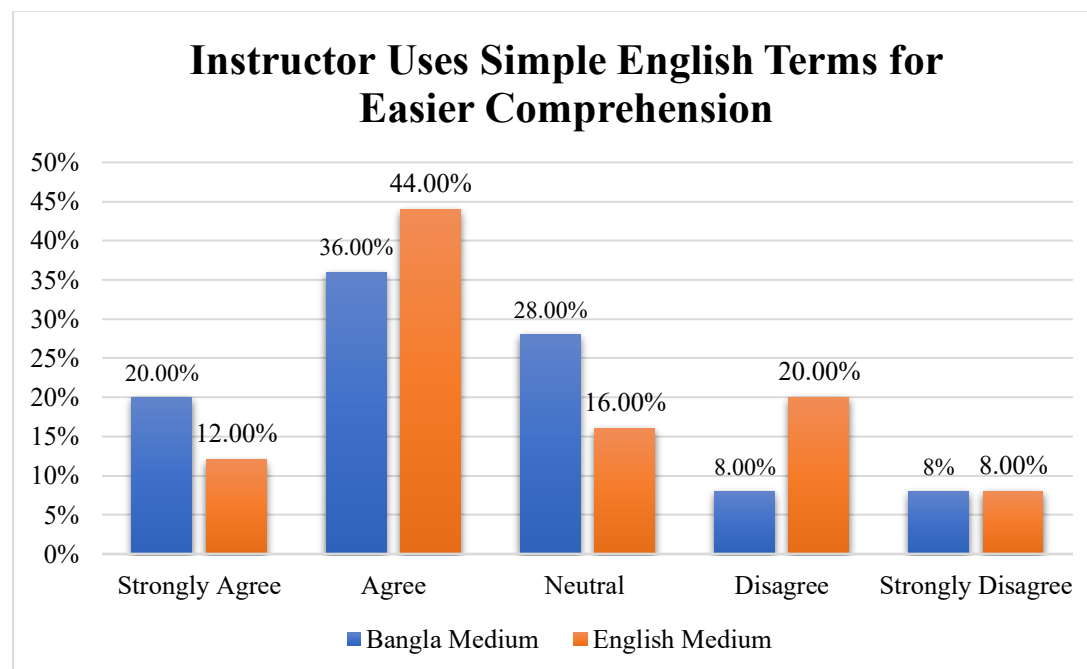


Figure 16 shows that 3 (12%) BM students strongly agreed and 10 (40%) BM students agreed that their instructor provides constructive feedback, while 6 (24%) EM students disagreed and 2 (8%) strongly disagreed with the point.

Figure 17

Instructor uses simple English terms for easier comprehension



From Figure 17, it has been detected that 5 (20%) BM students strongly agreed, and 9 (36%) BM students agreed that their instructor uses simple English terms for easy comprehension. Similarly, 3 (12%) EM students strongly agreed, and 11 (44%) agreed with the point.

Figure 18

Instructor uses code-switching for greater comprehension

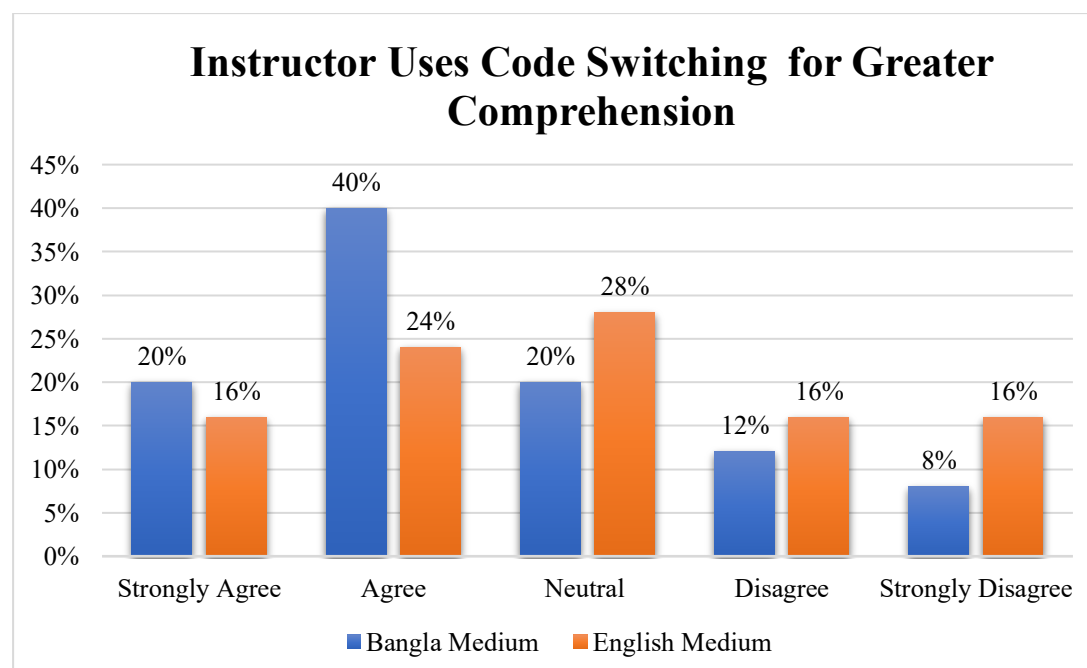


Figure 18 shows that 5 (20%) BM students strongly agreed, and 10 (40%) BM students agreed that the instructor uses code-switching for greater comprehension. Similarly, 4 (16%) EM students strongly agreed, and 4 (16%) agreed with the point.

### *Giving enough support to the university to cope with this medium of instruction and to strengthen English language skills*

An open-ended question was asked whether the university gave them enough support to cope with this medium of instruction and to strengthen their English language skills. A majority of the students wrote that the university did not give enough support to strengthen their language skills or to make them feel comfortable to cope with the medium of instruction. Some revealed that they took help from their classmates, and some took help from their family members. Some students exposed that it was their English language teachers who helped them enrich their English language skills:

*My university does not provide any support for enriching English, but our English teacher is very helpful. She tries to make us comfortable studying in English (Student 13; October 25, 2024).*

### *Analysis of Teachers' Interview*

Teachers of private universities were asked some open-ended, semi-structured questions where they shed light on the conception of inequitable and equitable educational practices, what their students felt about equity and inclusion in the class, the advantages of EMI for students, their experiences of conducting the classroom where both Bangla-medium and English-medium students existed, challenges in the classroom, constructive feedback that they preferred to provide in each class, instructional practices to engage students, strategies to encourage students' achievement if any of their students struggled what types of support they provided in order to cope with the medium of instruction.

- *Definition of Inequitable and Equitable Educational Practices:*

Before starting the interview questions regarding educational inequality in the classes, questions were asked to each of the teachers to determine their notions about inequitable and equitable educational practices. All of the teachers stated descriptive opinions on this question; for example, Salma (pseudonym) gave the appropriate definition of inequality, while Mahbub (pseudonym) asserted what actions he took in each class to address the existing educational inequality.

*Inequitable educational practices refer to discrimination, bias, or unequal practices in educational institutions based on the students' medium, background, or communities (Salma; Interview 4; October 28, 2024).*

*Equitable educational practice should be a system where all the students belong to the same level, which would be very challenging to ensure at the tertiary level because students generally tend to have a long history and background regarding their target language exposure. To ensure equitable educational practice, as a teacher, I focus on the need analysis to figure out which student belongs to what level (Mahbub; Interview 2; October 27, 2024).*

- *Students' Ideas about Equity and Inclusion at the University:*

After asking questions about their own views regarding inequality in educational practices, an additional question was asked to find out what they thought about their students' points of view on equity and inclusion at the university. The teachers stated that students of their universities

were satisfied due to the diversity of the classroom, and some explained how students could feel equity in the class.

*I believe they feel equal in every aspect of the classroom since our classrooms are the place where every student may raise questions until everything is comprehensible, and I make sure there's no discrimination here (Mahbub; Interview 2; October 27, 2024).*

*So far, I know all my students are happy about it because my university embraces all kinds of diversity. And this university has been practicing equitable educational practices since its inception (Salma; Interview 4; October 28, 2024).*

*I believe students will feel equal if I give them marks without creating any bias and interact with each individual student (Tonoy; Interview 8; March 28, 2025).*

- *Benefits of Using English as a Medium of Instruction for Students:*

In order to find out what the teachers of the private universities thought about the usage of EMI at class, the question was asked to find out their perceptions regarding whether EMI is salubrious to the students where the majority (4 teachers) believed that learning English skills is important for their academic, professional life while 2 of the teachers gave distinct opinions. In this case, Rahima stated how EMI can be troubling for students and how this difficulty can be optimized:

*I believe English as the only medium of instruction can be pretty tough for students at the tertiary level, especially if they are not well familiar with the language skills from the very beginning of their academic life. However, if they are taught well at the tertiary level, they can easily use the language for their communication (Rahima; Interview 1; October 27, 2024).*

- *Experiences of Conducting the Classroom where Both Bangla-medium and English-medium Students Exist:*

Since teachers at private universities have to conduct a number of classes each semester and both Bangla-medium and English-medium students may exist in those classes, the question was asked what types of experiences they had while conducting the classes where both Bangla-medium and English-medium students existed. The majority (4 teachers) shared that in those classrooms, they faced difficulties because of the different competency levels of both medium students. For example, Alam (pseudonym) revealed that he chose code-switching to conduct this type of class.

*In this case, using English throughout the class becomes very difficult because both Bangla and English-medium students do not share the same level of competency and understanding of the learning contents. I believe conducting classes in a bilingual method is effective (Alam; Interview 3; October 27, 2024).*

Two of the teachers stated that if the teachers used appropriate teaching methods based on the students' levels, it would become easy to conduct classes where both mediums of students existed.

*At our university, we teach mostly in English. However, because some students struggle to grasp the language easily, I try to use simple English terms and teach at a relaxed pace (Rahima; Interview 1; October 27, 2024).*

- *Challenges to Conduct Classes where Both Bangla-medium and English-medium Students Exist:*

Different teachers gave different opinions when asked what types of challenges they faced while conducting classes with both Bangla-medium and English-medium students. Two of the teachers stated that they did not face any significant challenge while conducting classes. However, the majority (4 teachers) revealed that they faced numerous difficulties while conducting classes.

*Students who are from Bangla-medium schools are usually more shy, threatened, and demotivated than English-medium schools (Rahima; Interview 1; October 27, 2024).*

*I use both Bangla and English in those classes where I find Bangla-medium students cannot understand the learning contents (Salma; Interview 4; October 28, 2024).*

- *Providing Constructive Feedback to the Students:*

Since the majority of the teachers faced numerous difficulties while conducting classes, I asked them what constructive feedback they provided for the betterment of students' learning. Different teachers followed different approaches while giving feedback; for example, Kona (pseudonym) asked them to check their grammatical errors, two of the teachers suggested reading English books and newspapers at home and practicing as much as they could, and three of the teachers tried to make learning content easy so that they could comprehend the topic easily.

*I usually provide positive feedback. I appreciate the little improvements of those who work hard. I repeatedly encourage those who do not work hard to be involved in the learning process (Kona; Interview 6; October 28, 2024).*

- *Instructional Practices to Engage Students:*

Different teachers provided different points of view regarding what instructional practices they conducted to engage their students in the classroom. One teacher revealed that he attempted to help students express themselves in conversation. The majority (4 teachers) stated that they provided videos, quizzes, slides, research articles, staging drama, picturizing poetry, etc.

*I try to use English as much as possible and use authentic materials from the target language. My language usage and course materials are mostly dependent on the students' level and capacity. If students are struggling to understand their content, I simplify the materials and use their mother tongue in a limited manner (Kona; Interview 6; October 28, 2024).*

*I use a number of activities to encourage them, such as group and pair activities, checking reading comprehension, arranging interesting and contextual activities, etc. (Gina; Interview 7; March 29, 2025).*

- *Strategies to Encourage Student Achievement:*

Different teachers provided different points of view regarding what strategies they applied in order to encourage students to make themselves better. Two of the teachers revealed that they made the classroom setting comfortable so that the students fruitfully learned from the class, another teacher stated that he gave compliments to them when giving correct answers and sometimes provided bonus marks, and three of the teachers explained that they tried their best to motivate the students in the language classroom.

*In my university, the classroom is organized to promote presentation and discussion. It is like a linear row of chairs where the teacher only discusses and the students only listen. But in my class, I sometimes change the arrangement, like a round shape or a couple shape for group and pair activities (Rahima; Interview 1; October 27, 2024).*



- *Support for the Students Who are Struggled:*

Different teachers provided different points of view regarding what types of support they provided so far if they found out their students were struggling due to poor language competency. Sara (pseudonym) revealed that she was motivated to express her thoughts in any way. Two of the teachers said that they provided synonyms to help them understand, and three of the teachers encouraged them to translate the text if it was comprehensible to them.

*I take care of the students individually and encourage them to develop proficiency in the target language. If most of the students struggle with their target language, I use their mother tongue, Bangla, in a very limited manner* (Sara; Interview 5; October 28, 2024).

## Discussion on Findings

This section provides a detailed analysis with reference to each of the research questions.

### *The perceptions of teachers and students regarding educational inequality in EMI classes*

To address the first research question, teachers' interviews and students' questionnaires collected perceptions regarding educational inequality, and it had been found from the students' questionnaire that the majority of the BM students – (12% of BM students strongly agreed and 36% of students agreed) revealed that teachers were biased who were efficient in English especially those from English-medium. For this reason, (32% of BM students strongly agreed, and 24% agreed) thought that learning Bangla was less important than English. Due to the existing inequality, the majority of them (24% of BM students strongly agreed and 24% agreed)- believed that they would improve if they could use Bangla as the medium of instruction. Moreover, they found comfort among Bangla speakers. However, English-medium students did not encounter similar challenges. In open-ended responses, the majority wrote that EMI should be practiced in the classes. Here, the power relation between the lower class and the middle class in terms of educational opportunities can be easily detected (Bourdieu, 1974), and there are similarities in Nepal, where speaking English is linked to more social and economic opportunities (Sah & Karki, 2020).

According to the teachers' responses, they did not encounter educational inequality among students in the classes. They agreed that when different levels of students studied in the same class, some problems might appear, and they needed to analyze their competency level. They took numerous steps to make their learning comprehensible, such as using Bangla and English in speech, motivating others to raise questions, using simple English vocabulary in-class lectures, etc. Moreover, they approved that all students felt equality in the classroom. Chinese educators modified their methods to get their students more involved in class discussions in English (Fang & Hu, 2022).

### *Challenges teachers and students face due to educational inequality in EMI classes*

This research question investigated the challenges teachers and students faced due to educational inequality in EMI classes. The students' questionnaire found that the majority (16% strongly agreed and 32% agreed) from BM faced challenges while communicating in English; 40% strongly agreed, and 12% agreed that their classmates teased them for their language skills. For that reason, they encountered challenges while making friends with English-proficient classmates. However, the EM students did not face similar kinds of challenges. From both mediums of students, it was found that their teachers did not provide immediate feedback. Moreover, instructors did not provide multiple teaching methods to make the lecture comprehensible for the students in different mediums. In an open-ended question, they revealed

that the university did not provide support to enrich their language skills or make them cope with the medium of instruction, so they took help from outside of the university. In a comparable way, Simbolon et al. (2020) found that students in Indonesia had difficulty with translation tools, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Teachers also highlighted a number of challenges while conducting classes, such as the existence of different competency levels of students, deficiency of content comprehension, the discouragement of the students to initiate practice in the classroom, etc. One of the teachers provided a detailed distinction between EM and BM students by stating that BM students are more reserved and demotivated than EM students. Thus, it can be claimed that educational inequality emerges not only from the English language competence of students but also from the insufficient EMI training of teachers and appropriate teaching quality (Hu & Duan, 2019; Rose et al., 2020a).

#### *A number of ways these challenges may be addressed to ensure better teaching and learning*

This research question investigated how better teaching and learning can be ensured. In order to ensure students' better learning, teachers revealed they utilized several techniques, such as encouraging them to read English books, newspapers, and journals, providing positive feedback, and practicing English with their classmates. Moreover, they provided videos, research articles, staging drama, picturizing poetry, etc., to enhance their language skills. Though the majority of the teachers used both Bangla and English in their conversation, they inspired them to have conversations in English and offered individual support when any student faced a struggle. By facilitating the use of L1 to improve comprehension, translanguaging was utilized as an educational approach in Vietnam to overcome learners' limited proficiency in English (Yuan et al., 2024).

When the same issues were asked of the students from both mediums, they unveiled similar scenarios, such as teachers encouraging them to read English journals, articles, short stories, etc., they found all the course materials were organized so they could connect themselves in numerous activities, the majority (12% strongly agreed and 40% agreed) of BM students stated that teachers provided constructive feedback. Despite the many challenges they encountered due to the existing educational disparities in the class, they still favor bilingual materials to improve their comprehension (Phuong & Nguyen, 2019). Here, a greater part of respondents from both mediums revealed that teachers used code-switching for their better conception. Moreover, the majority (20% strongly agreed and 36% agreed) of BM students and the majority (12% strongly agreed and 44% strongly agreed) of the EM students stated that teachers used simple vocabulary for easy comprehension.

### **Conclusion & Further Scope for Research**

To meet the challenges of the new century, English language learning has become necessary, and because of the massive importance of English, it has become the compulsory subject in the curriculum at the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels in Bangladesh and is the medium of instruction, especially at the private universities. One of the important purposes of this study is to find out whether students from different mediums (BM and EM) confront any disparity while using English as their medium of instruction. Since students of Bangladesh do not get opportunities to interact with native English speakers and BM students get restrained opportunities to improve their English language skills at the early levels of their academic lives, English-only instruction at the tertiary level can be troublesome for them. From the discussion above, it has been found that BM students encounter a number of experiences of educational inequality, such as getting teased by their classmates for insufficient language skills, facing

discrimination from their own course teachers, being less confident to speak, being fearful of making friends with English-proficient classmates, etc. These existing challenges hamper the creation of an equitable classroom and discourage students' competency. In this regard, this study also presented some solutions based on the students' and teachers' perspectives, which were taken to improve the student's skills, such as encouraging them to read English materials, practicing with their classmates, providing positive feedback, assisting the lagging behind, applying both Bangla and English language to support. Since BM-background students face more difficulties than others, university authorities should take immediate steps so that the classes will not confront those challenges in the future. To address these problems, pre-university English is offered to students in some countries before they are admitted to those universities (Thorp et al., 2017). Though in our countries, some universities provide this type of opportunity; it is significant for all the universities to consider this program earnestly for the betterment of students' learning. Furthermore, educational institutions may provide EMI training for teachers and peer mentoring programs where EM and BM students work together in the classroom and beyond. Here, these strategies may ensure the incorporation of pedagogical ideas into instruction focused on the learner's needs.

### *Further Scope for Research*

On the basis of the findings of my research, I feel the need for future research studies on the following issues:

- ✓ Because of the time limitation and students' and teachers' discomfited attitude towards assisting in the study, the research had not been completed with a large sample size. So, the future research study can be made more valid with a large sample size.
- ✓ In future research, data can be collected from different private universities all around Bangladesh to get a vivid picture of the tertiary education system.

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## Employing Dictogloss as a Cooperative Learning Approach to Enhance Language Acquisition among Non-English Majors at a Vietnamese University

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** cooperative learning, Dictogloss, language acquisition

This study was carried out to explore the effectiveness of implementing Dictogloss as a cooperative learning (CL) method in language acquisition. A mixed-method approach was employed, utilizing a survey questionnaire with 145 students, focus-group interviews with 15 students, and teacher diaries from 3 teachers. The results show that using Dictogloss as a cooperative learning strategy positively impacts students' perceived English language proficiency, motivation, and engagement. The research highlights the importance of comprehensively implementing Dictogloss as a teaching and learning method in the long term. Also, the study recommends incorporating Dictogloss into language curricula to provide substantial benefits for learners. This study hopefully contributes to the language teaching and learning method within the context of higher education in Vietnam and suggests that such an approach could be beneficial for English learners to enhance their learning outcomes.

### Introduction

Education is highly valued in several developing Asian nations, such as Vietnam, where it is seen as essential to success in life. Highly qualified individuals are highly valued in society, implying that credentials are occasionally valued more than abilities or talents (Le, 1999). This fact leads to the goal of learning, which could be obtaining certifications or passing tests. Furthermore, Vietnamese students are frequently accused of being passive. This is actually a result of adhering to Confucianism, which holds that teachers should be in charge of the classroom and assign tasks while students should remain silent and follow their instructions.

In today's global economic and cultural integration, the use of foreign languages, especially English, in communication has become increasingly essential. English has been required in most educational institutions in Vietnam, from primary to university levels. In addition to lowering learning quality, insufficient involvement makes acquiring the language skills

required for future employment more difficult. This lack of participation affects the quality of learning and creates barriers to developing the language skills necessary for future careers.

One of the top concerns of language educators is how to improve the interaction and motivation between students and teachers and between students in language practice activities. To address this problem, new pedagogical methods are constantly being tested and researched to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Among them, the CL method has emerged as a cutting-edge educational movement that is used globally and has been recommended to be applied in language classes by numerous studies (Namaziandost et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2022; Sarwat et al., 2024; Trinh, 2011)

Although English language teaching places a strong emphasis on traditional teaching methods like Presentation-Production-Practice or Test-Teach-Test for lesson design and teaching practice, these approaches are often criticized for being teacher-centered, focusing on accuracy over communication, and lacking flexibility (Pratista, 2023). In contrast, methods like Dictogloss, which enable collaborative learning with all four skills, including listening, speaking, writing, and reading, can foster learning engagement, critical thinking, and deeper linguistic knowledge awareness (Ardiansyah, 2020; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023; Vasiljevic, 2010; Wen, 2024). These benefits are particularly valuable for non-English majors, who often struggle with motivation and may find traditional, teacher-centered approaches monotonous and less interactive.

In the context of this study, non-English major students at a Vietnamese university were provided with blended learning courses in English. They completed 10 weeks of English classes, which included 40 hours of face-to-face instruction and 35 hours of online study. The students could self-study the linguistic knowledge through the learning management system and practice English vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, and writing exercises. The face-to-face lessons aimed to reinforce and extend language knowledge through interactive activities. This environment provides an ideal setting to implement Dictogloss as a cooperative learning approach that may bridge the gap between passive knowledge acquisition and active language use.

Due to Dictogloss's potential to enhance language acquisition through integrated skill development and collaborative learning, this study aims to investigate its effectiveness and provide insights into how this approach might be used to support language learning in similar educational settings.

## Literature review

### *Foreign language teaching and learning*

Learning and teaching a foreign language are intricate, multidimensional processes that numerous factors impact. Liuhuizi and Yasin (2024) mentioned psychological factors focusing on motivation, anxiety, attitudes, and cognitive factors. Sharing quite the same opinion, Abdulrahman (2023) referred to nine factors significantly impacting foreign language acquisition, such as interaction patterns in the classroom, rapport with teachers, motivation, learners' attitudes, general cultural concerns, initiation issues, self-consciousness, fear of making mistakes, and classroom anxiety. Hoang (2021) classified this process into internal and external elements, including communicative environment factors, comprehensive inputs, aptitude, age, gender, emotion or motivation, and learning strategies. Although each had their own way of categorizing, they all agreed that these elements interact to affect learners of foreign

languages, and motivation places great importance on the learners' language acquisition. Identifying these factors aids in determining learner difficulties and efficient teaching strategies and proposes suitable implications for learning and teaching foreign languages. Sun (2019) listed some noticeable features related to the teaching of language as follows:

- To create a language environment: Instead of teaching students to learn a language, teachers should concentrate on helping them acquire it. Therefore, teachers should place a high value on building a linguistic environment to increase language instruction's effectiveness. Teachers can first pique students' interest in language acquisition by introducing them to more of the target language's culture and customs; second, they can lessen students' reluctance to learn a foreign language by creating a welcoming environment. Third, in order to assist students in practicing what they have learned, teachers should host or encourage more language-learning activities.
- To provide more comprehensible input: The key to learning a language is getting a lot of intelligible input—mostly from reading and listening. In addition to teaching grammar, teachers are in charge of giving students understandable information in the classroom.
- To pay attention to the feedback on learning: Feedback gives students a clear picture of how well they are learning the language, allowing them to improve on their mistakes and study more effectively in the future. Genuine praise for students' efforts can help them learn the language more effectively, and their sense of accomplishment serves as motivation to get better at language acquisition.

Thus, the language environment for students to practice freely and actively and comprehensible material are two important factors leading to effective language acquisition.

### *Cooperative learning*

CL may be applied to a wide range of subjects and educational levels and is described as a teaching strategy that fosters learning, socializing, and higher-order thinking (Gillies, 2014). According to Barkley et al. (2012), in a cooperative learning environment, students work in groups under the guidance of a teacher who acts as an authoritative figure and decision-maker and assists students in their peer learning. CL is now a well-known teaching strategy in which students collaborate in small groups to accomplish shared objectives (Gillies, 2016; Johnson & Johnson, 2017).

According to Sarwat et al. (2024), CL is not just a teaching approach but also creates an active learning environment where students help one another accomplish shared objectives. CL has become a prominent pedagogical strategy in current educational research due to its many benefits, which may be observed in a variety of learning situations. One of the main benefits of CL is that it can improve academic performance. Several studies have demonstrated that it can enhance reading, writing, communication, scientific comprehension, and problem-solving skills (Wenning & Vieyra, 2019). Furthermore, CL fosters constructive interactions between students from various backgrounds, assisting in the development of critical social skills (Nguyen et al., 2022). Hence, persistent CL interventions can greatly increase students' motivation to learn (Nguyen et al., 2022; Wenning & Vieyra, 2019).

In short, CL has definite benefits over traditional learning strategies. The growing body of research demonstrating its ability to improve academic performance, encourage social skills, and increase motivation makes it a noteworthy teaching technique.

### *Dictogloss*

Dictogloss, an activity that originated from dictation, was developed by Wajnryb in 1990. According to Newman (2012), Dictogloss is the combination of two parts: "dicto" and "gloss",

in which "dicto" means dictation, and "gloss" refers to paraphrasing or interpretation of the text. The author took a close look at the term by separating it into two parts that are easy to understand. What makes Dictogloss different from traditional dictation is that the students do not passively copy the text word for word; they reproduce a new one but still keep the meaning and style as close as possible. In short, the above definitions are all correct and show the nature of Dictogloss but just from different perspectives. There are four steps in the original Dictogloss presented by Wajnryb (1990):

- a. Preparation: Learners are introduced to topics and some related key vocabulary
- b. Dictation: The teacher reads the text at a normal speed twice. The first time, the learners just listen to get general ideas about the text and should not write anything. The second time, they listen and take notes.
- c. Reconstruction: The learners work in groups and share their notes to recreate the text.
- d. Analysis and correction: This step is flexible; the learners can compare their text with other groups or with the original text and make corrections if necessary.

In this study, the original procedure is kept when Dictogloss is implemented. However, to diversify the activity, the teachers may ask the students to listen to the recording and reconstruct; the students may reconstruct the content in text or orally; or, in analysis and correction, the teachers can check the work or ask for cross-checking among groups.

Dictogloss brings about various benefits for the learning and teaching of language. Firstly, the reconstructing stage in Dictogloss helps students become more aware of linguistic knowledge and rhetorical patterns (Vasiljevic, 2010). During note-sharing and discussions, students closely examine the text, make sense of their notes, negotiate, and hypothesize. They focus on grammar points like verb tenses, parts of speech, and homonyms to maintain the text's main ideas. In the analysis stage, students compare their reconstructed texts with others, enhancing their self-awareness of rhetorical patterns and cohesive devices. Shak (2006) notes that Dictogloss aids vocabulary acquisition as students practice during the Preparation, Dictation, and Reconstruction steps.

Secondly, Dictogloss promotes cooperative learning, allowing students to work in groups rather than individually. This method encourages students to communicate and interact with each other, stimulating negotiation and communication skills (Wen, 2024). This approach also helps them share the workload, gather diverse ideas, and provide a supportive environment for speaking out (Jacobs & Small, 2003). As a result, students feel more confident in hypothesizing to understand the text.

Thirdly, Dictogloss is used in foreign language learning and contributes to improving many skills, such as listening, writing, and speaking (Ardiansyah, 2020; Ngo & Le, 2020; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023). Dictogloss is also used to effectively promote grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Kurtaj, 2021; White, 2011).

Fourthly, Dictogloss lets teachers cut down on teacher-talk time while allowing students to work together through peer teaching and peer corrections. Furthermore, Dictogloss gives FFL/ESL teachers a chance to provide detailed feedback to students, building on their input despite being easier to prepare (Jose, 2022).

While Dictogloss is generally considered a beneficial approach for both learners and teachers, some issues need to be addressed, such as students' cognitive load. The activity involves various steps and skills that may overwhelm students, and students' engagement may be hindered by the complexity of the instruction (Ngo & Le, 2020; Vasiljevic, 2010). Besides, there may be

unequal contributions in group work; strong students may dominate group discussion while weak students become passive (Jacobs & Small, 2003), or the activity may be time-consuming; it may not fit into all curricula (Ardiansyah, 2020). Ngo and Le (2020) also highlight the topic and speed of the input or students' background knowledge as factors that need to be considered when applying Dictogloss.

### *Previous studies on Dictogloss*

Ardiansyah (2020) used Dictogloss to examine its effectiveness in improving writing skills among university students. The data collection methods included observations, interviews, the pre-test, and the post-test. The findings showed an enhancement of students' collaboration to rewrite a delivered text in their own words, improving their comprehension of students' writing skills. The Dictogloss approach also improved contextual grammar learning, motivation, and interaction. Aminatun et al. (2021) conducted research to examine the effect of Dictogloss on senior high school students' listening. The study used quasi-experimental research with pre- and post-tests as a primary instrument to collect data. The result indicated that Dictogloss had a favorable impact on students' listening proficiency and might be a substitute method for teaching listening in the classroom. The study also regarded Dictogloss as a simple method for teaching listening skills and was a suitable approach that may be used to improve listening comprehension as well as other English language skills.

In Vietnam, Nguyen and Nguyen (2023) looked into how Vietnamese EFL students at a university might utilize Dictogloss to enhance their note-taking and listening abilities. Through student perception and performance, the study sought to investigate the efficacy of the Dictogloss approach. According to the pre-test, post-test, and survey questionnaire findings, students' listening and note-taking skills significantly improved. Furthermore, the majority of students reported that the Dictogloss method improved their listening comprehension and increased their interaction with teachers and peers. Ngo and Le (2021) conducted action research using qualitative methods to see whether the Dictogloss method improves listening comprehension for non-English majors at a university. The listening notes taken in class were examined, and forty students were invited to participate in focus group interviews. The findings showed that students found this method enjoyable and that their awareness of linguistic knowledge had increased. Additionally, they felt that the strategy significantly improved their listening skills.

In previous studies, Dictogloss has been widely used to promote specific language skills. There is limited research on how Dictogloss impacts learners' language acquisition comprehensively and systematically as a teaching method in a lesson that integrates all four language skills. Thus, this study will examine the effect of Dictogloss on teaching English cooperatively in a whole semester with non-English majors at a university. In order to achieve the research objectives, the following research question will be addressed:

*How do students perceive Dictogloss as a cooperative learning approach in their English language acquisition?*

## **Methodology**

### *Participants*

The study's participants were second-year non-English majored students from five different intermediate-level classes. Their ages ranged from nineteen to twenty. Each participating student had two English lessons per week, with each lesson focusing on two language skills,



including listening-speaking and reading-writing, with a contact time of two hours. Each course lasted 10 weeks. Three teachers of classes applying Dictogloss also participated in the data collection procedure to provide insights for the study. They all have over 10 years of teaching experience.

### *Data collection and analysis*

This study was designed as a mixed-method descriptive study, combining quantitative and qualitative methods with the questionnaire and focus group interviews as the main source of data and the teachers' diaries as a supplementary source. The questionnaire was delivered to the students through Google Forms in week 10, and then focused group interviews were carried out one week after the researcher had screened the data from the questionnaire. This enabled the researcher to choose appropriate interviewees, which is justified in the focus group interview method below. The last research tool employed in this study was teacher diaries. The teacher diaries were collected every two weeks during the period dictogloss was applied in the English classes.

### *Questionnaire*

The researchers used a Google Form to administer an online survey to students in order to investigate their attitudes toward Dictogloss. The questionnaire was adapted from previous works in the same field by Shak (2006) and Nguyen et al. (2021). The three components of the English questionnaire were personal information, students' attitudes, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of Dictogloss in English learning. Five multiple-choice questions (MCQs) made up the first section, and fifteen Likert-type questions with responses ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" made up the last section. Excel statistical software was used to calculate and show the survey data in tables and charts for comparison and analysis.

### *Focus group interview*

Out of the 145 students who gave their contact details and consented to be interviewed, the researchers then chose 15 of them. The students from different classes with uncertain responses, those who gave rich and extensive answers, and those whose responses were either similar to or different from the majority were among the selection criteria for student interviews. These criteria were intended to complement the quantity of data gathered and guarantee that the viewpoints and opinions accurately represented all facets of the study issue. The aim of these interviews was to clarify and elaborate on the answers provided in the survey questionnaire. The interviews also offered insights into students' attitudes and learning experiences. Each group interview consisted of five students. Every interview was recorded to aid in data analysis, lasted roughly thirty to thirty-five minutes, and was conducted in Vietnamese to avoid any misunderstanding due to language barriers. The questionnaire items used to investigate *students' attitudes* and *language improvement* following the implementation of Dictogloss in their class served as the basis for the interview questions. Interview data were transcribed and categorized according to the same themes to analyze qualitatively.

### *Teacher Diaries*

Although the primary data of this research were collected through the survey and interviews to investigate the participants' perceptions of Dictogloss in learning English, the teacher's diaries were also employed to help interpret and contextualize the students' responses. The teacher's reflections could also be used to triangulate findings. These diaries served as a supplementary source to support the interpretation of student-reported experiences. Three teachers were asked to note down their thoughts in diaries as personal reflections every two weeks. The diary was structured with three criteria: *The students' attitude*, *the students' ability to acquire English*, and

*Others.* The column “Others” was for the teachers to note down any occurrences or immediate thoughts while the activity was carried out. The teacher's diaries were kept in narrative form and categorized under the same themes.

## Findings

The key findings of the study are presented as follows:

### *Students' attitudes*

**Table 1**

*Students' attitude towards the use of Dictogloss as a cooperative learning approach*

No		M	SD
1.	Dictogloss is easy to carry out in class	4.02	0.85
2.	You willingly participate in Dictogloss activities.	4.15	0.83
3.	You actively engage in the teaching-learning process during Dictogloss activities.	4.15	0.83
4.	You feel more motivated and engaged when participating in Dictogloss activities.	4.04	1.00
5.	Dictogloss enhances good working relationships among team members.	4.02	0.85
6.	Dictogloss helps to develop more positive attitudes towards language learning in the classroom.	4.21	0.82
7.	Dictogloss makes learners more responsible for their own learning.	3.92	0.98

According to the questionnaire data, the majority of students enthusiastically participated in the activity with a mean score ranging from 3.92 to 4.21, and the moderate variety in students' attitudes is indicated by the SD values, which vary from 0.82 to 1.00. The participants ranked the highest score for the statement that Dictogloss assisted them in having positive attitudes towards learning. The group interview also confirms this result. The student shared that Dictogloss enabled them to actively participate in the learning process through group work, and it provided a comfortable learning environment for them to express themselves with their peers. They did not experience the pressure of learning like in other traditional classes (S#6, S1#0, S#11, #S14). Another student added: “*I feel less embarrassed being corrected by my teammates rather than by the teacher in front of the class. Thus, I dare to talk more, and I am more willing to take part in learning activities.*” (#S1). In terms of feedback, the teacher's diary commented: “*During the process of reconstruction, I noted that with Dictogloss, the students were more willing to ask the teacher; maybe asking during group work seemed to be less formal than asking in front of the whole class.*” (TD#5). The teachers' diaries also provide more insights into the students' motivation and engagement in the activities. It is recorded: “*In analysis step, every group tried to outperform the others by comparing their texts with the original. They were more active and more competitive in learning than in traditional class where the teacher teaches, students do exercise and check*” (TD#3).

Despite the positive result of the student's attitude towards using Dictogloss, some participants complained of uneven group member contributions (Interview 2, 3). The teacher's diary explained this: “*There were some groups in which good students seemed to dominate the weak ones in discussion and text reconstruction, and I sometimes needed to go around to monitor*

*group discussions.*” (TD#1). The difficulty level of the text or topic also affects the students’ engagement in the activities. The teachers all admitted that some lessons had more challenging topics and vocabulary. However, because the Dictogloss was implemented as a learning approach for the whole semester when the teachers noted their students’ less engagement, they had to provide more prompts in the preparation stage, and the discussion got better in the following lessons (TD#3, TD# 4).

### *Students’ language acquisition*

**Table 2**

*Students perceived the efficacy of language acquisition*

No		M	SD
8.	Dictogloss has improved your listening skills.	4.30	0.88
9.	Dictogloss has improved your speaking skills.	4.21	0.82
10.	Dictogloss has improved your reading skills.	3.83	0.98
11.	Dictogloss has improved your writing skills.	4.19	0.85
12.	Dictogloss has enhanced your overall language proficiency.	4.00	0.88
13.	You can achieve more in language learning when working collaboratively using Dictogloss than when working alone.	4.25	0.82
14.	Dictogloss helps you to understand a lesson better.	4.31	0.84
15.	Dictogloss makes the language acquisition easier.	4.21	0.85

Data from the questionnaire shows that Dictogloss is effective in improving various language skills. Listening (M=4.30) is the highest-ranked skill, followed by speaking (M=4.21), writing (M=4.19), and reading (M=3.83). While overall language proficiency is enhanced, there may be room for further improvement in reading skills. A high mean score in item #13 (M=4.25) also explains why students are so positive about Dictogloss in terms of language enhancement.

In the interview, one student said that Dictogloss is an “all-in-one” activity for studying English because it enables him to practice four skills (S#7). The other student added: “*Dictogloss helps me to remember vocabulary and acquire grammar knowledge better because I have to listen, write, speak, and read the text out during dictation and reconstruction steps. That really helps to raise my awareness of the linguistic knowledge.*” (S#15). Besides, the students also admitted that they could learn the language better with stronger students. Some students shared the same points that in the reconstruction step, they compared their notes with other group members and realized that they just tried to note down every word, not the keywords. Thus, next time, they learned to identify keywords and improve their notes. (S#1, S#2).

Another student in the same interview agreed:

*Thanks to group discussion in Dictogloss, I can remember the learning strategy better. For example, in the dictation step, I can note down the phrases, such as big and something like i-no-mas. I am not sure; I just transcribed the pronunciation of that word. Then, in a discussion, my friend said that because the two words are linked by “and”, they must have similar meanings; after that, we tried to base on the pronunciation and context to check that word in the dictionary. It is then “enormous”. We did our best to find that word, and I think I will remember it forever! (S#4).*

The teachers’ diaries also confirmed the results of the questionnaire and interview. All three teachers thought that their students’ language proficiency had generally improved, thanks to Dictogloss. One teacher noted:

*In traditional listening class, after listening, the students do exercises. However, I am not sure all of the students with correct answers can really understand the text, especially with MCQ questions. However, with Dictogloss, they had to connect the ideas to rebuild the text. That makes them really comprehend what they are studying (TD#8).*

The teacher also noticed that weaker students gradually improved their ability to catch keywords after some lessons with the Dictogloss approach. They became more confident in identifying the main ideas. (TD#10). Although reading is the skill that received the lowest score in the questionnaire (M=3.83), the teachers still noted some benefits, as the students became more aware of the text structure, discourse makers, and meaning relationships among paragraphs. (TD#4, TD#6, TD#7)

Nevertheless, the teachers also revealed that the most important step to help the students achieve their learning goal with the Dictogloss method was the preparation stage; if the new knowledge or vocabulary was not well introduced, the students were likely to fail in the following steps. They also added that it would take one or two first-class periods for the whole class to understand the flow of the approach during the activity, and the role of the teacher was important in monitoring the group discussion. (TD#4, TD#12, TD#13). Besides, it was noted that the students should also be trained in note-taking skills while listening because, when reconstructing the text, they tend to take more notes than in traditional language classes. Thus, good note-taking skills would enable them to perform better in the following steps of Dictogloss. (TD#2).

## Discussion

The study indicated that the students have a positive attitude towards Dictogloss in learning English. The first reason for that is that it brings about a favorable yet competitive learning environment with collaborative learning, in which the participants feel free to express themselves. They are not afraid of making mistakes and also strive for excellence. Secondly, Dictogloss enables them to receive prompt corrective feedback from their peers and teachers, which can improve their language proficiency. These findings also align with the previous study on Dictogloss to improve students' motivation and engagement from Jacobs and Small (2003), Jose (2022), Sarwat et al. (2024), and Wen (2024) for CL, as it helps create a favorable environment for learning. Also, the result confirmed Sun's suggestion (2019) that in order to have an appropriate teaching method, a language environment and timely feedback from peers and teachers are needed.

Additionally, the results revealed that Dictogloss could contribute to the students' self-efficacy in language acquisition. This method showed its effectiveness in all four skills and overall language proficiency because it is a collaborative and integrated approach to language learning. Thanks to it, the students can practice all language skills in one lesson, and working together helps them be more aware of language features and learning strategies better than in traditional classes. These findings are in line with other research in the literature, such as Ardiansyah (2020), Kurtaj (2021), Nguyen and Nguyen (2023), and White (2011), in which Dictogloss was proved to help enhance various aspects of language learning and Gillies (2016) and Johnson and Johnson (2017) for group goal achievement, Wenning and Vieyra (2019) for various skill promotion in CL.

The study also revealed some challenges in the implementation of Dictogloss in teaching English, such as uneven contribution among group members or different levels of difficulties among lessons. This could require the role of the teachers as the knowledge providers,

facilitators, managers, instructors, and counselors (Muliyah et al., 2020, as cited in Aminatun et al., 2021). It is also interesting to note that in order to carry out the method successfully, the students should be equipped with proper note-taking skills and the ability to work well in groups. Such challenges in applying Dictogloss also confirm the results from previous studies such as Jacobs and Small (2003), Ngo and Le (2020), and Vasiljevic (2010).

## Conclusion

The study investigates the effects of Dictogloss as a new teaching method to help students acquire language with non-English major students at a university. Dictogloss is implemented in the long term with 10 successive weeks in every English lesson of five English classes. The finding indicates that Dictogloss generally improves the students' perceived motivation, engagement, and efficacy of language acquisition. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to integrate Dictogloss into the language curriculum and use it as a teaching and learning strategy in a comprehensive manner over the long run. It is hoped that this study will advance the language teaching and learning methodology in Vietnam's higher education system and that non-English majors may benefit from this approach in terms of improving their learning outcomes.

Although this study contributes to the literature by investigating the effectiveness of using Dictogloss as a cooperative learning method in English language acquisition, some limitations of the research need to be addressed. First, the study is still conducted with non-English majors. Further studies could be carried out with English majors. Second, the study just evaluates the impact of Dictogloss on the perceived language proficiency of the learners. The following research should employ tests to measure the students' practical language ability to produce more objective results.

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## The Role Immersive Technology in Creating Rich Affordance Environment for ELT

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** immersive technology, English Language Teaching, affordance, socio-cultural theory

In contemporary educational contexts, the application of immersive technologies (VR, AR, and MR) in English Language Teaching (ELT) has gained significant attention. Thus, the aim of this literature review is to investigate the benefits of these technologies in creating rich affordance environments for language learning within ELT via the theoretical frameworks of affordances and sociocultural theory. This review synthesizes recent research on the impact of VR, AR, and MR on language acquisition, emphasizing their established benefits in enhancing engagement and interactivity. The analysis of current studies via the lens of Socio-cultural theory reveals that immersive technologies effectively support the process of creating meaningful and contextualized learning experiences. This review intends to offer insights to educators and researchers who want to utilize immersive technologies to design language learning experiences that are engaging, successful, and aligned with current pedagogical approaches.

### Introduction

Immersive technology, encompassing Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Mixed Reality (MR), is poised to revolutionize English Language Teaching (ELT). By offering "rich affordance environments," these technologies enable experiential learning, simulating real-world scenarios and interactions (Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021). VR transports students to virtual worlds for authentic conversations and cultural immersion (Akçayır & Akçayır, 2017; Kavanagh et al., 2017). AR enhances the real world with interactive language learning opportunities (Santos et al., 2014; Shadiev et al., 2021). MR combines both, deepening language understanding and fostering collaboration (Parveau & Adda, 2018).

Immersive technologies like VR, AR, and MR are becoming increasingly important in ELT due to their novel opportunities for students' practice and interaction, also referred to as 'affordances' (Aagaard, 2018; van Lier, 2004). These affordances encompass both the technological features and how learners engage with them. By providing immersive and

challenging contexts, these technologies enable students to practice language skills, manipulate virtual objects, and collaborate with peers (Chen et al., 2021). These affordances are categorized into three dimensions:

- Material affordances, relating to the technology's physical characteristics, like high-quality visuals and immersive audio in VR, create a sense of presence and realism that boosts engagement.
- Affective affordances, focusing on the emotional and psychological aspects, like the interactive and gamified nature of many immersive language learning applications, can increase motivation and enjoyment.
- Social affordances, providing opportunities for interaction and collaboration, enable learners to practice communication skills with virtual avatars, collaborate on tasks with peers in virtual spaces, and interact with native speakers in virtual environments.

This study builds on prior research that has provided evidence of how these affordances can potentially support different dimensions of language learning such as engagement, confidence and commitment (Liu et al., 2018). For example, the affordances of mobile learning technologies such as enhanced interactivity and real-time feedback have resulted in higher engagement levels among students. When we are able to tap into the affordances of these new platforms, researchers become better equipped at designing and implementing effective language learning experiences using immersive technologies. Thinking intentionally about the material, affective and social dimensions at play can provide a sound basis for them to design such learning spaces - making use of these technologies' potential in order to achieve real language acquisition combined with increased intercultural competence.

Recent studies have evaluated the affordances of Virtual, Augmented, and Mixed Realities in second language contexts. The application of virtual reality was investigated by Parmaxi (2023) with the use of a comprehensive study of 26 publications that were published between the years 2015 and 2018. The researcher identified a number of different virtual reality platforms that are utilized in language schools, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each. However, the study did not distinguish between language skills (e.g., reading, writing, listening, speaking) or target languages, limiting its applicability to specific second language acquisition contexts. AR, by overlaying virtual elements onto the real world, enhances interaction with physical surroundings while focusing on educational content. Research has shown that AR improves cognitive and affective engagement, facilitating vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and grammar practice (Alshumaimeri & Mazher, 2023). Bui and Nguyen (2023) emphasize the transformative impact of digital strategies on education, noting a paradigm shift in teaching and learning methods through technologies such as AR/VR and adaptive learning. Moreover, MR, combining VR and AR, creates interactive spaces for language use, although its adoption in ELT is limited by technological challenges. Nevertheless, MR has the potential to foster collaboration and context-based learning, particularly when integrated with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) (Altun & Lee, 2020). For instance, applications like WordSense provide contextualized vocabulary support, though they still require further refinement to mitigate technical limitations such as latency issues (Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021)

On the other hand, the incorporation of immersive technologies into ELT is not without its difficulties. According to Shi et al.'s research from 2020, there are some technical issues that can be obstacles to general adoption. These include the requirement for specialized hardware and software. Additionally, guaranteeing fair access to these technologies for all learners, regardless of their socioeconomic background, is a key concern (Aylett, 1999). According to

Shadiev and Yang's research from 2020, the successful application of immersive technology calls for a change in educational techniques, as well as a significant amount of training and professional development for educators.

Educational technology tools have been shown to improve grammar teaching by creating more engaging and interactive lessons, which are essential for language learning (Tu, 2022). Despite the growing interest in immersive technologies, there is still a need for a deeper understanding of how these technologies can be fully integrated into ELT to create rich affordance environments. While emerging research has begun to recognize the potential of VR, AR, and MR for language learning, there is a lack of comprehensive research addressing their combined implementation, cohesive learning experiences, and long-term impact on language acquisition (Kavanagh et al., 2017; Parmaxi, 2023; Peixoto et al., 2021). This gap impedes the development of holistic pedagogical frameworks that effectively harness the affordances of immersive technology for diverse ELT contexts.

This literature review seeks to investigate how immersive technologies can create complex affordance worlds for ELT. This review consolidates empirical research, theoretical constructs and real-world applications to shed light on the disruptive role that VR, AR and MR can play in language learning. We will also consider the pedagogical potential of these technologies: how they might facilitate language learning, encourage communicative competence and even promote learner autonomy. Furthermore, this review will also tackle the issues and barriers met when adopting immersive technologies within ELT giving hints and guidance for not only educators but researchers as well as policymakers should they decide to embark on such a journey.

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the research sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do immersive technologies like virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and mixed reality (MR) contribute to the creation of rich affordance environments in ELT?
2. What challenges exist in integrating immersive technology into ELT environments?

## Literature Review

Teachers of English as a foreign language are always keen on looking for new strategies that can be employed to make learning more effective and fun. Virtual, Augmented, and Mixed realities are emergent trends that have been attracting lots of focus and they have the potential of enhancing “rich-affordance” contexts for ELT (van Lier, 2004). These technologies offer an opportunity to improve the flow and strive for an optimal learning environment that can give the students an experiential view in language learning (Chen et al., 2021; Tai & Chen, 2021).

### *The Power of immersion and definitions*

The term "immersive technology" refers to a broad spectrum of digital tools and systems that integrate virtual and augmented experiences to create highly interactive, multisensory learning environments (Radianti et al., 2020). Immersive technology encompasses a range of tools, including virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and mixed reality (MR), which collectively transform the educational landscape by blurring the boundaries between the real and virtual worlds. These tools are increasingly adopted in language education for their ability to simulate real-world contexts, foster interaction, and engage learners through experiential learning (Kuhail et al., 2022). Unlike traditional methods, immersive technologies facilitate

learner-centered environments where authentic communication and collaboration take center stage (Weng et al., 2024).

Virtual Reality (VR) takes learners into computerized contexts instead of real ones; therefore, enhancing cognitive ability, language comprehension and general learning performance (Alharbi, 2022; Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; Sherman & Craig, 2018). Also, having interaction with avatars or immersing in cultural-related VR scenarios help students in their language skills and cultural affordances (Akçayır & Akçayır, 2017; Kavanagh et al., 2017). According to Nguyen and Nguyen (2024), virtual classrooms support four skills integration and promote the efficiency in teaching, which fit the purpose of immersive technologies, as to expand more English teaching methods. In addition, it has been shown that virtual reality provides an interactive and multisensory learning environment that boosts the ability of language learning and active involvement. For example, as recent research has shown, virtual contexts with cultural integration improve learners' awareness of cultures as well as engaging possibility in cultural interactions (Liaw, 2019; Yuditseva, 2023).

Augmented reality (AR), by seamlessly overlaying virtual elements onto the real world, enhances the learner's interaction with their physical surroundings while maintaining a focus on educational content (Hockly, 2019). Studies have shown that AR improves learners' cognitive and affective engagement by offering gamified and interactive experiences that facilitate vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation practice, and grammar drills (Alshumaimeri & Mazher, 2023). AR has been shown to cater to diverse learning styles, enhancing engagement and supporting different types of learners, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (Ngo & Vo, 2024). By using AR apps like vocabulary that can print over the real objects or language learning game apps it can be effective in expanding Acronym's vocabulary and filling the knowledge gap (Viktoria et al., 2018). AR-based learning materials designed with a game-based approach have been found to increase learner motivation, engagement, and enjoyment, making language learning more immersive and effective (Taskiran, 2019). Additionally, integrating AR with problem-based learning (PBL) has been shown to enhance learners' problem-solving skills and critical thinking while fostering authentic language use in context (Sorte & Kim, 2023). Furthermore, AR tools such as QR codes, AR flashcards, and mobile AR applications have been successfully utilized in ELT to improve vocabulary retention, listening comprehension, and interaction in communicative tasks (Rosyidah & Anugerahwati, 2024).

Mixed reality (MR) can be defined as the integration of real and virtual worlds, where AR integrates virtual objects with the real environment for language learning (Marcel, 2020; Parveau & Adda, 2018). Mixed reality enhances the real environment and supports the segregation of abstract objects and tangible objects simultaneously; thus, students can employ virtual objects in real environments. The above dynamic approach facilitates real cultural interactions, enhanced language acquisition, cooperation, and problem-solving (Parveau & Adda, 2019). Recent research has highlighted that MR environments, when integrated with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), enable learners to navigate complex linguistic tasks through real-time feedback and authentic communication scenarios (Altun & Lee, 2020). For instance, applications like WordSense provide contextualized vocabulary support, though they still require further refinement to mitigate technical limitations such as latency issues (Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021).

Overall, immersive technologies leverage digital affordances to create engaging, interactive, and contextually rich learning environments, which have been shown to improve learner motivation, engagement, and performance in ELT and beyond (Merchant et al., 2014; Liaw, 2019; Sorte & Kim, 2023). However, their effectiveness depends on technological accessibility,

pedagogical integration, and learner adaptability, factors that must be critically considered when implementing these tools in educational settings (Shadiev et al., 2021; Khodabandeh & Mombini, 2024).

### *Theoretical foundations: Affordances and Sociocultural Theory*

The implementation of immersive technology in ELT draws on the concepts of affordances and sociocultural theory. Affordance, introduced by Gibson (1979), emphasizes the interactive possibilities offered by the environment to learners. Van Lier (2004) defines affordances as the set of options available to learners in a given context, which in ELT creates a “rich affordance environment.” This environment provides ample opportunities for learners to act, broadening their perception of language learning and enhancing effectiveness. Van Lier (2004) stresses that such environments promote engagement, collaboration, and authentic interaction. Aagaard (2018) categorizes affordances into material (e.g., digital simulations), affective (e.g., reducing anxiety), and social (e.g., promoting collaboration). Yuditseva (2023) adds that rich affordance environments include interactive tasks, real-world activities, active learner involvement, collaboration, and feedback, all of which enrich the language learning process. Xiangming and Song (2018) emphasize that affordances positively affect learning outcomes, encompassing material, affective, and social dimensions that enhance learners’ engagement, such as practicing with avatars in VR, manipulating objects in AR, and collaborating with peers in virtual spaces Ezeh (2017).

Affordances align closely with sociocultural theory, which emphasizes social interaction and cultural context in learning. Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) highlights the gap between what learners can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance. Immersive technologies, such as VR and AR, provide scaffolding by simulating authentic contexts and enabling collaboration with avatars, peers, and instructors. These interactions foster co-constructed knowledge, making learning more engaging and effective (Liaw, 2019; Lin & Lan, 2015). Vygotsky (1978) asserts that learning activates internal processes that only occur through collaboration, and this knowledge is co-constructed at the inter-psychological level before being internalized at the individual level (Wertsch, 1985). Sociocultural theory also underscores that language learning is not just about linguistic acquisition but involves developing intercultural competence. Van Lier (2004) extends this idea by describing “action in potential,” emphasizing the importance of environments that prioritize social and cultural interactions for enhancing learning.

By bridging affordance theory with sociocultural and constructivist perspectives, immersive technologies provide a robust framework for understanding their potential in language education. They enable the alignment of theoretical principles with practical applications, such as leveraging VR to create stress-free zones for anxiety-prone learners or employing AR to merge physical and virtual elements for contextualized vocabulary acquisition (Takkaç Tulgar et al., 2022). Moreover, these technologies can reduce the gap between formal instruction and informal learning by offering flexible and engaging learning environments (Weng et al., 2024). This integration of theory and practice not only enhances our understanding of immersive technology's role in language learning but also opens avenues for further exploration and refinement of these tools in diverse educational settings.

### *Research gap*

Despite the growing interest in immersive technology, a deeper understanding into how they can be fully integrated and thereby, the production of rich affordance environments is still invited. Such integration needs to extend to a wider range of technologies, pedagogical



frameworks, and long-term learning outcomes (Tang, 2024). While the emerging research has begun to recognize the potential of VR, AR, and MR for language learning, there is a lack of comprehensive research addressing their combined implementation, cohesive learning experiences, and long-term impact on language acquisition (Kavanagh et al., 2017; Parmaxi, 2020; Peixoto et al., 2021). This gap impedes the development of holistic pedagogical frameworks that effectively harness the affordances of immersive technology for diverse ELT contexts. Additionally, while studies have demonstrated the benefits of immersive technologies in enhancing engagement, motivation, and cultural awareness (Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; Alshumaimeri & Mazher, 2023), there is limited research on how these technologies can be scaled and sustained in real-world educational settings. Challenges such as high costs, technical limitations, and unequal access (Huang, 2023; Mohd Nabil et al., 2024; Shi et al., 2024) are often overlooked, leaving educators and policymakers without clear guidance on how to implement these technologies equitably and effectively.

Upon such an observation, the current study is diving deeper to shed light on the full capacity of immersive technology in ELT and provide practical insights into overcoming barriers to adoption, such as cost, accessibility, and teacher training, to ensure that immersive technologies can be implemented equitably across diverse educational contexts. By addressing these gaps, this study seeks to contribute to the development of more holistic pedagogical frameworks that leverage the full potential of immersive technologies in ELT, ultimately enhancing language learning outcomes for students worldwide.

## Methods

### *Design of the Study*

This literature review investigates the integration of immersive technologies - VR, AR, and MR - in ELT. The review is anchored in the concept of creating "rich affordance environments" to enhance language learning. The aim is to synthesize existing research, identify patterns, and analyze the specific features and challenges associated with these technologies in ELT. By systematically selecting, analyzing, and categorizing studies, this review ensures alignment with the principles of validity and reliability.

### *Data collection & analysis*

This stage begins as authors sift through various academic databases in an extensive manner. Through Google Scholar, ERIC, ProQuest, Web of Science, and JSTOR, various combinations of the keywords and terms related to the theme of interest are selected: "immersive technology", "virtual reality (VR)", "augmented reality (AR)", "mixed reality (MR)", "English language teaching (ELT)", "language learning", "affordance in education", and "technology in language education".

Table 1.

Studies were further filtered with specific criteria as the following table.

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Focus	Studies explicitly addressing the use of VR, AR, or MR in ELT and their impact on creating affordance environments.	Studies not explicitly addressing the use of these technologies in ELT or their impact on affordances.
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, conference papers, credible reports from recognized educational organizations.	Non-peer-reviewed articles, opinion pieces, blog posts.
Publication Date	Published within the last ten years (2014-2024).	Studies published before 2014.
Language	Published in English.	Published in languages other than English.
Methodology Quality	Empirical studies with clear methodology and significant findings; rigorous qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods studies.	Studies with unclear methodology, low-quality, or inconclusive findings.
Relevance	Directly relevant to research questions/themes: language learning, affordances, challenges, and opportunities.	Indirectly related or irrelevant to the core themes of the review.

After applying these criteria, **44 studies** were selected for final analysis. To analyze the selected studies, a thematic analysis approach was used (Braun & Clarke, 2006), where patterns and recurring themes related to immersive technology affordances in ELT were identified. The themes were developed inductively, meaning they emerged naturally from the data rather than being predefined (Nowell et al., 2017). The thematic analysis categorizes the selected 44 studies into five core themes, ensuring that each theme is well-supported by relevant literature. The studies were analyzed to extract recurring patterns and insights that align with the objectives of this review. The five thematic categories—(1) Enhanced Learner Engagement, (2) Support for Communicative Competence, (3) Promotion of Learner Autonomy, (4) Teacher Affordances and Professional Development, and (5) Obstacles and Challenges—were identified based on a rigorous process of coding and classification, which involved the following steps. First, all selected studies were reviewed in-depth to extract key findings, methodologies, and conclusions relevant to immersive technologies in ELT. Next, recurring ideas and key terms related to affordances, engagement, interaction, and barriers were coded. Then it comes the thematic mapping where similar codes were grouped into broader themes representing distinct aspects of immersive language learning. Finally, themes were reviewed against the dataset to

ensure internal consistency and validity, with an iterative refinement process to avoid overlap or redundancy (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The thematic categories identified in this study were not arbitrarily assigned but were grounded in existing research on technology-enhanced learning. While some of the categories (e.g., enhanced learner engagement, communicative competence) align with previous frameworks on digital learning affordances (Aagaard, 2018; van Lier, 2004), others—such as teacher affordances and professional development—were inductively derived from recurring patterns across the selected studies. This hybrid approach ensures that the findings are both theoretically robust and empirically grounded, addressing the specific needs of ELT instructors and learners.

**Enhanced Learner Engagement:** The literature highlights that immersive technologies such as VR and AR create realistic, engaging environments that captivate learners and immerse them in meaningful language use contexts. These technologies reduce learner anxiety, promote active participation, and enhance the overall learning experience by providing authentic simulations and game-based interactions (Alharbi, 2022; Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; Belda-Medina & Marrahi-Gomez, 2023; Chen et al., 2021; Cheng & Kent, 2020; Li & Zhou, 2021; Lin & Lan, 2015; Reinhardt, 2021; Shi et al., 2024; Taskiran, 2019; Ustun et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2018)

**Support for Communicative Competence:** Immersive technologies provide platforms for the interactive practice of language skills and context-based learning, fostering communicative competence. AR and MR environments allow learners to engage in role-playing, vocabulary acquisition, and conversation-based tasks in meaningful, authentic contexts. These affordances are particularly useful for oral language development and intercultural communication (Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; Arslantaş & Tokel, 2018; Castillo, 2016; Chen et al., 2021; Cheng & Kent, 2020; Ebadi & Ebadijalal, 2022; Ezeh, 2017; Li & Zhou, 2021; Liaw, 2019; Liu et al., 2018; Merchant et al., 2014; Mohd Nabil et al., 2024; Selfa-Sastre et al., 2022; Shadiev et al., 2021; Shi et al., 2024; Sorte & Kim, 2023; Xiangming & Song, 2018; Yang et al., 2020; Yip et al., 2019).

**Promotion of Learner Autonomy:** Studies demonstrate that immersive technologies promote self-directed learning by allowing learners to explore language content at their own pace and tailor their learning experiences. These technologies offer adaptive feedback, personalized learning paths, and interactive tasks, fostering motivation and independence. Additionally, VR and AR applications help reduce anxiety in language learning by creating a controlled and immersive space where learners can practice without fear of making mistakes (Alharbi, 2022; Chen et al., 2021; Cheng & Kent, 2020; Khodabandeh & Mombini, 2024; Liu et al., 2018; Reinhardt, 2021; Selfa-Sastre et al., 2022; Shadiev et al., 2021; Shih, 2015; Tai & Chen, 2021; Tang, 2024; Taskiran, 2019; Ustun et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2010; Yip et al., 2019; York et al., 2021).

**Teacher Affordances and Professional Development:** Immersive technologies offer new tools for lesson planning, classroom management, and teacher training. They enhance teachers' ability to design engaging, interactive lessons while supporting professional growth through immersive training programs that allow educators to experiment with innovative pedagogical approaches. However, teachers require technical training and institutional support to integrate these tools effectively into ELT settings (Aagaard, 2018; Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; Squires, 2019; De Back et al., 2023; Herrera Mosquera, 2017; Huang, 2023; Li & Zhou, 2021; Liaw, 2019; Lin & Lan, 2015; Liu et al., 2018; Rauf et al., 2021; Shi, 2020; Sorte & Kim, 2023; Wu et al., 2021; Yip et al., 2019).

**Obstacles and Challenges:** Despite their potential, immersive technologies face barriers to adoption. High equipment costs and technical difficulties that make them inaccessible to underfunded institutions (Hockly, 2019; Li & Zhou, 2021; Lin & Lan, 2015). Limited accessibility and equity concerns, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds or those with disabilities (Castañeda et al., 2018; Shadiev et al., 2021). Challenges in content design—educators struggle to develop high-quality and culturally appropriate materials that align with curriculum goals (Alharbi, 2022; Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; Huang, 2023; Khodabandeh & Mombini, 2024; Rauf et al., 2021). Ethical and privacy concerns surrounding data collection in VR/AR applications, requiring stronger security frameworks (Arslantaş & Tokel, 2018; Castillo, 2016; Wu et al., 2021).

To ensure validity and reliability, the findings are cross-referenced with multiple sources to ensure consistency (Denzin, 2017). Next, the research selection and analysis process are fully documented, allowing for reproducibility. Finally, a subset of studies was independently reviewed by a second researcher to confirm consistency in coding and ensure inter-coder reliability.

## Findings

### *Contributions of Immersive Technologies to ELT Affordances*

In terms of the first research question, immersive technologies like VR, AR, and MR significantly contribute to a more effective learning process in ELT by offering diverse opportunities for interaction and engagement. These technologies provide learners with a vast array of interactive experiences.

First, VR and AR have contributed greatly to ELT thanks to its material affordances through realistic simulations and interacting tools in genuine scenarios. Students can enhance their language skills via immersion. For example, making a food order in a restaurant, try on a tour guide in a city or museum, in which everything is virtual (Alharbi, 2022; Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; De Back et al., 2023). These scenarios allow students to use language skills in controlled environments where mistakes do not carry real-world consequences (Bonner & Reinders, 2018; Squires, 2019; Li & Zhou, 2021). Also, the sense of presence that these immersive platforms bring about enables learners to improve their ability in language usage in real life. Moreover, students can try out more appealing and understandable real-time interactions than those in traditional methods (Cheng & Tsai, 2020; Merchant et al., 2014; York et al., 2021). Tools such as Google Expeditions and personalized virtual environments offer learners tailored opportunities for learning at their own pace, fostering better comprehension and meaningful learning (Ebadi & Ebadijalal, 2022).

Second, technologies like VR, AR and MR better learners' attitude and motivation through their fascinating and stress-free environments. Such tools are suitable for those who are introverted and antisocial, as immersive and collaborative tasks that they provide can make even these kinds of people to be able to actively engage in (Huang, 2023). Gamified VR and AR environments increase learner motivation by involving them in meaningful, context-rich activities that elevate their desire to learn and communicate (Belda-Medina & Marrahi-Gomez, 2023; Yip et al., 2019). In addition, virtual adoption promotes people's perception of cultures and reduces stress by cross-cultural connection. Learners can network with various types of backgrounds, cultures and enhance their confidence when using the language (Arslantaş & Tokel, 2018; Liaw, 2019). This also helps them to acquire some perspectives of cultures and

develop the intercultural sensitivity (Cheng & Kent, 2020; Khodabandeh & Mombini, 2024; Marcel, 2020; Shih, 2015).

Thirdly, immersive technologies create opportunities for social affordances via meaningful social interaction, enabling learners to engage in collaborative language tasks. Social VR platforms like Second Life provide real-time interactions where students can practice public communication skills with peers, mentors, and native speakers (Castillo, 2016; Yang et al., 2020). Such environments not only improve language skills but also enhance cultural competence by allowing students to socialize across cultures (Liaw, 2019; Zheng et al., 2018). Role-playing and mission-based activities within these platforms further support communicative competence by mimicking real-world tasks (Cheng & Kent, 2020). Additionally, collaborative virtual games require learners' active engagement and teamwork, fostering both linguistic and interpersonal skills (Huang, 2023). These platforms effectively simulate real-world dynamics, preparing learners for authentic social interactions (Marcel, 2020; Zheng et al., 2018).

Fourthly, VR and AR technologies empower learners by fostering learner autonomy. Personalized tasks allow learners to progress at their own pace, adjust task difficulty, and receive targeted feedback (Peixoto et al., 2021; Taskiran, 2019; Ustun et al., 2022). Extended reality tools offer learners the flexibility to explore virtual environments that suit their preferences, further fostering self-directed learning (Reinhardt, 2021). Immersive platforms also provide learners with opportunities to access diverse content and engage in activities tailored to their needs, making language acquisition more effective and meaningful (Chen et al., 2021; Parong & Mayer, 2018). However, guidance from educators remains essential to maximize the effectiveness of such tools and ensure alignment with learning objectives.

Lastly, immersive technologies also provide affordances for teachers by enabling innovative lesson design and delivery. VR and AR tools facilitate the creation of interactive presentations, virtual field trips, and gamified language activities, making lessons more engaging and effective (Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; Alshumaimeri & Mazher, 2023; Bonner & Reinders, 2018; Yip et al., 2019; Yousif & Noman, 2023). For instance, teachers can use virtual environments to simulate real-world language use scenarios, providing learners with authentic opportunities for practice (Bonner & Reinders, 2018; Shi, 2020). However, the effective use of these tools requires proper training and mentorship. Teachers need support to develop pedagogical strategies that leverage immersive technologies while addressing potential challenges, such as high costs and technical difficulties (Alharbi, 2022; Shadiev & Yang, 2020; Takkaç Tulgar et al., 2022).

### *Challenges in Integrating Immersive Technologies in ELT*

Hypothetically, the incorporation of innovative technologies will be promised to revolutionize the way English is taught in the future challenges as it is prepared nowadays. This review focuses on barriers in the second research question, which are categorized into three aspects: technical constraints, teaching and learning factors, as well as the fairness issue. Thus, to overcome these challenges the use of these technologies in ELT classrooms must also be optimally utilized.

Firstly, the use of immersive technologies in ELT presents significant technical and organizational challenges. For example, the need for stable internet connections, high-performance computers, and VR/AR headsets can impose financial burdens on schools with limited resources, especially in rural or underfunded areas (Shadiev et al., 2021; Parong & Mayer, 2018; Akçayır & Akçayır, 2017). Additionally, the lack of infrastructure in some

institutions further hinders the adoption of these technologies (Wang et al., 2021; Kuhail et al., 2022). Software and hardware issues can disrupt the learning process, with technical failures like lagging or crashing software causing frustration for both teachers and students (Parong & Mayer, 2018; Wang et al., 2021; Shadiev et al., 2021; Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021). To mitigate these challenges, it is essential to provide technical support and problem-solving measures to ensure the functionality of these tools (Cheng & Tsai, 2020; Peixoto et al., 2021).

Another challenge lies in creating engaging, relevant, and culturally appropriate content. Poorly designed VR/AR activities may fail to engage students or meet learning objectives, leading to decreased motivation (Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; Alharbi, 2022; Chen et al., 2021). Additionally, the lack of standardized guidelines for integrating immersive technologies into existing curricula poses a barrier to widespread adoption (Chang et al., 2020; Khodabandeh & Mombini, 2024; Wu et al., 2021). Furthermore, unstructured or uncontrolled learning environments on social VR platforms, such as Second Life, can lead to negative experiences. For instance, students may encounter rude or inappropriate behavior, which can undermine their motivation and willingness to participate (Herrera Mosquera, 2017; Rauf et al., 2021). Moreover, the lack of visual and auditory cues, like facial expressions and body language, reduces communication effectiveness in virtual interactions (Castillo, 2016; Chen et al., 2021). Traditional teaching methods may also conflict with immersive technologies, requiring careful integration with existing curriculum standards (Khodabandeh & Mombini, 2024). Additionally, culturally insensitive or overly generalized content can alienate learners, highlighting the need for content that is both relevant and inclusive (Chen & Kent, 2020; Arslantaş & Tokel, 2018). Adapting teaching strategies to effectively leverage these technologies without compromising traditional practices remains a significant challenge (Belda-Medina & Marrahi-Gomez, 2023; Shadiev & Yang, 2020).

Thirdly, assessing learning outcomes in immersive environments poses unique challenges, as traditional assessment tools often fail to capture the multifaceted skills acquired through VR/AR experiences (Zheng et al., 2018; Shadiev et al., 2021). For instance, the development of cultural awareness, problem-solving abilities, and collaborative skills in immersive settings cannot be adequately measured using standard tests (Viktoria et al., 2018; Kuhail et al., 2022). Additionally, the lack of standardized assessment frameworks tailored for immersive learning environments hinders the ability to evaluate their effectiveness. Researchers have called for the creation of new assessment models that account for the complex and dynamic nature of language learning in virtual settings (Peixoto et al., 2021; Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021). These models should address not only linguistic skills but also intercultural competence and social interaction abilities, which are integral to immersive learning (York et al., 2021; Cheng & Tsai, 2020).

Finally, the collection and use of learner data in immersive environments raise significant ethical and privacy concerns. Many VR/AR applications collect extensive user data, which, if misused, can compromise students' privacy and security (Rauf et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2018). Schools and educators must ensure that data protection measures are in place and comply with legal and ethical standards to maintain trust among learners and their families (Wu et al., 2021; Alharbi, 2022). The ethical implications extend to the potential misuse of immersive tools for purposes unrelated to education. For instance, commercial interests or third-party involvement in data management could exploit learners' personal information, underscoring the need for strict regulation and oversight (Shadiev et al., 2021; Castillo, 2016).



## Discussion

This literature review has explored the role of immersive technologies including VR, AR, and MR in creating rich affordance environments for ELT. The findings suggest that these technologies have significant potential to enhance language learning by providing authentic, interactive, and engaging experiences that align with the principles of sociocultural theory and affordance-based learning (van Lier, 2004; Aagaard, 2018). However, while the benefits of immersive technologies are well-documented, a more critical analysis reveals both the strengths and limitations of their application in ELT, as well as important implications for practitioners and researchers.

The findings highlight several key strengths of immersive technologies in ELT. First, they provide material affordances such as high-quality visuals, immersive audio, and realistic simulations that create a sense of presence and engagement, allowing learners to practice language skills in safe, controlled environments (Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; Alharbi, 2022). Second, immersive technologies offer affective affordances that enhance motivation and reduce anxiety. Gamified and interactive applications, such as AR vocabulary games or VR role-playing scenarios, cater to diverse learning preferences and draw even introverted learners into active participation (Yip et al., 2019; Belda-Medina & Marrahi-Gomez, 2023). These technologies also promote cultural awareness by allowing learners to interact with virtual avatars or explore culturally rich environments, thereby fostering intercultural competence (Liaw, 2019; Shih, 2015). Third, immersive technologies support social affordances by enabling collaborative learning and real-time interaction with peers, mentors, and native speakers. While previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of gamification in language learning (Yip et al., 2019), this review extends the discussion by highlighting how immersive technology enhances engagement not just through rewards-based motivation but also by fostering a sense of presence and embodiment.

Unlike traditional CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) platforms that focus primarily on structured content delivery, immersive VR-based approaches provide authentic and interactive environments where learners feel physically present (Reinhardt, 2021; Kuhail et al., 2022). These findings align with Cheng & Tsai (2020), who suggest that contextualized learning in VR environments enhances cognitive load in a positive way, leading to higher retention rates and deeper comprehension. Moreover, while Liaw (2019) highlighted VR's potential to enhance intercultural communication, this review expands on this argument by demonstrating that VR not only facilitates exposure to diverse linguistic input but also actively reduces anxiety in language learners through social immersion in low-risk environments. This aligns with findings from Selfa-Sastre et al. (2022) but contrasts with studies that argue VR lacks sufficient linguistic scaffolding for structured grammar instruction (Shadiev et al., 2021). In addition, from the findings about the benefits of immersive technology, it can be concluded that the social interactions offered by these platforms align with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, emphasizing the importance of social engagement in language learning. Such technologies enable the learners to converse with other learners or even the native speakers of the area. Learners are also, therefore, enabled to learn various customs, traditions, and even norms. Consequently, immersive technologies create a dynamic interplay between affordances and sociocultural factors, resulting in a rich and engaging environment for language learning. By letting learners interact with others, work together, and experience different cultures virtually, these technologies empower them to take ownership of their learning journey and develop the communication skills necessary for success in the globalized world.

Despite the apparent advantages of immersive technologies, some contradictions emerge in the literature. While many studies emphasize learner autonomy in VR-based environments (Peixoto et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2021), others caution that immersive technology may lead to increased dependence on structured teacher guidance, particularly for learners with lower self-regulation skills (Alharbi, 2022; Kuhail et al., 2022). This suggests that while VR and AR enhance engagement, their effectiveness may vary depending on learner proficiency levels and individual learning strategies. Additionally, while immersive platforms are widely recognized for improving oral proficiency through role-playing and interaction (Chen et al., 2021), some studies highlight the limitations of conversational AI in VR simulations, where responses may not be as dynamic or grammatically correct as human interaction (Liaw, 2019; Shih, 2015). This suggests that immersive technology may be more effective as a supplementary tool rather than a standalone replacement for communicative instruction. Another key challenge is the issue of privacy and safety in open social VR platforms. While some research argues that virtual environments foster authentic communication (Castillo, 2016; Yang et al., 2020), other studies raise concerns about exposure to inappropriate content and unmoderated interactions in social VR spaces (Rauf et al., 2021). This contradiction highlights the need for institutional policies and pedagogical safeguards when incorporating open VR tools into ELT.

The findings of this review have several important implications for ELT practitioners and researchers. For practitioners, immersive technologies offer exciting opportunities to create dynamic, learner-centered environments that enhance engagement, motivation, and cultural awareness. However, successful implementation requires careful planning, including professional development for teachers to build their technical and pedagogical skills in using immersive technologies (Shadiev & Yang, 2020). In addition, it is necessary for institutions to provide equitable access to ensure that all learners, regardless of socioeconomic background, can benefit from these tools (Aylett, 1999). Administrators should also consider thoughtful integration of immersive technologies into existing curricula, with a focus on aligning these tools with learning objectives and assessment frameworks (Khodabandeh & Mombini, 2024).

For researchers, this review highlights the need for further investigation into several areas including the long-term impact of immersive technologies on language acquisition, particularly in terms of fluency, accuracy, and intercultural competence. It is also necessary to investigate the combined use of VR, AR, and MR to explore how these technologies can complement each other in creating richer learning experiences. Last but not least, the development of standardized assessment tools to measure the effectiveness of immersive learning environments should be further investigated, particularly in terms of skills that are difficult to assess through traditional methods, such as cultural awareness and collaborative problem-solving (Zheng et al., 2018; Peixoto et al., 2021).

In summary, while immersive technologies hold immense promise for transforming ELT, their successful integration requires a balanced approach that considers both their potential and their limitations. By addressing the challenges of cost, accessibility, and ethical concerns, and by providing clear guidelines for implementation, educators and researchers can unlock the full potential of these technologies to create engaging, effective, and equitable language learning experiences. Future research should focus on bridging the gaps identified in this review, ensuring that immersive technologies are not only innovative but also practical and sustainable in diverse educational contexts.

## Conclusion

This comprehensive literature review underscores the transformative potential of immersive technologies—Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Mixed Reality (MR)—in reshaping the landscape of English Language Teaching (ELT). The findings reveal that these technologies create rich affordance environments that significantly enhance learner engagement, interactive learning processes, and personalized language acquisition. By offering authentic, context-rich, and immersive experiences, VR, AR, and MR enable learners to practice language skills in realistic scenarios, fostering both linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence. The integration of these technologies aligns with sociocultural theory, emphasizing the importance of social interaction, collaboration, and cultural immersion in language learning.

The review highlights that immersive technologies provide material affordances through high-quality simulations and interactive tools, allowing learners to practice language skills in safe, controlled environments. Additionally, affective affordances are evident in the way these technologies reduce learner anxiety and increase motivation through gamified and interactive experiences. Learners, including those who are introverted or socially anxious, are drawn into active participation, enhancing their confidence and willingness to communicate. Furthermore, social affordances allow learners to interact with peers, mentors, and native speakers, fostering collaborative learning and intercultural communication. However, the integration of immersive technologies in ELT is not without its challenges. Technical constraints, such as the high cost of equipment, the need for stable internet connections, and the complexity of software, pose significant barriers to widespread adoption. Additionally, the lack of standardized guidelines for integrating these technologies into existing curricula and the absence of equitable access for learners from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds remain critical issues. Ethical concerns, particularly regarding data privacy and security, also need to be addressed to ensure the responsible use of immersive technologies in educational settings.

The pedagogical implications of immersive technologies are profound. They offer teachers innovative tools to design dynamic, learner-centered environments that enhance engagement, motivation, and cultural awareness. However, successful implementation requires professional development for teachers to build their technical and pedagogical skills. Institutions must also ensure equitable access to these technologies and thoughtfully integrate them into curricula, aligning them with learning objectives and assessment frameworks.

Future research should prioritize addressing the identified gaps and challenges. This includes investigating the long-term impact of immersive technologies on language acquisition, particularly in terms of fluency, accuracy, and intercultural competence. Researchers should also explore the combined use of VR, AR, and MR to understand how these technologies can complement each other in creating richer learning experiences. Additionally, the development of standardized assessment tools tailored for immersive learning environments is crucial to measure the effectiveness of these technologies in fostering skills such as cultural awareness, problem-solving, and collaboration.

In summary, while immersive technologies hold immense promise for enriching ELT by creating immersive and interactive learning environments, addressing the challenges of cost, accessibility, and ethical concerns is essential for their successful and equitable integration. By focusing on these areas, future research can unlock the full potential of immersive technologies to revolutionize language education, providing learners with unparalleled opportunities for language acquisition and cultural understanding.

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## An investigation into the Interrelationship between Foreign Language Enjoyment, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, and HUFLIT Students' Performance

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** Foreign language enjoyment, foreign language classroom anxiety, performance

Language learners experience both enjoyment and anxiety in foreign language classrooms, and these emotions can significantly impact learning outcomes, especially in contexts where international English certificates are required for graduation. This study was conducted to explore students' levels of Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) when learning English. The study involved 98 students from HUFLIT. A questionnaire in the form of a 5-point Likert scale, including 57 items, was administered to the students. The results revealed that a high level of FLE and an average level of FLCA were experienced during learning. In addition, among the factors of FLE, namely FLE personal, FLE social, FLE teacher appreciation, FLE teacher appreciation was proved to have the strongest impact on learners' FLE. Finally, students' personal actions in struggling with anxiety were shown to be the element that caused the highest level of anxiety. Based on the results, several pedagogical implications were drawn to help maximize students' enjoyment and minimize their anxiety in learning English.

### Introduction

In today's interconnected world, English language proficiency has become an integral component of academic advancement and professional integration. For university students, particularly in non-English-speaking countries, obtaining an international certificate of English is crucial for graduation and for effectively communicating in English in their professional lives within the globalized workforce. In the process of mastering a foreign language, emotions have been proven to be either triggers or inhibitors of meaningful learning and academic achievement (Seli et al., 2016). Among the various emotional experiences reported in the language classroom environment, two affective factors—foreign language enjoyment (FLE) as triggers and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) as inhibitors—have been proven to occur most frequently (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

FLE and FLCA are recognized as affective factors experienced by language learners in the context of the classroom environment (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, 1993). FLE refers to positive feelings, such as joy, enthusiasm, and interest, aroused in learners when they achieve an accomplishment in English. In contrast, FLCA is composed of negative feelings caused by fear of communication, negative evaluation, and test anxiety, which are specific to the context of classroom language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). Research has shown a positive correlation between FLE and learning effectiveness, and a negative correlation between FLCA and learning performance, which suggests the role of FLE as a motivator and FLCA as an inhibitor in the language learning process. This highlights the critical importance of these emotional states in helping learners achieve success in foreign language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Li et al., 2018).

Additionally, various researchers have suggested that FLE and FLCA do not operate in isolation. Instead, they co-exist and correlate with each other in a complex and dynamic way (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Li et al., 2018; Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2021). A learner may experience some level of FLE and FLCA at the same time in their language learning process. On the other hand, other researchers argue that FLE and FLCA may be mutually exclusive, meaning that when FLE increases, FLCA will decrease, and vice versa.

In the Vietnamese higher education context, the process of language learning is an emotionally intense learning environment because English is not only a subject of study, but also a foundational skill embedded across multiple academic disciplines (Nguyen, 2022; Tran, 2022). Moreover, in this high-stakes environment, FLE and FLCA are likely to play a central role in shaping students' academic engagement and achievement. Although a few studies on the affective variables of FLE and FLCA have been conducted in Vietnam, such as Le & Nguyen's (2020) research on the coexistence of FLE and FLCA, their influence on learners' performance remains limited. Additionally, it is essential to understand how these emotional states vary across student subgroups, such as gender and academic performance, which informs the development of more inclusive and effective teaching strategies.

## Literature review

### *Foreign language enjoyment*

Over the past few years, increasing attention has been paid to the role of emotions in second language acquisition, particularly with respect to the positive relationship between emotional experiences and learners' engagement and learning outcomes. Among the various emotions which learners experience in their language classrooms, foreign language enjoyment (FLE) is considered one of the most significant factors influencing learners' motivation, participation, and achievement.

Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) were pioneers in studying FLE in the context of the language classroom. They defined FLE as “a complex emotion that is social in nature and arises when a learner feels competent and supported in their learning environment” (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, p. 242). In this case, FLE is understood as a positive emotion experienced by individual language learners while learning a foreign language. The complex nature is reflected in the diversity of positive feelings, which can include joy, pride, interest, and satisfaction, particularly when learners overcome linguistic challenges or experience meaningful communication, thereby achieving success in language learning. In addition, Li et al. (2018) emphasized the social nature of FLE by stating that “FLE is not only an internal emotional



experience but also shaped by the external classroom factors such as peer interaction and teacher behavior” (p. 25). Therefore, learners with FLE are characterized by their joy of learning, their active participation in learning activities, their willingness to make mistakes, as mistakes are part of the learning process, and their pride in their accomplishments.

Based on empirical studies, particularly on the work of Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016), FLE is conceptualized as consisting of three main components: FLE-Personal, FLE-Social, and FLE-Teacher. Firstly, FLE-Personal refers to learners’ internal feelings of enjoyment derived from language challenge and accomplishment. This component of FLE is characterized by the joy of learning a foreign language such as mastering a new grammar point, vocabulary or pronunciation, their sense of personal growth and satisfaction with their own personal accomplishment when feeling that they have learnt interesting things in the English classes, and the experience of flow and intrinsic motivation, which enhances the learning process and motivates them to achieve success in language learning. Secondly, FLE-Social is considered the enjoyment of learning English within a social classroom setting, with the presence of other people. The social aspect of FLE is reflected in elements such as a friendly, collaborative classroom setting, positive peer relationships, and group cohesion, as well as opportunities for communication and mutual support. Last but not least, FLE-Teacher involves teacher-centred variables such as the teacher’s friendliness and humor, which contribute to learners’ FLE (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2018). This component involves, firstly, positive interaction with instructors, encouragement, humour, and enthusiasm from instructors, and feeling safe, respected, and appreciated in the classroom. In addition, Ozdemir et al. (2019) found that strong predictors of FLE were chiefly teacher-related variables, including teacher friendliness, the teacher’s frequency of using their mother tongue, teacher strictness, and attitudes towards the teacher.

Considering the importance of FLE in language learning, FLE is seen as a trigger in the process of language acquisition because it contributes to sustained levels of motivation, active participation of learners in learning activities, willingness to communicate, and improved performance in language (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Li et al., 2018). FLE contributes significantly to learners’ sustained levels of motivation because enjoyment enhances intrinsic motivation, leading learners to engage more actively in language practice for personal satisfaction. Thus, by engaging in meaningful interactions and experiencing a sense of accomplishment, learners are more likely to persist in learning, participate more actively, and embrace challenges (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Li et al., 2018). Secondly, willingness to communicate refers to the likelihood of learners choosing to communicate in the target language when given the opportunity (MacIntyre & Ayers-Glassey, 2021). Researchers have found that FLE is positively correlated with the willingness to communicate, concluding that this willingness can be fostered by a positive learning environment where FLE can flourish (Dewaele, 2019). Additionally, empirical research has found a positive correlation between FLE and language learning success. For instance, Li et al. (2018) concluded that learners with higher levels of enjoyment tend to score better in listening, speaking, and overall language performance. Similarly, Botes et al. (2022) also found a moderate positive correlation between FLE and academic achievement, stating that learners who experienced a higher level of enjoyment in foreign language classes were more likely to achieve higher academic outcomes.

In the current study, FLE is understood as a positive emotional state that learners experience while learning a foreign language. FLE encompasses three core components: personal enjoyment, social enjoyment, and teacher appreciation. Additionally, FLE plays a central role in helping learners to achieve success in foreign language learning due to its capacity to enhance learners’ motivation, willingness to communicate, and academic achievement.

### *Foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA)*

In contrast to FLE, which represents the positive emotional states experienced by learners in the language classroom, FLCA shows the opposite emotional side, which has been proven to negatively affect language acquisition.

Horwitz et al. (1986) were among the first researchers to conceptualize and measure foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA), which is a form of anxiety experienced in language learning settings using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). They defined FLCA as a “distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). FLCA can be seen as a unique form of anxiety stemming primarily from the demands of public speaking, constant evaluation, and the fear of making mistakes in front of others in the classroom context (Horwitz, 2001).

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), Aida (1994), and Cheng et al. (1999), FLCA is composed of four interrelated components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and general classroom anxiety. Communication apprehension can be understood as a type of shyness when communicating with other people, particularly in a foreign language. This shyness is characterized by fear of speaking in front of peers or feeling uncomfortable in speaking activities. Secondly, test anxiety refers to the fear of failing or performing poorly in language tests. This type of anxiety is reflected in excessive worry about poor grades, making mistakes, or being evaluated in the language classroom. Thirdly, the fear of negative evaluation involves a fear of being judged by others, especially lecturers and peers, in the classroom context. Students with a high level of fear of negative evaluation may avoid participating in class due to a fear of making mistakes or appearing foolish in front of others. Finally, general classroom anxiety refers more broadly to learners' tension or nervousness associated with learning in the language classroom context.

Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated a negative correlation between FLCA and academic achievement (Horwitz, 2001). FLCA is considered a barrier to successful language acquisition because it hinders the language learning process across cognitive, behavioral, and social interaction in the classroom (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Eysenck et al., 2007). Considering the cognitive domain, FLCA negatively affects learners' cognitive resources, impairing their ability to process and retain new language input, which leads to working memory overload (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Moreover, Saito & Samimy (1996) reported that FLCA can also cause difficulty in understanding spoken or written input due to heightened tension. Similarly, Sparks & Ganschow (2007) concluded that FLCA is associated with lower scores in vocabulary recall, grammar accuracy, and listening comprehension, resulting in lower performance on language tests. Regarding the behavioral domain, FLCA discourages learners from participating in communication tasks, leading to avoidance behaviors which cause learners to avoid speaking in class, volunteering, or interacting with peers (Horwitz et al., 1986). In addition, Gregersen & Horwitz (2002) further stated that FLCA led to more pauses, hesitations, and self-corrections in speech, which resulted in reduced fluency during speaking activities. Academic achievement was also affected by certain levels of FLCA. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) found that students with high anxiety performed worse on standardized language proficiency tests. Similarly, Liu & Jackson (2008) reported that students with a high level of FLCA scored lower in oral exams and final grades. Moreover, learners with lower FLCA and higher FLE tended to have higher self-rated proficiency and classroom engagement (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Moreover, FLCA affects the learner's social relationships within the classroom since anxious students may withdraw from group work or pair activities.

More seriously, a high-anxiety environment can spread tension and reduce group cohesion and participation. Students with FLCA may interpret teacher feedback more negatively, increasing their sense of inadequacy (Horwitz, 2001). Moreover, one of the challenges that greatly increases students' anxiety is their perception of their own language ability (Tran, T. T. L., 2022). Learners may lack confidence in their language proficiency or feel anxious about making mistakes, which in turn can diminish their motivation to improve their own language proficiency.

Overall, in the current study, FLCA is seen as a multi-dimensional emotional barrier to effective language learning. FLCA encompasses factors of communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and general classroom anxiety. FLCA negatively affects foreign language learners' academic achievement because it impairs learners' cognitive function, reduces their willingness to communicate, impacts academic outcomes, and diminishes their enjoyment and motivation.

### *The relationship between FLE and FLCA*

Empirical studies over the past few decades have revealed both the coexistence and mutual exclusion of FLE and FLCA, illustrating the relationship between them.

Concerning the coexistence of FLE and FLCA, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014, 2016), in a study of 1746 foreign language learners measuring FLE and FLCA levels, emphasized that learners often experience both emotions simultaneously, and they are negatively correlated. They revealed that learners experience both emotions simultaneously. While anxiety in learners arises from challenging learning situations, enjoyment stems from the sense of accomplishment that follows the completion of these challenges. In the same line of research, Elahi Shirvan & Taherian (2021) confirmed this coexistence through their longitudinal study, demonstrating that both emotions are present over time. This conclusion suggests that learning a foreign language in a classroom environment elicits both emotions in learners, and each can influence the other (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Li, Jiang, & Dewaele, 2018; Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2021).

However, other researchers suggest a mutually exclusive relationship between FLE and FLCA, where the increase in FLE leads to a decrease in FLCA. Dewaele & MacIntyre (2016) concluded that greater FLE in the foreign language classes has been associated with lower FLCA in the sense that learners who enjoy language learning are less likely to experience high levels of anxiety. In the same line of research, Elahi Shirvan and Taherian (2021) confirmed this negative correlation, stating that increased levels of enjoyment may reduce anxiety and that FLE contributes to learner resilience by promoting positive experiences that counteract the effects of anxiety. This result can be explained by the fact that while anxiety represents barriers to language learning, enjoyment can promote resilience in learners and help them learn more effectively, thus when FLE increases, FLCA decreases.

Moreover, Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014) and Elahi Shirvan & Taherian (2021) suggested another complex dimension in the relationship between FLE and FLCA, stating that FLE can counterbalance FLCA by neutralizing its harmful effects, and thus support learning success. Botes et al. (2022) reinforced the mitigating effect of FLE on FLCA, stating that higher levels of FLE lead to improved academic outcomes, even in the presence of anxiety.

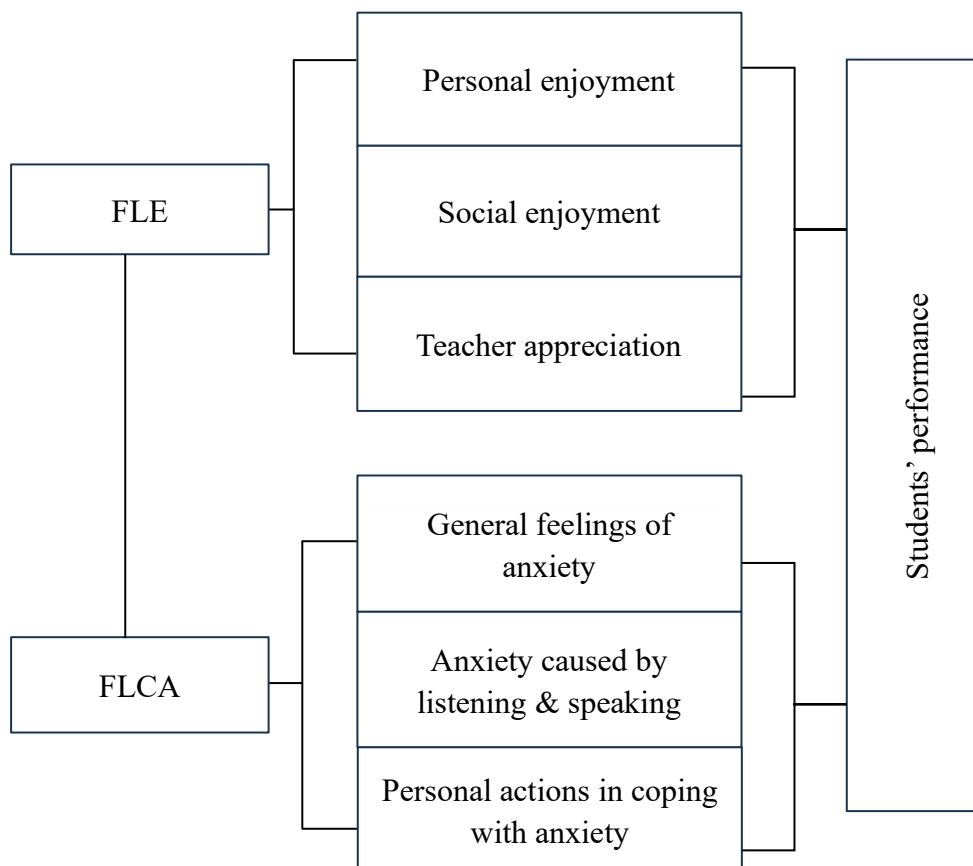
Overall, despite the conflicting effects of FLE and FLCA on learners and learning success, both emotions exist simultaneously and have a complex and dynamic relationship. This fact highlights the importance of examining the precise impact of FLE and FLCA, particularly on learners' performance, as reflected in measurable language outcomes such as scores, which can

provide more valuable information to help instructors adjust their teaching methodologies and support language learning effectively.

### *Theoretical framework*

*Figure 1.*

Theoretical framework of FLE and FLCA (adapted from Horwitz et al., 1986; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Chametzky, 2019)



The current study employed a theoretical framework adapted from Horwitz et al. (1986), Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014), and Chametzky (2019) to conceptualize the emotional experience of FLE and FLCA of the participants. The reason for adopting these frameworks is that, in the context of the current study, students were enrolling in various English-related courses that integrated online learning on Moodle for self-study. This integration transformed the context into blended learning environments, where students participate in both traditional classroom environments and digital learning environments, each with its own unique set of characteristics and challenges. Thus, the current framework integrates both foundational and contemporary perspectives on these emotional traits, while also allowing for the coexistence and interaction of both FLE and FLCA. In addition, this framework provides a basis for understanding how these emotions relate to learners' performance.

In this framework, students' levels of FLE are reflected through three factors of personal enjoyment, social enjoyment, and teacher appreciation. These factors reflect learners' satisfaction with language learning activities; the enjoyment derived from interacting with peers and the positive influence of supportive teachers. This model captures the multifaceted nature of FLE while emphasizing the importance of both internal and interpersonal experiences in fostering positive emotional engagement.

Conversely, the framework of FLCA, adapted from Chametzky's (2019) Online World Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, consists of three categories of overall feelings of anxiety, including comfort, embarrassment, fear, and overwhelming anxiety caused by listening and speaking activities, and students' personal actions in struggling with anxiety. Comfort is characterized by learners' enjoyment, relaxation, and confidence in their learning abilities and in taking tests. Embarrassment, fear, and overwhelming feelings refer to their anxiety about making mistakes, either orally or in writing, and the feeling of anxiety when learning with a foreign teacher or when native speakers are around them. Secondly, anxiety caused by listening and speaking activities refers to the anxiety when doing listening activities, especially with a native speaker's voice, and anxiety caused when speaking in front of other students, caused by linguistic interference from one language to another. Finally, when a certain level of FLCA arises in learners, they automatically seek strategies to handle it. The strategies include asking for help from peers and the teacher, using positive thinking to overcome one's own anxiety.

Additionally, the interplay between FLE, FLCA, and students' performance is also examined in this study. Despite the increasing interest in research on both FLE and FLCA, a lack of research remains that offers insights into how the interplay between FLE and FLCA affects specific learner behaviors, such as test performance. By distinguishing between specific emotional dimensions and behavioural responses, this framework enables an analysis of how learners' emotional experiences manifest in their test-related performances and in-class participation. Moreover, the inclusion of both FLE and FLCA aligns with contemporary approaches in second language acquisition that advocate for a balanced view of learner affect (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016).

Considering the critical importance of the emotional states of FLE and FLCA in helping learners achieve success in learning English, and the gap in recent study trends, the current study was conducted for the purpose of answering the two research questions below:

1. To what extent are FLE and FLCA experienced by students when they learn English?
2. What is the relationship between FLE, FLCA, and the students' performance?

## Methods

### *Pedagogical setting & Participants*

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh City University of Foreign Languages and Information Technology (HUFLIT), a private university that offers both English-major and non-English major programs. A convenience sampling method was employed to recruit 98 undergraduate students from six classes. At the time of the study, these students were participating in various English courses during their first and second years. The participants included two main groups: non-English majors and English majors. The non-English major students were in their second year, taking the course General English 3, which focuses on developing integrated skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, aligned with CEFR B1 proficiency. These students had already completed General English 1 and 2 during their first year. The English-majored students were in their first year of the English Language Studies program. They were enrolled in skill-based courses, including Listening-Speaking Skills and Reading Comprehension 1, which are part of the foundational language training curriculum. The proficiency level of these students varied between A2 and B1, reflecting their diverse English backgrounds prior to university. Across both groups, instruction was delivered in English, in accordance with the university's policy that mandates a foreign language medium

of instruction level 2, meaning that at least 50% of classroom interactions, explanations, and materials must be conducted in English.

In the instructional context of this study, students' academic performance is evaluated through a comprehensive assessment system that combines both in-class participation and self-study. Students are expected to self-study by completing assignments on the SPARK online learning platform from National Geographic Learning and on Moodle, which will contribute to their progress scores. Self-study accounts for 20% of their progress scores. The overall progress score includes three components: their full attendance in class time (10%), their participation in class activities (10%), their self-study scores, which are their scores for SPARK and Moodle assignments (20%), and their three progress tests throughout the course (60%). For the purpose of this study, the students' progress scores, which account for 50% of the final scores, are collected by the teacher, then divided into categories including Excellent ( $\geq 8.5$ ), Good (from 7.0-8.4), Fair (from 5.5-6.9), and Poor ( $< 5.4$ ). These categories allow for quantitative comparison across participants with varying levels of FLE and FLCA. By incorporating the progress scores, the study was able to investigate how affective factors of FLE and FLCA correlate with measurable indicators of language proficiency and academic engagement.

### *Design of the Study*

This research adopted a quantitative design, utilizing questionnaires to measure students' levels of enjoyment and anxiety in learning English. The questionnaire consisted of 46 items, divided into three sections. The first section is designed to collect students' demographic information, including gender, academic major, and year at university. The second and third parts focus on evaluating different features of the students' FLE and FLCA. The FLE items in the questionnaire ( $n = 14$ ) were adapted from the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale developed by Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014) and further validated by et al. (2018). The items of FLCA ( $n = 29$ ) were adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) and additional items adapted from Chametzky's (2019) Online World Languages Anxiety Scale, to reflect anxiety experiences in both traditional and technology-mediated learning environments. Reliability scale analysis using Cronbach's alpha was conducted to ensure the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The overall reliability coefficient of the full scale was  $\alpha = .961$ , which demonstrates the high reliability of the questionnaire. Specifically, the FLE subscale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .924, while the FLCA subscale had an alpha of .953, both of which exceed the generally accepted threshold of .70 for high reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

### *Data collections & analysis*

Data collection was conducted over a two-week period during the second semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. The students were informed about the study's purpose, the nature of the study, and its voluntary nature. The questionnaire was hosted and administered via the Moodle system of HUFLIT. To collect data, a questionnaire was developed on the LMS Moodle system of HUFLIT. Participants access the questionnaire through their individual Moodle accounts, which were created by the University. The questionnaire remained available for 14 days, during which the students were reminded in class and via Moodle announcements to complete the survey. Once the data collection period ended, responses were exported from Moodle into Microsoft Excel and then imported into SPSS version 26 for statistical analysis. Statistical tests, including descriptive, t-tests, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation, were employed to address the study's research questions. Descriptive statistics of mean, SD, and frequencies were used to summarize students' levels of FLE and FLCA. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine whether significant differences in FLE and FLCA existed based on gender. One-way



ANOVA was used to explore differences in FLE and FLCA across academic majors and academic performance groups. In addition, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between FLE, FLCA, and students' progress scores.

## Results and discussion

### *Foreign language enjoyment*

*Table 1.*

Foreign language enjoyment (n = 98)

Statements	Mean	SD
<b>FLE – Personal enjoyment</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>0.80</b>
Be creative	3.87	0.938
Don't get bored	3.79	1.221
Enjoy learning	4.20	0.973
Be like a different person	3.46	1.317
Express myself better	3.79	1.058
Be a worthy member	3.59	1.191
Learnt interesting things	4.38	0.947
Feel proud of my accomplishments	3.61	1.207
Laugh at mistakes	3.72	1.182
It's interesting to learn English	4.27	0.948
Mistakes are part of learning	4.20	1.055
<b>FLE – Social enjoyment</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>0.87</b>
Nice peers	4.04	1.093
Tight group	3.92	1.090
Common "legends", such as running jokes	3.89	1.234
Laugh a lot	4.27	1.061
Positive learning environment	4.40	0.928
<b>FLE – Teacher appreciation</b>	<b>4.46</b>	<b>0.91</b>
Encouraging teacher	4.46	0.932
Friendly teacher	4.47	0.965
Supportive teacher	4.48	0.955
<b>Foreign language enjoyment</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>0.79</b>

As shown in Table 1, the participants' FLE is at a high level, with a mean score of 4.16. Specifically, the highest mean score belongs to teacher appreciation ( $M = 4.46$ , indicating a very high level), followed by social enjoyment ( $M = 4.13$ , indicating a high level), and personal enjoyment ( $M = 3.89$ , indicating a high level).

Firstly, concerning students' personal enjoyment, the highest mean score belongs to the idea of being able to learn interesting things in English classes ( $M = 4.38$ , very high level). The participants also find it interesting to learn English at a very high level ( $M = 4.27$ , very high level). Specifically, 91.8% of the students agreed and strongly agreed that they learnt interesting things in English classes. Accordingly, 84.7% of them also agreed and strongly agreed that it's interesting to join English classes as compared to other subjects. In addition, most of the participants agree that mistakes are part of the learning process ( $M = 4.20$ , high level) and stated that they enjoyed learning the English subject ( $M = 4.20$ , high level). Other items including

being able to be creative ( $M = 3.87$ ), not feeling bored ( $M = 3.79$ ), being like a different person ( $M = 3.46$ ), express oneself better ( $3.79$ ), being a worthy member ( $3.59$ ), feeling proud of one's achievement ( $M = 3.61$ ), feel fun to learn via different platforms, in this case is the blended learning system of Moodle ( $M = 4.14$ ), and laughing at one's own mistakes in English classes ( $M = 3.72$ ) all got a high level of agreement from the participants.

For social enjoyment, a positive learning environment, and laughing a lot in English classes, the participants reported the highest agreement level with mean scores of 4.40 and 4.27 (very high levels). Specifically, 86.8% of the students agreed and strongly agreed with the idea that the learning environment in the English classes they joined is positive, which makes they feel more comfortable learning English. Furthermore, 83.7% of them also reported that they laughed a lot in their English classes. In addition, all the other items, including having nice peers in class ( $M = 4.04$ , high level), forming a tight group as a class ( $M = 3.92$ , high level), and having common legends in English classes ( $M = 3.89$ , high level) also received a high level of agreement from the participants.

In addition, the highest mean score across the three categories in students' enjoyment belongs to teacher appreciation ( $M = 4.46$ , indicating a very high level). The results indicate that the majority of students expected their English teacher to be encouraging ( $M = 4.46$ , very high level), friendly ( $M = 4.47$ , very high level), and supportive ( $M = 4.48$ , very high level) in order to increase their enjoyment of learning English in class.

In summary, teacher appreciation is considered the most important factor in enhancing students' enjoyment of learning English. Social factors such as peers and classroom atmosphere ranked second, while personal enjoyment ranked lowest. This result reveals that teachers' qualities of being friendly, supportive, and encouraging significantly contribute to students' enjoyment of learning English. Additionally, the classroom atmosphere and peers play a crucial role in making English learning enjoyable for students. Moreover, although the other factors easily influence personal enjoyment in FLE, it makes a significant contribution to keeping learning enjoyable for students.

### *Foreign language classroom anxiety*

*Table 2.*

Students' foreign language classroom anxiety ( $n = 98$ )

Statements	Mean	SD
<b>Overall feeling of anxiety</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>0.87</b>
<b><i>Comfort</i></b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>0.930</b>
Enjoy taking more English classes	3.76	1.149
Be relaxed during oral tests	3.22	1.231
Be relaxed during written tests	3.10	1.264
Feel confident in speaking abilities	3.13	1.273
Feel confident in writing abilities	2.97	1.272
<b><i>Embarrassment</i></b>	<b>3.39</b>	<b>1.20</b>
Be anxious about making oral mistakes	3.40	1.345
Be anxious about making written mistakes	3.56	1.324

Feel anxious if I am around native speakers	3.23	1.413
<b><i>Concern/ Fear/ Overwhelming</i></b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>1.208</b>
Concern about the consequences of failing	3.66	1.323
Forget things I studied because I get nervous	2.96	1.457
Be anxious about falling behind	2.84	1.412
Feel more tense and nervous in English classes than in other classes	2.84	1.390
Feel overwhelmed by grammar rules	2.82	1.424
Become more confused when studying for a test due to anxiety	2.99	1.388
<b>Anxiety caused by listening and speaking activities</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.94</b>
<b><i>Linguistic interference</i></b>	<b>2.91</b>	<b>1.199</b>
Studied one or more foreign languages	2.81	1.390
Words from other foreign languages “pop up” when trying to use English	2.97	1.388
Be anxious when words from other foreign languages “pop up”	2.96	1.315
<b><i>Listening</i></b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>1.324</b>
Get anxious when having to do listening exercises	2.80	1.324
<b><i>Oral production</i></b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>1.001</b>
Be anxious when needing to speak in front of other students	3.07	1.357
Have sufficient time and opportunities to prepare before I give an oral response	3.56	1.167
<b><i>The need to practice</i></b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>1.298</b>
Write down my answers	3.55	1.393
Practice saying my answers several times	3.66	1.347
<b>Personal actions in struggling with anxiety</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>0.825</b>
<b><i>Asking for help</i></b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>0.980</b>
Ask for help from the instructor publicly	3.61	1.172
Ask for help from the instructor privately	3.56	1.210
Ask for help from other students	3.86	1.121
<b><i>Positive thinking</i></b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>1.237</b>
Positive thinking helps to reduce my anxiety and stress	3.50	1.237
<b><i>Putting oneself down</i></b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>1.219</b>
Other students are doing better than I am	3.45	1.219
<b>Foreign language classroom anxiety</b>	<b>3.26</b>	<b>.853</b>

Table 2 describes students' level of foreign language anxiety in English classes. As can be seen from this table, the participant reported an average level of anxiety with  $M = 3.26$ . Specifically, their feelings of comfort, embarrassment, and fear in the English classes were at an average level ( $M = 3.25$ ), a little higher than their anxiety related to listening and speaking skills ( $M = 3.15$ , average level), but lower than their personal actions in struggling with their anxiety, which were at a high level ( $M = 3.62$ , high level).

### *Overall feelings of anxiety*

The participants' overall feelings of anxiety in the English classes were at an average level, with  $M = 3.25$ . Specifically, their comfort in English classes had a mean score of 3.38 (average level), their embarrassment had a slightly higher mean score of 3.39 (average level), and their concern, fear, and overwhelming feelings about English and the English classes had a lower mean score of 2.97 (average level).

Firstly, the participants reported enjoying taking more English classes ( $M = 3.76$ , at a high level). For test anxiety, less than 34% of the participants reported feeling anxious in oral and written tests. In contrast, approximately 38 to 40% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable, while about 26.5 to 27% of participants were undecided. Moreover, the students' confidence in speaking and writing abilities also received varied responses from the participants ( $M = 3.13$  and 2.97, respectively).

Secondly, the participants' level of embarrassment in learning English was also at an average level, with a mean score of 3.39. The only item within this category with a high level was the feeling of anxiety about making written mistakes ( $M = 3.56$ ). The feeling of anxiety when around native speakers and the feeling of anxiety about making oral mistakes were both at an average level ( $M = 3.23$  and 3.40, respectively). Moreover, the participants' embarrassment was slightly higher than comfort, suggesting that they occasionally felt self-conscious and embarrassed in the English classes.

Moreover, the students' feelings of concern, fear, and overwhelming in the English classes were also at an average level ( $M = 2.97$ ). The only item that received the highest level of agreement was concern about the consequences of failing the subject ( $M = 3.66$ , indicating a high level). The other items, including feeling more tense and nervous in English classes compared to other classes, feeling overwhelmed by grammar rules, feeling more confused when revising for tests due to test anxiety, received varied responses from the participants and are at an average level. The level of concern, fear, and overwhelm was lower than that of the other emotions, indicating that these feelings were less prevalent but still present at a moderate level.

In short, the participants' overall feelings of anxiety in the English classes suggest that they had a moderate emotional response, neither strongly positive nor strongly negative. Data analysis suggests that the participants experienced a range of emotions in English classes, with no single emotion dominating significantly. Comfort and embarrassment were slightly more prominent than fear, concern, and overwhelm.

### *Anxiety caused by listening and speaking activities*

*Figure 2.*

Students' anxiety caused by productive listening and speaking activities

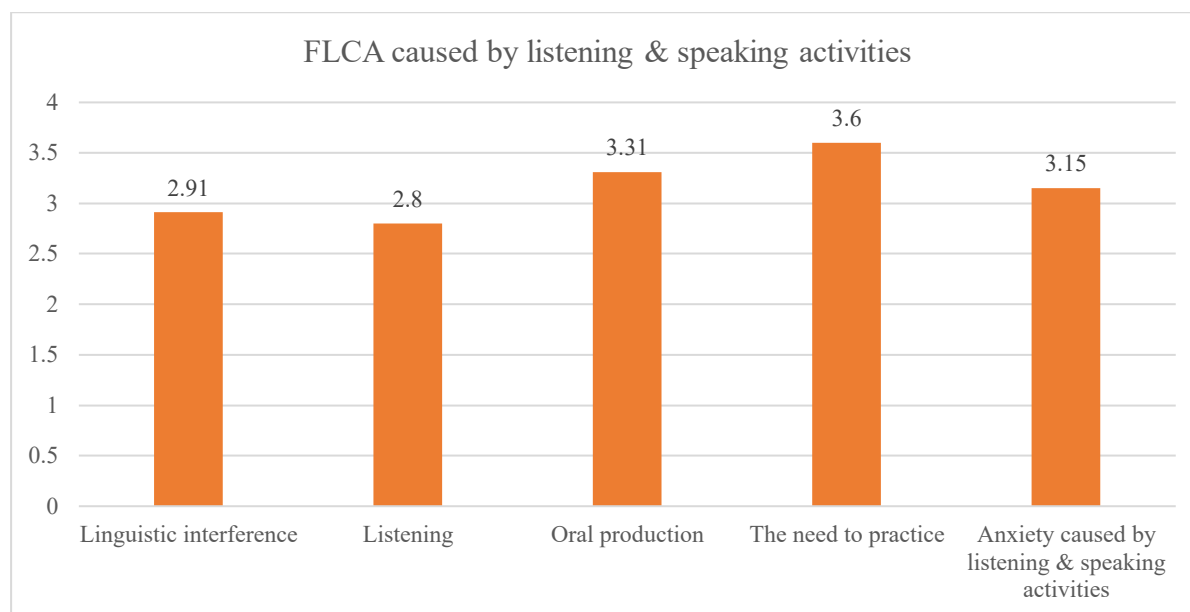


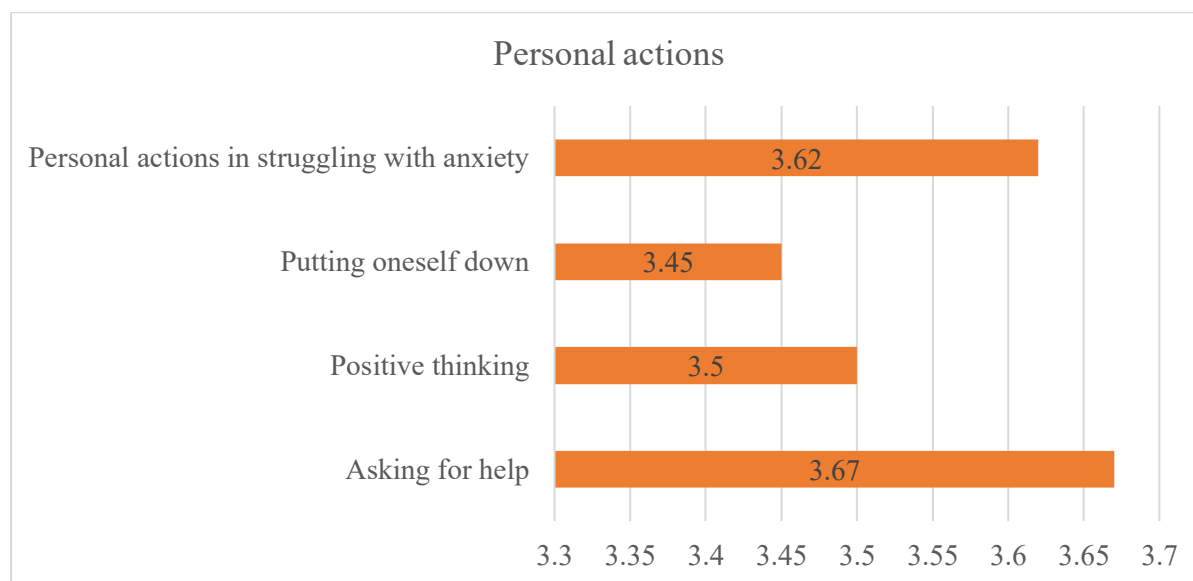
Figure 2 reveals that FLCA caused by listening and speaking activities is also at an average level ( $M = 3.15$ ). Specifically, the students reported that linguistic interference caused by studying one or more foreign languages, as well as the fact that words from other foreign languages popped into their heads when they spoke, did not affect their production of English or their anxiety ( $M = 2.81$ ,  $2.97$ , and  $2.96$ , respectively). The fact that the mean score for linguistic interference was at an average level suggests that the impact of learning multiple foreign languages or the intrusion of words from other languages into English had a minimal effect on anxiety or language production.

Concerning anxiety caused by listening activities and oral production in the English classes, it was also at an average level ( $M = 2.80$  and  $3.31$ , respectively). This indicates that listening and oral production activities generated a moderate level of anxiety among the participants. What should be taken into consideration here is that most participants (57.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that they have sufficient preparation time before giving an oral response in class, which also contributed to their average level of FLCA. Thus, preparation time is proven to help reduce their anxiety levels, as they feel more confident and ready to participate.

Considering the need to practice before engaging in productive activities of speaking and writing, it received a high level of agreement from the participants ( $M = 3.60$ , indicating a high level). The majority of participants reported that they needed to write down their answers first ( $M = 3.55$ , high level) and then practice them several times before speaking in front of the class ( $M = 3.66$ , high level). This result indicates that participants highly valued practicing before engaging in speaking or writing activities, as it may help build confidence and reduce anxiety during productive tasks. Rehearsal before speaking was also important, reflecting their desire for fluency and confidence.

*Personal actions in struggling with anxiety**Figure 3.*

Students' personal actions in struggling with anxiety



As shown in Figure 3, the students' personal actions in struggling with FLCA had a mean score of 3.62 (indicating a high level), indicating that the students attempted their best to overcome their anxiety in English language classrooms through various strategies. This result indicates that the students were highly engaged in addressing and overcoming anxiety in English classes. It also suggests a positive and resilient attitude among students toward managing their emotional challenges. In addition, when they encountered problems in their learning, they preferred to ask for help from their peers ( $M = 3.86$ ), but they also sought support from teachers, both publicly ( $M = 3.61$ , high level) and privately ( $M = 3.56$ , high level). This suggests that the students relied quite heavily on peer support, reflecting the importance of collaborative learning and a sense of community in the English classes. The fact that students sought teacher support both publicly and privately at a high level indicates that they were comfortable addressing their struggles openly with teachers, demonstrating their trust in the teacher-student rapport. However, this result also highlights the value of one-on-one interactions with teachers, where students may feel more secure discussing their anxiety.

Moreover, the participants also reported a high level of positive thinking ( $M = 3.50$ ) and a slightly lower level of insecurity in thinking that other students were doing better than they did ( $M = 3.45$ ). This result indicates that the students generally maintained an optimistic outlook in their English language learning, and despite experiencing FLCA, they employed a positive attitude to cope with challenges. However, there was some degree of insecurity when the students felt that others might be performing better than they were, which may have influenced their confidence and classroom participation.

*Differences in FLE and FLCA between students of different backgrounds*

Table 3.

Differences in FLE and FLCA

Variables	Test	N	FLE		FLCA	
<b>Gender</b>	Independent Sample T-Test		T	Sig.	T	Sig.
	Male	45	.638	.516	-1.646	.099
	Female	53				
<b>Scores</b>	One-way ANOVA (F)		F	Sig.	F	Sig.
	Excellent	48	2.773	.046	1.816	.150
	Good	13				
	Fair	18				
	Poor	19				

Table 3 reveals differences in FLE and FLCA mean scores of the participants' responses. As can be seen from this table, there is no statistically significant difference in the level of FLE and FLCA between male and female students, with a p-value of Sig. = .099 ( $>0.05$ ). It shows that male and female students exhibited similar levels of FLE and FLCA. Concerning scores, ANOVA test results show that there is a statistical difference in the level of FLE (Sig. = .046,  $<0.05$ ) but no statistical difference in the level of FLCA (Sig. = .150,  $>0.05$ ). This result indicates that students with varying scores exhibited significantly different levels of FLE. Further analysis reveals that the groups of students with good and excellent scores differed significantly in mean scores, as supported by a p-value of .044. With a mean score of 4.54, students with good scores had a significantly higher level of FLE than students with an excellent score ( $M = 3.86$ ). This result shows that scores significantly impacted FLE, with students achieving a good score enjoying foreign language learning more than those with an excellent score. In addition, scores did not significantly affect FLCA, indicating that anxiety levels in foreign language learning were consistent across groups with varying scores.

*The interplay between FLE and FLCA*

Table 4.

Correlation among factors of FLE and FLCA

Variables	FLE-Personal enjoyment	FLE-Social enjoyment	FLE-Teacher appreciation
<b>FLE-Personal enjoyment</b>	1	.778	.711
<b>FLE-Social enjoyment</b>	.778	1	.789
<b>FLE Teacher appreciation</b>	.711	.789	1
	FLCA-Overall anxiety	FLCA-Productive activities	FLCA-Personal actions
<b>FLCA-Overall anxiety</b>	1	.882	.818
<b>FLCA-Productive activities</b>	.882	1	.731
<b>FLCA-Personal actions</b>	.818	.731	1

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship among factors of FLE and FLCA. The results revealed a strong positive relationship between teacher appreciation and personal enjoyment ( $r = 0.711$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), between teacher appreciation and



social enjoyment ( $r = 0.789$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and between personal enjoyment and social enjoyment ( $r = 0.778$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These findings suggest that teacher appreciation was closely related to both personal and social aspects of enjoyment, and that personal and social enjoyment were also strongly interconnected.

In addition, there was a very strong positive correlation between FLCA overall feelings of anxiety and FLCA personal actions ( $r = .818$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and between FLCA emotions and FLCA productive activities ( $r = .882$ ,  $p < .001$ ), as well as a strong correlation between FLCA personal actions and productive activities ( $r = .731$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These results reveal the significance of FLCA emotions of comfort, embarrassment, fear, concern, and overwhelming as central components influencing personal actions in struggling with anxiety and becoming more confident in speaking and writing activities.

*Table 5.*

Correlation between FLE and FLCA

Variables	Correlation (r)	p-value
FLE & FLCA	.438	.000

In addition, a Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between FLE and FLCA. Table 5 presents the results of the correlation between FLE and FLCA, which revealed a moderate positive correlation,  $r = .438$ ,  $p < .001$ , suggesting that students who enjoy learning English also tend to experience some extent of anxiety. This finding highlights the complex relationship between positive and negative emotions in language learning, indicating that enjoyment and anxiety are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they may coexist as part of a dynamic emotional equilibrium, where a certain degree of anxiety could enhance focus, motivation, or engagement.

## Discussion

The purpose of the current study is to examine the level of FLE and FLCA that the students experience in their English classes, as well as the relationship between FLE and FLCA, and the differences in levels of FLE and FLCA across groups based on gender and GPA scores. Three main findings were revealed through data analysis as follows.

Firstly, the participants in the current study experienced significant enjoyment in learning English. Teacher appreciation was considered a key contributor to supporting and encouraging students' positive experiences. FLCA was present but not overwhelming for most of the participants. The feelings of comfort, embarrassment and fear, and their anxiety related to listening and speaking skills were both reported to be at an average level, suggesting a mixed emotional responses in the classroom, whereas their personal actions against these feelings were at a high level, which revealed the students' proactivity in managing their anxiety, using strategies such as seeking peer and teacher support, writing down responses, and rehearsing before speaking. The same results are also reported by Botes et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2025), which highlight teacher support as the strongest predictor of enjoyment in the language classroom. This result is also consistent with the idea that teaching practices significantly influence the emotional balance in classrooms, as posited by Wang and Guan (2020). In addition, the finding that most students experienced a moderate level of FLCA aligns with research by MacIntyre & Gregersen (2012), which argued that moderate anxiety levels can be productive and stimulate engagement. This alignment emphasizes the need to maintain a

balance between support and moderate challenges to engage learners in learning activities and improve their performance. Therefore, teachers can help students overcome negative emotions, such as anxiety, while they are studying by fostering confidence and encouragement in their students (Nguyen, T.H., 2022).

Secondly, a statistically significant difference was found in FLE levels among students with different score ranges, whereas no difference was observed between genders. Specifically, the difference was found in students with scores of Good and Excellent. Students with Good scores experienced a significantly higher level of enjoyment than students with Excellent scores. No differences were found among groups of students with Fair and Poor scores. This result aligns with the results from Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016), in which students with higher academic performance were reported to experience a lower level of enjoyment as compared to students with moderate academic performance. Moreover, the results from Botes et al.'s (2022) study also showed a similar trend in which mid-achieving students reported a higher level of enjoyment and engagement. The fact that students in different groups scored differently led to varying levels of FLE. The results of the current study differ from those of Li et al. (2019), in which higher achievers exhibited a higher level of FLE than other students. The fact that students in different groups with varying scores experienced different levels of FLE, especially those with Good and Excellent scores, may originate from the components of their mid-term scores. As mentioned above, the students' midterm scores include participation, self-study, and progress tests that occur during the course, which reflect the students' efforts and motivation in achieving high scores, thus indicating high levels of enjoyment when succeeding.

Thirdly, no statistical differences in FLCA were found among male and female students, and among students with different score ranges. This result is inconsistent with the result of the study of Shao et al. (2013), who concluded that female students experienced a significantly higher level of both FLE and FLCA. However, Dewaele et al. (2018) highlighted that both male and female students were equally likely to experience the emotional states of enjoyment and anxiety in language learning, depending on the classroom environment. Additionally, no differences were observed in the level of FLCA between groups of students with higher and lower scores.

Finally, the moderate positive correlation between FLE and FLCA suggested that these emotional states co-existed, rather than being mutually exclusive. In addition, strong to very strong correlations among the different components of each construct revealed the interconnected nature of each component within its respective construct. This result aligns with the study by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), which found that enjoyment co-existed with anxiety in language learning. These findings highlight the interconnected nature of both enjoyment and anxiety-related factors in foreign language learning. Notably, the role of teacher appreciation appears central to fostering personal and social enjoyment, while FLCA emotions strongly influence personal actions and productive activities.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The aim of the current study is to investigate the emotional factors of FLE and FLCA that students experience while learning English. Based on the results, the following implications for teaching and learning are drawn.

Firstly, the strong association between teacher appreciation and FLE emphasizes the importance of teacher behaviors in fostering enjoyment. Thus, teachers should focus on creating a supportive and encouraging classroom environment by providing constructive feedback,

being approachable, and celebrating small successes. Additionally, engaging and collaborative activities may help sustain and even increase the level of enjoyment among students. As a result, integrating interactive teaching methods, such as group work, games, and project-based learning, can contribute to a positive learning experience.

Secondly, the finding that most of the students experience a moderate level of FLCA suggests the need for targeted strategies to reduce anxiety without compromising the productive tension that can drive learning. Teachers can encourage students to use coping mechanisms, such as peer support, preparation, and rehearsal, in the classroom. In addition, the observation that students with higher scores report slightly lower FLE suggests that high achievers may face unique challenges, such as heightened pressure of self-expectations. Thus, teachers might need to tailor activities to sustain motivation for these students by offering advanced-level tasks, individualized challenges, or opportunities for creative language use. Moreover, the lack of significant differences in FLE and FLCA across genders suggests that interventions designed to enhance FLE and FLCA do not necessarily need to be gender-specific.

Finally, the correlation between FLE and FLCA suggests a dynamic emotional balance in language learning, where a certain degree of anxiety may complement and even enhance enjoyment. Therefore, teachers should strike a balance between fostering enjoyment and setting productive challenges that engage students without overwhelming them. This approach ensures a supportive yet stimulating learning environment that allows students to thrive both emotionally and academically.

Some limitations of the current study include the fact that students' self-evaluated responses to the questionnaire questions may not be consistent. Thus, future research should rely more on in-depth interviews to get a deeper understanding of their choices. Secondly, the results reveal a lower level of FLE in students with excellent scores compared to those with good scores. This result raises important questions about the underlying reasons for students' emotional experiences in language classrooms, which are not fully addressed in the context of the current study. Thus, future research may dedicate more effort to developing better methods of data analysis to shed further light on this problem, allowing for implications to be drawn that can enhance learners' emotional experiences even more.

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## Biodata

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## The Effects of English Films on Learning English Speaking Skills: A Case Study at a Private University

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** English films, English speaking skills, motivation, language learning, and challenges

While using films in English language learning is not a new idea, there is limited research on how films specifically affect speaking skills in EFL university contexts. The present study aimed to investigate the impact of English films on students' speaking performance. Conducted at a private university's English department, the research involved 112 English majors for a survey and semi-structured interviews with four students and four teachers. This study was conducted with a mixed-method approach to explore how much English films enhanced the speaking skills in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation, while improvements in fluency and confidence were reported to a lesser extent. Some challenges were identified, consisting of difficulty understanding unfamiliar accents, fast-paced dialogue, and cultural references. Both students and teachers had positive attitudes toward using films to improve English speaking skills, and offered implications that well-chosen film materials can enrich speaking instruction and encourage students to move beyond the traditional learning approaches.

### Introduction

In English learning, the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are crucial for all learners must master, and each skill requires different strategies. Various sub-skills also depend on how these scored skills are applied in real-life contexts. For language learners, English speaking is an essential skill, as it plays a vital role in daily communication and interactions. Mastering speaking, therefore, is a top priority. The evidence of successful learning can be attributed to effective communication (Nita & Dewanti, 2020). According to Brown (2001), speaking proficiency corresponds to communicating competently with others.

According to Murshidi (2020), the significance of the English language in today's world is understandable as the world has become smaller. The concept of boundaries has become less noticeable with the advent of technologies such as TVs, radios, mass media, and the internet.



English has gained importance over the last few decades. However, the acquisition of a foreign language is one of the most significant challenges in a person's life (Kaboooha, 2016).

As a consequence, new methods of teaching and learning English are being researched to make the language learning process more engaging and to optimize the learning conditions (Albiladi et al., 2018). In recent years, many researchers and instructors have shown interest in exploring innovative strategies to support learners in developing their English-speaking skills and to improve teaching practices (Nguyen & Terry, 2017). One of these methods is using films as a medium to learn how to speak fluently, which helps them improve their speaking competencies and encourages them to learn.

Many studies have effectively utilized films in English-speaking contexts and yielded somewhat positive results. Much attention has been given to the use of films in English-speaking countries. According to Khoshniyat and Dowlatabadi (2014), using English films can enhance the English learning process by providing extensive vocabulary and syntax to help improve speaking proficiency. Furthermore, other researchers (Bui, 2020; Ismaili, 2013; Parmawati & Inayah, 2019; Shing & Yin, 2017) have found that films offer several benefits, including increasing motivation, enhancing oral and communication skills, developing cultural awareness, and facilitating authentic language learning experiences for learners.

While the positive outcomes of film use are encouraging, several limitations and inconsistencies in the research should be noted. Although these studies have yielded positive results, very few researchers have examined the impact of English films on EFL learners on a large scale, involving over a hundred learners or more. The existing studies have found that the use of English films in learning speaking has proven to be mostly beneficial for EFL students. While films have a significant impact on students' speaking development, helping to improve their pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary (Parmawati & Inayah, 2019), they have been found to fail in improving students' accuracy and pronunciation (Shing & Yin, 2017). These discrepancies suggest that while films are widely accepted as a motivational and linguistic resource, their actual effectiveness in specific speaking components requires further investigation.

Moreover, while prior studies have explored the effectiveness of films in EFL settings, there has been limited research that examines how local educational contexts influence learners' use and perceptions of films in speaking development. Learners' language backgrounds, cultural familiarity, and classroom exposure to media-based instruction may all affect the success of using films in speaking development. Thus, there is a pressing need to examine not only how films improve speaking but also how students and teachers perceive their practicality, challenges, and relevance within their institutional settings. While some studies used pre- and post-tests or observational data, fewer combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture learners' perceptions and actual improvements. This mixed-methods approach could yield more comprehensive insights into the effectiveness and limitations of film-based instruction.

These unresolved issues point to the need for further research, particularly in contexts where such methods are underutilized or understudied. To address these research gaps, the present study aims to investigate the impact of English-language films on the development of speaking skills among EFL students at a private university in Vietnam. It investigates not only the overall effectiveness of films in enhancing speaking abilities but also the specific speaking components that are most affected, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. Additionally, it explores both teachers' and students' attitudes toward the use of films in

language learning, identifying perceived benefits, challenges, and pedagogical recommendations.

By involving a larger sample and focusing on the Vietnamese higher education context, this study contributes original findings that may inform language teaching practices and curriculum development. It also supports the broader pedagogical shift toward integrating multimedia resources in English language teaching, particularly for skills that require exposure to authentic communication, such as speaking.

Overall, it can be concluded that speaking English is not only a difficult skill to master but also has become a necessary part of life in a globalized world, where people from diverse backgrounds must interact with one another. As such, this study investigates whether English films can serve as an effective tool to support learners in developing their speaking skills within the EFL classroom.

## Literature Review

### *The Use of Films as a Resource for Language Learning*

Film is a visual art form that utilizes recorded or programmed motion pictures, along with other audiovisual aids, to stimulate experiences and communicate ideas, stories, perceptions, feelings, or atmospheres through recordings (Yudar et al., 2020). Filmmaking involves a variety of techniques, such as photographing real scenes, drawings, models, traditional animation, and CGI. The availability of movies on easily accessible platforms like cinemas or YouTube makes them a valuable resource for both teaching and learning. Films provide entertainment, inspiration, trauma, and hope, bringing people to places they have never been. In other words, films evoke emotions and express universal themes, regardless of individual differences.

Mustikawati (2013) believed that films can contribute to the development of teaching and learning skills through the use of slow motion and playback to make the learning comprehension process easier, and that film is suitable for situations such as introductory courses, complex topics, lower-achieving students, and visual or spatial learners. Ebrahimi & Bazaee (2016) state that films are valuable resources that naturally motivate learners. According to their study, when learners are exposed to various types of films, such as science fiction, soap operas, comics, horror, or romantic movies, it can help enhance language learning by exposing the learners to new phrases and vocabulary.

Films help motivate learners by catering to their interests, especially those who lack motivation to learn. According to Islam et al. (2022), many EFL learners lack motivation and confidence when speaking English. The integration of multimedia materials, such as films, can reduce anxiety and make learners more engaged. The way one watches a film, such as using subtitles in the native or target language, can also affect the learning process. Tran (2022) emphasized that unfamiliar vocabulary and accents often create anxiety in learners, suggesting that supportive tools, such as subtitles, can alleviate this burden. Exposure to different films aids students in their English speaking by introducing them to new vocabulary and words. It also helps to pique their interest and motivate them. In essence, films are an integral visual art form that helps convey human ideas, such as educational content, through moving pictures and sound effects. Films offer to stimulate human emotions through the diversity of their themes and genres, available in various formats, from television to social media.

In terms of the role of films in the Vietnamese EFL context, according to Truong and Tran (2013), Vietnam's economic, cultural, and social context has seen drastic changes in recent

years with the introduction of the government's new open-door policies. As a result, English learning has become an integral part of the country in the last two decades. This has become a problem for the traditional English teaching and learning method, as English learning now focuses on the wider sociocultural context of the language. As such, films have been considered suitable learning materials in the sense that they are created by and for native speaker audiences, making them valuable assets for students who wish to learn and understand the meaning of characters through their actions and dialogues.

According to Bui (2020), the development of information technology benefits the teaching and learning of English-speaking skills, with numerous studies proving the benefits of using films in the study of English skills. Whereas the traditional method of education faces many difficulties, as textbooks do not provide diverse speaking activities for learners to understand the context and express themselves fully. On the other hand, films can provide EFL learners with supplementary knowledge to support their speaking skills.

### *Films and Improvement of English Speaking Skills*

According to Bassma (2013), integrating technology into ESL instruction can enhance students' engagement and motivation, leading to improved language proficiency. It emphasizes the importance of selecting appropriate technological tools that align with learners' proficiency levels and learning objectives. Another more efficient way to improve learners' speaking proficiency is to expose them to a lot of information from non-native and fluent native speakers with a high degree of language fluency, such as through films (Bahrani & Tam, 2011).

Furthermore, Hidayatullah (2018) suggested that learners' pronunciation shows signs of improvement when they watch English films; a similar result is also presented in Rayasa's (2018) research, where learners' English skills improved after watching films. Additionally, the students' involvement and enthusiasm increased as the lesson progressed. Similarly, Fakhurriana et al. (2024) aim to learn how EFL students perceive the use of English films in their learning process. With the help of the quantitative method, the research has concluded that English films are effective tools for speaking training. The students have a good perception of them as they are exposed to the native speakers' dialect, which helps learners expand their vocabulary and improve their pronunciation. Additionally, Nguyen and Thai (2024) have reached a similar conclusion, finding that the active use of films in the students' learning process has helped them actively absorb new words, expressions, fluency, and pronunciation in films, and develop their speaking ability as a whole. Although there are mixed views on the practice and learning attitude, the students were all shown to have a high regard for the importance of films in the classroom environment, viewing them as essential and enjoyable for their learning experience (Rahman et al., 2021).

From previous research, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of films has a significant impact on the journey to improve students' speaking skills, especially for their motivation and pronunciation. Faqe (2017) once stated that films help learners by exposing them to realistic scenarios, as they force the brain to work as you try to describe and predict what is happening in the scenes. Apart from the combination of visual and audio, contextual information also helps new learners quickly adapt to language learning. Similarly, Sherman (2003) states that the human eye processes information more quickly than the ear. Meaning that learners can acquire knowledge through visual formats effectively in English-speaking learning.

Several studies have examined the correlations between watching English films and students' improvement in their English-speaking skills. With most of these studies employing a combination of various methods to identify and draw conclusions, all of them suggest that these

films have, in one way or another, had a positive impact on learners' English-speaking ability. Parmawati and Inayah (2019) aimed to determine whether English movies can enhance students' speaking skills when used in speaking classes. To collect data, the researcher employed observational instruments, tests, and questionnaires. The test was administered to second-semester students enrolled in Speaking for General Communication courses. The findings showed that the use of English movies was effective in improving the students' speaking abilities in class, especially in terms of grammar, pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It also helps to motivate students by boosting their self-confidence and enhancing the classroom atmosphere, making them less fearful of making errors and familiarizing themselves with the components of speaking skills. The students were also more active in the classroom, participating in leading the activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that watching English movies can improve students' speaking skills and enhance the classroom environment.

Bui (2020) used a before-and-after research design to check the effect of watching English movies, as well as the survey questionnaires used for the pre-test and post-test. The findings revealed that students do not perform very well in interactive communication and discourse management, whereas they show improvement in grammar and vocabulary. The results showed that watching English movies has a positive effect on learners' speaking skills, albeit only in some aspects. It also revealed that, despite its shortcomings, students felt engaged and interested in this learning method. The study suggested that the use of films should be accompanied by surveying film genres, pre-teaching keywords, enabling or disabling subtitles, and employing blended models.

The present study aims to investigate how films can be used to aid in learning English speaking and the impact of English films on learning to speak as a whole, as well as their effects on English majors at a private university. Based on these objectives, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do English-majored students believe that films enhance their English-speaking skills?
2. What specific aspects of English speaking have improved as a result of using English films?
3. What are the teachers' and students' perspectives on the effectiveness of English films on EFL learners' speaking skills?

## Methods

The research employed a mixed-methods research design, which gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. This method served to enhance the understanding of the effects of English films on student speaking skills, as well as to collect opinions from students and teachers. The research participants consisted of students from the English Language Department at a private university in Vietnam. The quantitative section of the research included 112 English major students who studied from their first year through to their fourth year. The qualitative research involved conducting semi-structured interviews with four English teachers and four students. The research participants were picked based on their willingness and availability to participate in the study.

Two primary instruments were used for data collection: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms and consisted of 28 questions:

3 demographic questions, 23 multiple-choice questions, and 2 open-ended questions.. The study evaluated students' perceptions of film-based learning for speaking through questions that assessed how films helped develop vocabulary and pronunciation, as well as fluency and confidence skills. A five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) was used to measure responses, and the results were reported as percentages for analysis.

The Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms were employed to conduct online interviews that explored in-depth insights from students and teaching staff. The interview questions focused on participants' classroom experiences with English films, as well as the challenges they encountered and the classroom implementation strategies they proposed. Each interview lasted between 20 and 30 minutes and was conducted over a period of two weeks.

The data from the questionnaire were analyzed through SPSS version 22.0. Descriptive statistical methods, including frequencies and percentages, served as the basis for the analysis. The research team conducted a pilot test involving 30 students to verify the clarity and quality of the questionnaire items before commencing the main study. The researchers implemented minor changes following the feedback received. The research team used Cronbach's alpha to check the internal consistency of the questionnaire, which resulted in a reliability score of 0.78.

The interview transcripts were examined thoroughly before the approval of member checking (i.e., the interviewees rechecked what they had answered). The researcher extracted essential points from the responses to identify recurring themes regarding film utilization for speech development.

## Results/Findings

### *Research Question 1: To what extent do English-majored students believe that films enhance their English-speaking skills?*

Table 1 summarizes students' perceptions of the benefits of using English films to enhance their speaking skills. It presented the mean scores and standard deviations for various statements related to how films support vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, motivation, and overall speaking performance.

The table 1 indicates that the method of using English films has yielded mostly positive outcomes, with the most focus on the ability to apply new vocabulary learned from English films ( $M = 3.91$ ;  $SD = 1.127$ ). The second highest result was the enrichment of idioms, proverbs, and slang in practice through the use of films ( $M = 3.88$ ;  $SD = 1.191$ ).

The students seemed to think highly of English films, especially the belief that they can become familiarized with native accents and dialects better through English films ( $M = 3.85$ ;  $SD = 1.141$ ) and how watching English films can be beneficial for English use in the classroom ( $M = 3.82$ ;  $SD = 1.117$ ). Another aspect that students share similar views on is how film dialogue imitation improves students' pronunciation, with a mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.274.

Situations in classroom environments, such as whether or not films raised students' enthusiasm towards speaking lessons and how watching films can help them apply correct pronunciation in conversation and classroom settings, have also been viewed with a degree of certainty by the participants with  $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 1.187$  and  $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = 1.155$ , respectively. The ability to apply foreign accents and dialects more effectively and understand conversations in the classroom is also agreed upon by many subjects to be another benefit of using English films, with  $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 1.149$ , and  $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 1.158$ , respectively.

Table 1.

Advantages of watching English films for learning English speaking

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
3. With English movies, I can learn and be entertained at the same time.	112	3.69	1.230
4. Viewing the movie with English subtitles makes me remember the language easily.	112	3.68	1.050
5. Movie dialogue imitation improves my pronunciation.	112	3.79	1.274
6. I can enrich more idioms, proverbs, and slang in practice through movie dialogues.	112	3.88	1.191
7. Motion pictures in the movies inspire me to practice better daily conversations.	112	3.60	1.127
8. The use of English movies raises my confidence when I speak.	112	3.59	1.143
9. English movies raise my enthusiasm towards speaking lessons.	112	3.76	1.187
10. I am familiar with native accents and dialects better through English movies.	112	3.85	1.141
11. Frequent exposure to English films makes me feel that my speaking skills are becoming better.	112	3.63	1.201
12. Watching English films helps me understand the conversation on the topic in the classroom.	112	3.71	1.158
13. Watching English films can be beneficial for English use in the classroom.	112	3.82	1.117
14. Watching English films makes me apply correct pronunciation in conversation and classroom environments.	112	3.77	1.155
15. Watching English films helps me to apply foreign accents and dialects better.	112	3.72	1.149
16. Watching English films makes me apply the new vocabulary I learn from films.	112	3.91	1.127
17. Watching English films can improve my speaking skills better than other English media normally used in the classroom.	112	3.52	1.170
18. Watching English films is good for teaching speaking to students in the classroom.	112	3.55	1.161
19. I can improve my speaking skills by watching English films in the classroom.	112	3.66	1.143

For the use of films as both entertainment and learning tools, the participants' choices were very divisive ( $M = 3.69$ ;  $SD = 1.23$ ). Similar results can be found for the opinions that using subtitles can help students remember language easily ( $M = 3.68$ ) and improve their speaking skills by watching English films in the classroom ( $M = 3.66$ ), as well as the idea that watching English films can raise confidence in speaking ( $M = 3.59$ ).



Last but not least, it appeared that students did not have a high opinion on whether or not films can be used as a good way to teach speaking in the classroom ( $M = 3.55$ ), and if English films can improve speaking skills better than other English media used in the classroom ( $M = 3.52$ ). It can be concluded from the high standard deviation (SD) of these answers that participants did not share similar views regarding the effectiveness of films. Suggesting that other methods of learning were still highly regarded.

*Research Question 2: What specific aspects of English speaking have improved as a result of using English films?*

As shown in Item A (Table 2), the majority of students believed that their vocabulary and pronunciation had improved significantly, with numbers increasing to 53.6% and 27.7%, respectively. This can be attributed to the way students interact with films. By listening to the characters' dialogues and the way they speak, students can access a wealth of materials to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation. However, the research suggests that pronunciation may be lower than vocabulary, as character accents and dialects varied between settings. The two skills considered to be the lowest were fluency and confidence, at 12.5% and 5.4%, respectively. These two skills have not seen many improvements for many reasons. For fluency, characters in films may speak too quickly or not quickly enough for students to catch up or understand what they are saying. As for confidence, films, as a medium, while bringing entertainment value and helping with vocabulary and pronunciation, do not provide much in terms of raising confidence when speaking, something that requires actual speaking experience with others to improve. Last but not least, only one student believed that films have improved all of their skills. While rare, this result has demonstrated that films can serve as a positive learning tool for English-speaking learners.

Item B showed that most students struggled because they lacked sufficient vocabulary. 71.4% of the students answered “yes,” indicating that they often struggled to understand the movie plot. This suggested that vocabulary was still a problem when learning English through films. However, 25% said they had no problems, which may indicate that they already possessed better vocabulary knowledge or used subtitles to aid their understanding.

The use of films as a learning tool for new vocabulary is beneficial; however, some students face challenges with rapid speech and unfamiliar expressions, which hinder their learning process. Teachers should instruct students to watch English subtitles while replaying challenging parts of the film to help them observe words in their natural context. Students who repeatedly encounter new words can develop their vocabulary while simultaneously building their speaking abilities. The combination of guided film viewing with active strategies makes it an effective method for speaking development.

In Item C, it was explored how students were unable to understand the differences in their culture compared to that of the films, with 78.6% of students agreeing and only 21.4% disagreeing. This means that many students faced this kind of difficulty when using films to improve their speaking skills. The findings suggest that cultural unfamiliarity poses a significant learning challenge for many students. Students who lack understanding of real-life contexts in film dialogues or situations may struggle to learn authentic language usage. Students face limitations in their ability to enhance their speaking skills through film use because cultural differences create barriers to understanding appropriate language usage and tone, and idiomatic expressions.



Table 2.

Aspects of English speaking improved as a result of using films

Items	N	Valid	Frequency	Valid percent
A. Which speaking skills have improved after watching films?	112	Confidence	6	5.4
		Fluency	14	12.5
		Maybe all of them	1	0.9
		Pronunciation	31	27.7
		Vocabulary	60	53.6
B. My limited vocabulary prevents me from keeping up with the movie plot.	112	There's no problem as long as the subtitles are available	1	0.9
		No	28	25
		Not given	1	0.9
		Sometimes	1	0.9
		Yes	80	71.4
C. Sometimes I struggle to understand the differences in our culture compared to those portrayed in movies.	112	No	24	21.4
		Yes	88	78.6
D. I'm overwhelmed by watching scenes, listening to dialogues, and reading subtitles at the same time.	112	No	58	51.8
		Yes	54	48.2
E. Characters speak too fast.	112	Maybe	1	0.9
		No	34	30.4
		Yes	77	68.8
F. The visual aspects of the movie appeal to me, and they distract me from focusing on the movie dialogues.	112	A hard yes	1	0.9
		When the movie is at its climax. I often ignore subtitles and guess the character's intention through the movie's context	1	0.9
		No	49	43.8
		Yes	61	54.5
G. I struggle to catch new words due to the unfamiliar accents of the actors.	112	Sometimes I cannot hear the native expression	1	0.9
		Maybe	1	0.9
		No	35	31.3
		Yes	75	67.0
H. I don't know how to write down the new words I hear in the films.	112	Maybe	2	1.8
		No	31	27.7
		Yes	79	70.5

Two primary challenges students encounter when learning English through films are presented in Items D and E. The data in Item D shows that 48.2% of students experienced confusion

because they needed to watch scenes simultaneously with reading subtitles and listening to dialogue. The results indicate that learning experiences through films differ among students, as 51.8% of participants did not encounter this challenge, while 48.2% did.

Shown in Item E, there is 68.8% of participants experienced difficulties because characters in films spoke too quickly, which made it hard to understand their dialogue. In contrast, over one fourth (30.4%) did not experience this issue. The results show that the speed creates a more significant challenge for students to understand content and develop their speaking abilities than the challenges of multitasking during film viewing. Those who need extra assistance should receive repeated viewings, slowed-down videos, or guided listening activities to maximize their benefits.

These three items show some common difficulties students face when learning English through films.

Item F shows that more than half of the students (54.5%) found the visual elements of movies so interesting that they were distracted from listening to the dialogue. However, 43.8% of students did not have this problem, which means that the effect of visuals can vary from person to person. Item G points out that 67% of students struggled to catch new words because the actors spoke with unfamiliar accents. Additionally, the survey results in Item H indicate that 70.5% of students admitted they were unable to write down new words they heard, which made it difficult for them to remember and apply those words afterward.

The research suggests that films can serve as effective learning tools, but students sometimes struggle to understand their proper application. Teachers should implement three strategies to support learners: pre-teaching essential vocabulary and explaining cultural and language differences, and demonstrating note-taking methods during film viewing. Students will achieve better success in film-based learning when they receive proper guidance.

Overall, it can be concluded from these findings that students face numerous problems when applying this method of learning to improve their speaking abilities. Whether it be movie speed, a foreign dialect, a lack of writing ability, or any other problem.

### *Research Question 3: What are the teachers' and students' perspectives on the effectiveness of English films on EFL learners' speaking skills?*

On one hand, teachers strongly endorsed English films as an effective tool for enhancing EFL students' speaking skills, routinely integrating them into speaking and listening courses to leverage their motivational and linguistic benefits. They emphasized that films significantly improve pronunciation, vocabulary, and intonation by exposing students to authentic, native-like speech, which students can mimic to learn contextual phrases and natural delivery. Films also create an engaging learning environment that boosts student motivation and provides practical ideas for speaking tasks, particularly benefiting low-level learners who need accessible content. However, teachers identified challenges, such as the need for short, level-appropriate films to maintain focus and accommodate varying proficiency levels, as long films or complex topics like science fiction can overwhelm students. Cultural differences in films sometimes hinder vocabulary comprehension, requiring careful selection. Teachers emphasized that the effectiveness of films hinges on students' active engagement, such as note-taking and practicing dialogues, with contributions to speaking skills varying from 30–100% based on effort. They viewed films as a complex, high-level skill requiring subtitles and strategic implementation to maximize accessibility and impact.

*When exposed to films, students observe various communication contexts and can shadow characters to enhance vocabulary retention. However, improvement varies, with some*

*students benefiting greatly, while others do not. Low-level students may struggle with fast speech or complex genres, such as science fiction. Therefore, selecting level-appropriate movies is essential (T01).*

*I believe my students have improved their pronunciation by repeating and mimicking the characters' vocabulary and intonation. Films contribute about 30% to 50%—they serve as a tool to make speaking lessons more engaging. In the Speaking 1 course, I used short films to help students generate ideas and vocabulary. Films must match the students' level and include subtitles; otherwise, learning is limited (T02).*

*By watching English movies, students can understand the language and imitate the tone and intonation of the characters. Not only that, but they can also improve their pronunciation. I could see that the students made some improvement, especially in terms of pronunciation, as they were able to imitate characters in the movies and improve (T03).*

*I strongly believe in the significance of using films in developing speaking skills, as well as cognitive and meta-cognitive skills. I rarely used it because I had to consider the length of the films so that they were not too long (T04).*

On the other hand, the students expressed enthusiasm for using English films to enhance their EFL speaking skills, though their engagement varied from daily viewing to occasional use due to time constraints and academic pressures. They reported notable improvements in pronunciation, vocabulary, and intonation, achieved by mimicking characters' native-like speech and noting new words, which helped them speak more naturally. Films were seen as contributing significantly, around 50–60%, to their speaking skills, offering both educational value and an entertaining learning experience that boosted motivation. All students relied on subtitles to grasp the context and vocabulary, often employing strategies such as rewatching films or pausing to practice dialogues. However, students faced problems such as being distracted by interesting stories or phone notifications, and having trouble understanding fast speech or complex English. Students addressed these issues by selecting short films to maintain focus or minimizing distractions, such as disabling notifications, emphasizing the need for active effort to maximize the benefits of the films.

*English films have significantly contributed to my improved speaking skills, accounting for approximately 50 to 60% of my progress. They have made me improve my vocabulary substantially and helped me pronounce many words naturally. However, sometimes we can get caught up in the plots that we forget about the learning entirely (S01).*

*I watch films every day because I like films in general... it helps me a lot with skills like grammar and vocabulary. I can mimic how characters in films pronounce certain words... which helps me speak more naturally. Subtitles help me understand the meaning of vocabulary within the context... I prioritize repeating the dialogue and conversations in films. I would get easily distracted because of all the notifications on my devices... I would turn off the notifications (S02).*

*I cannot understand what the characters said due to my lack of understanding and low-level skills (S03).*

*My pronunciation and fluency have improved after watching films. I watch films with subtitles and then... try to watch without the subtitles to understand the meaning on my own. (S04).*

In conclusion, teachers and students found English films to help improve their speaking skills, particularly in areas such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and intonation. Films were perceived

as motivating and useful when used in conjunction with subtitles and active learning strategies. However, challenges like fast speech, distractions, and cultural differences were noted. Overall, films are a valuable tool, but their effectiveness depends on the student's effort and how they are utilized in class.

## Discussion

This research explored the impact of English films on students' English speaking skills, specifically examining the effectiveness of this method, the aspects of speaking skills that were improved, and the opinions of teachers and students on the use of films. Based on the data gathered from the questionnaire and interviews, it was observed that both teachers and students at the private university were fully aware of the importance of using films as a means to improve English speaking skills, as well as having positive impressions of their effectiveness.

It was evident that students' experiences in using English movies to improve their speaking skills were predominantly positive across various studies (Parmawati & Inayah, 2019). It was also demonstrated that students viewed films as beneficial for enhancing their speaking skills. They noted that the film not only helped motivate students to learn but also through the characters' dialogue, students could learn new vocabulary and improve their pronunciation—two factors, according to the majority of participants, that were most affected. This aligns with findings by Ismaili (2013), who highlighted the contribution of films to vocabulary expansion and better pronunciation through authentic language input.

This was attributed to characters in films coming from different parts of the world, being diverse in dialects and accents, and the fact that films provided a relaxing atmosphere for students, helping them to learn and have fun at the same time. A similar consensus was found in the studies of Bui (2020) and Fakhurriana et al. (2024), who reached similar conclusions. Students gave positive answers in both the questionnaire and the interview. This suggests that English films helped them improve their speaking skills. As for how much films helped improve the ability to speak, the answers of teachers and students showed significant deviation. While teachers had conflicting views on the effectiveness of this method, with some claiming it contributed significantly, others believed it accounted for only half of the learning effort, and some did not provide specifics. Students, on the other hand, generally believed that films contributed significantly to their speaking ability. However, as shown in the questionnaire results, the belief that films were superior to other learning formats was still debatable among the student population. This finding aligns with those in Albiladi et al. (2018), who noted that while multimedia enhances engagement, its impact varies depending on how learners utilize it.

On a different note, the main difficulties that plagued the students when using this method were their limited English proficiency, which prevented them from keeping up with the accents, speaking speed, vocabulary, and understanding of specific contexts. The consensus among the teachers and students to solve this problem was to choose shorter films to promote students' concentration and ensure the contents were appropriate for their level, as well as to provide aids such as subtitles. These difficulties are consistent with the findings of Shing and Yin (2017), who observed that students often struggle with fast-paced speech and unfamiliar cultural content in films.

Regardless of their differing views on the use of films, both students and teachers agreed that films only showed their effectiveness when students actively learned from what they saw in films and practiced what they had learned; otherwise, they did not have as much effect as they should. This idea was in line with studies made by Kaboocha (2016) and Ebrahimi and Bazae

(2016), who stated that visual aids such as subtitles and frequent repetition and practice were necessary for students to use films to improve their speaking ability effectively.

Overall, these results illustrated the potential advantages of using multimedia resources in language education programs and the efficacy of including movie-based activities to enhance students' language proficiency. Movies had a significant impact on vocabulary, pronunciation, and other aspects of speaking. As a result, using films in language learning was considered an effective strategy to boost students' speaking skills and make the learning process more interactive and enjoyable for students at the private university.

## Conclusion

This study investigates the impact of English films on students' speaking skills at a private university. The study's findings revealed that English films are a significant contributor to the improvement of students' English-speaking skills at the private university. The majority of participants, including teachers, expressed a positive view of using English films, stating that they helped students be entertained and educated at the same time.

Through the film characters' diverse accents and rich vocabulary, students were able to significantly improve their vocabulary, pronunciation, and intonation. Although it should be noted that even though students thought highly of films, they remained conflicted about believing that films are superior to other forms of learning, as well as their ability to boost one's confidence when speaking. Furthermore, many students and teachers indicated that the films used need to be appropriate for students' level and short enough so that students can concentrate on them. Teachers also believe that students need to use this method repeatedly and take the initiative in learning to maximize its potential and improve.

There was also evidence of difficulties regarding the students' use of films, especially their inability to keep up with native-speed dialogue, understand the context, or write down new words due to unfamiliar accents or distractions. Despite these challenges, many positive results and data were obtained as expected. However, the study had unavoidable shortcomings and limitations that should be addressed in future studies, namely the limited population, the short timeframe of only a month, and its focus on a single private university. Future research could explore a broader population, compare film use across proficiency levels, or assess the long-term impact of regular film integration into speaking curricula.

The results suggest that students who engage with English films for language learning purposes experience positive language development, particularly in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. The general responses across different students and teachers suggested a common belief in the effectiveness of using English films for language learning. Despite this, the drawbacks of using this kind of method should also be recognized by both students and teachers, especially elements such as students' levels and the content of films.

As a result, with careful consideration and preparation, English films can be an effective support tool that helps teachers improve the learning quality of students, as well as helping students gain knowledge more effectively. This is especially impactful in modern learning contexts, where teachers and students must learn to integrate technology and other modern media into the learning process to achieve better results.

The research may bring new perspectives to English majors and help shift their view on how to learn English speaking, showing how digital media can enrich the learning process and

promote autonomous learning. This, in turn, helps to broaden their horizons instead of confining them to traditional learning methods.

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## Enhancing EFL Speaking Skills through Peer Assessment: A Case Study at Tay Nguyen University


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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** Peer assessment, EFL education, speaking skills, collaborative learning

This study examines the role of peer assessment in developing English speaking skills among second-year English majors at Tay Nguyen University. Using surveys for 80 students and interviews with 12 students, the research gathered insights into students' experiences and perceptions towards peer assessment. Findings indicate that peer assessment enhances self-awareness, motivation, and key speaking components such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. However, challenges emerged, including unclear rubrics, unhelpful feedback, and hesitation in peer interaction. To address these issues, the study suggests applying well-defined criteria, offering training in peer evaluation, and fostering a supportive classroom environment. These results provide practical implications for EFL educators seeking to promote communicative competence through collaborative learning. Additionally, the study highlights the need for continued research into the long-term effects of peer assessment and its relevance to other language skills to help educators refine strategies that support both individual progress and peer-based learning.

### Introduction

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, speaking skills are regarded as one of the most difficult, yet crucial for students to learn (Ork et al., 2024). Speaking is an active, productive skill that demands advanced cognitive effort, making it particularly challenging as compared to other skills such as listening, reading and writing skills (Ismatullayeva & Zubaydova, 2024). Educators are constantly looking for methods and approaches to enhance and evaluate the speaking skills of their learners, given the increased focus on functional use of language (Adem & Berkessa, 2022). Therefore, specific forms of alternative assessment may be more appropriate for such situations, in this case peer assessment.

Peer assessment by students in terms of their interactivity performances within a provided framework has recently received much attention as a means of improving student learning and collaboration in the classroom (Alt & Raichel, 2022). The purpose of this article is to establish the place and functionality of peer assessment in the development of speaking skills among 2nd-year students of English in Tay Nguyen University, Vietnam. The study seeks to examine what students feel about it, how peer assessment is implemented, and if it is effective in enhancing students' speaking skills.

## Literature Review

### *Speaking Skills in Language Education*

Students in the language learning process regarded speaking as the most important aspect as it had the most direct bearing on communication with others. Also, it was the process of producing thoughts in spoken language and had nonverbal gestures (Fajar, 2019). Speaking was a highly complicated skill for EFL learners because of its intricacies in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and interaction (Ghafar & Raheem, 2023; Thornbury, 2005). From mastering speaking skills, one was able to succeed academically, professionally, and socially; for this reason, it received utmost attention in language teaching. The following figure illustrates the significance of speaking skills in English learning contexts from Rao (2019).

As shown in Figure 1, the responses indicated that most students perceived peer assessment as beneficial.

**Figure 1**

The Importance of Speaking Skills in English learning classrooms (Rao, 2019)



### *Peer Assessment in Language Learning*

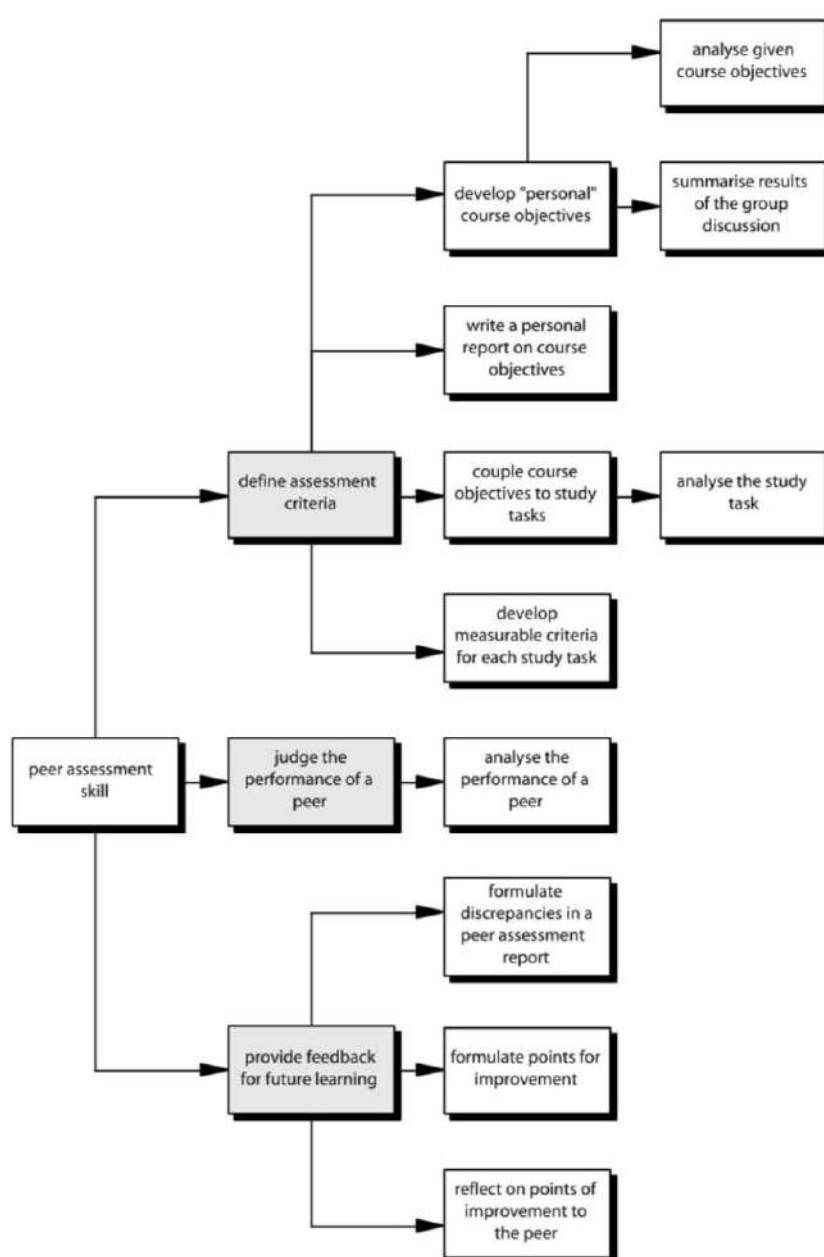
In the educational framework where students assessed their colleagues based on predefined criteria, peer assessment was an approach encompassed within it. Its purposes were twofold: it served as a tool to assess one's performance and as one that facilitated the learner to acquire

knowledge and hone self-assessment skills (Topping, 2017). One significant advantage of peer assessment was its ease of application in language learning as it promoted critical thinking, reflection, and learning together (Boud & Falchikov, 2006; Dang & Le, 2023; Ha & Ho, 2025). Findings suggested that peer assessment could alleviate anxiety, increase motivation, and enhance the performance of learners in speaking tasks by offering timely and appropriate feedback (Khonbi & Sadeghi, 2012).

Figure 2 presents the conceptual framework used to analyze how peer feedback mediated speaking development through interaction and self-reflection.

**Figure 2**

### Conceptual Framework of Peer Assessment



### *Benefits and Drawbacks of Peer Assessment*

As noted in the ultimate goals of peer assessment, students could be able to enhance their learning through self-reflection and critical thinking as they thought about the assessment criteria (Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000; Ha & Ho, 2025; Saito & Fujita, 2009). Additionally, peer assessment helped to instill responsibility, ownership, and accountability in students for their learning as well as their peers' (Gielen et al., 2010a; Kumar et al., 2023). Thirdly, it promoted engagement through sustained interaction among students, thus enhancing social and communication development (Alzubi et al., 2024). In addition, peer assessment filled learning gaps between students during the process where students were allowed to individually assess their peers' performances (Sadler, 1989; Yan et al., 2022), and taught students real-life experiences of evaluation and giving constructive feedback in a professional setting (Topping, 2010).

Although peer assessment brought some advantages, it contained significant shortcomings. Gender, friendship, and other personal relationships could lead to biases that might compromise the accuracy and equity of evaluations (Azarnoosh, 2013). Also, peer grading was often unreliable because different peers had different understanding levels, which might result in inconsistent instruction or bias (Strijbos & Sluijsmans, 2010). Additionally, some students might be doubtful of their peers' judgment and knowledge, creating skepticism towards the feedback received (Kaufman & Schunn, 2010). Considerable effort was also necessary to train the students on how the exercises were assessed (Cheng & Warren, 1997). Additionally, since effective implementation required substantial training, implementation, and assessment of performance, peer grading was often regarded as looking less effective. Because of these limitations, educators had to set criteria and when possible, influence the teachers' professional development to address them (Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000).

### *Types of Peer Assessment*

Peer assessment could be implemented in various forms, including qualitative comments (peer feedback), quantitative ratings (rubrics), and hybrid evaluations that combined both (Gielen et al., 2010b; Mphahlele, 2022). Each type had its own strengths and limitations. Qualitative feedback fostered deep learning and reflection, while quantitative ratings provided structured and standardized evaluation. The hybrid approach sought to balance these elements, offering comprehensive feedback while maintaining reliability and validity (Ashton & Davies, 2015).

### *Research Questions*

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are second-year English major students' perceptions regarding the role of peer assessment in developing speaking skills at Tay Nguyen University?
2. What are the methods and criteria applied by lecturers when integrating peer assessment into Speaking 2 classes?
3. How effective is the peer assessment in enhancing the speaking performance of second-year English-majored students?
4. What are the challenges and proposed strategies for improving the implementation of peer assessment in EFL classrooms?

## Methods

### *Pedagogical Setting & Participants*

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure familiarity with Speaking 2 peer assessment activities. 80 students aged 19–21 were selected to complete the questionnaire and 12 students (7 females, 5 males, aged 19–21) were interviewed in face-to-face, semi-structured sessions lasting approximately 30 minutes each. The survey instrument was piloted and had acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.81$ ). The university's Research Board granted ethical approval. Informed consent and anonymity were maintained.

### *Design of the Study*

The study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, focusing on the phenomenon of peer assessment in Speaking 2 classes. The quantitative data were gathered through a structured survey questionnaire using Google Forms, which aimed to track discrepancies in perceptions, practices, and problems. Selected participants were subsequently interviewed to gather insights into their experiences.

### *Data collection & analysis*

This survey was divided into three sections that would correspond to the research objectives of the study:

1. The first section was concerned with how students viewed peer assessment, focusing on their perceptions of peer assessment and its potential to aid learning processes.
2. The second section focused on the students, aiming to identify the measures and procedures lecturers adopted for peer assessment and the didactic strategies they employed.
3. The last section evaluated research questions 3 and 4, regarding the effectiveness of peer assessments and problems encountered by students.

Trends and patterns identified on the survey were evaluated using descriptive statistics. The qualitative interview data was analyzed using a thematic approach to gain a deeper understanding of lecturer's techniques, students' experiences, and how the challenges were sought out.

## Findings

### *Students' Perceptions of Peer Assessment*

The data showed that most students (75.55%) had a positive attitude towards peer assessment and its role in developing their speaking skills. Out of the 80 participants, 65.55% reported that peer assessment enabled them to self-reflect and enhance their performance, while 34.45% held sentiments that were somewhat negative to positive, mainly because of problems connected with giving or receiving constructive feedback.

Moreover, the in-depth data gathered in the interview provided further details. Many students reported that peer assessment provided avenues for collaborative work and improved their confidence when speaking in English, as one participant put it:

*"Peer assessment helps me identify my mistakes and learn from my friends' strengths. It makes me feel more involved in the learning process."*



The quote above suggested that students were more willing to participate in the process of assessment and learning through their peers. Unfortunately, reluctance to provide constructive comments appeared in students' interviews. Another participant stated:

*"I'm afraid that my comments might hurt my classmates' feelings, so I tend to only say positive things."*

This statement indicated that fear of providing constructive feedback stemmed from not wanting to offend classmates. The avoidance of participating in peer assessments appeared among students with no prior experience of peer assessment. In addition, some participants noted the challenges of providing detailed critical feedback in English. On the other end of the spectrum, one participant said:

*"I find it hard to explain what needs improvement in English without sounding too critical or unclear."*

In either case, students recognized the prospect of utilizing peer assessments as motivational tools to foster interaction and practice speaking skills due to their previous experiences. The issue that emerged was the lack of adequate training on how to give and receive feedback in a constructive manner.

In conclusion, the results highlighted that learners' perceptions were predominantly influenced by their self-esteem, language proficiency, and prior experience with the peer assessment process.

**Table 1**

Students' Perceptions of Peer Assessment

Perception Category	Percentage (%)	Key Insights from Interviews
Positive Perception	75.55	Students appreciate collaborative learning and self-reflection.
Recognizing Significant Improvement	65.55	Peer assessment helps identify mistakes and strengths.
Mixed Feelings	34.45	Hesitation to provide feedback due to fear of offending others.
Difficulty in Providing Constructive Feedback	N/A	Challenges in articulating feedback in English without sounding critical.

#### *Application of Peer Assessment by Lecturers*

The results of the survey revealed a divergence in views regarding the processes and standards of peer assessment allocation as undertaken by the lecturers. Out of the sample, 43.33% of students felt that the assessment criteria were not adequately communicated to them. On the other hand, 38.89% reported that they were active and participative in their Speaking 2 classes because peer assessment was used in the class. Of these students, a large proportion, 33.33%, expressed their concern over the disparity in marks awarded by peers and attributed it to the absence of set grade standardization policy.

The interviews shed further new light on the issues. Most students mentioned that although the

lecturers spoke about peer assessment having some value, they did not always provide proper instructions or proper illustrations on how to effectively assess a peer's work. One student made the following observation:

*"We received the criteria, but we didn't get much explanation on how to use them. I think having examples or practice sessions would have been very helpful."*

Another common issue was the absence of proper training to apply the criteria. Insufficient training made students feel shy to attempt to evaluate their colleagues as one of the participants stated:

*"I didn't fully understand how to use the rubric. Sometimes, I wasn't sure if my feedback was accurate or helpful."*

Nonetheless, some students mentioned being able to work through these barriers because their instructors attempted to get students interested and involved in learning. For instance, many participants valued the class discussions led by the lectures, during which students were allowed to give their comments and critiques to one another. One student said:

*"Our teacher encouraged us to talk about our feedback in small groups. This helped me see different perspectives and understand how to assess better."*

To sum up, the study argued that, although peer assessment was a constructive approach, its implementation was often hindered by teachers' attempts to put it into practice within lessons without providing comprehensive explanations of criteria and guidance. Such gaps hindered them from making meaningful and thorough evaluations.

**Table 2**

Application of Peer Assessment by Lecturers

Feedback Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Key Insights from Interviews
Clear Communication of Assessment Criteria	34.45	22.22	43.33	Students felt unclear about expectations and lacked guidance.
Encouraging Active Engagement	38.89	27.78	33.33	Group discussions helped improve understanding of peer assessment.
Consistency in Grading Across Peer Assessors	33.33	34.44	32.23	Lack of standardized criteria led to inconsistencies.
Need for More Training	N/A	N/A	N/A	Students highlighted the importance of practice sessions for better preparation.

This section underscored the importance of clearer communication, standardized criteria, and hands-on training to enhance the effectiveness of peer assessment in Speaking 2 classes.

### *Effectiveness of Peer Assessment in Enhancing Speaking Performance*

According to the survey, 65.55% of students claimed that their speaking performance improved greatly owing to the peer assessment component of the course. Students stated that they became

more aware of their strengths and weaknesses through the feedback giving and receiving process. However, 34.45% were skeptical and indicated that there was room for improvement in the effectiveness of the process used in peer assessment.

The data collected through interviews corroborated the reviewed literature by providing rich accounts on the effect of peer assessment on the students' speaking skills. Many reported that consistent practice and feedback helped them improve specific areas of their speaking like fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary. One participant said:

*"When my classmates point out my mistakes, I can focus on fixing them, especially with pronunciation. It's different from a teacher's feedback because it feels more relatable."*

Another student talked about how student assessments help increase the effort put forth in a task.

*"Knowing my peers will assess me makes me put in extra effort. I want to show improvement so I can get good feedback."*

As much as there were positive benefits, some students pointed to challenges. Some students highlighted that the feedback was at times too vague or poorly focused which made it difficult to be useful. For example, one student remarked:

*"Sometimes the feedback is just 'good job' or 'improve fluency.' It doesn't help me understand what to work on specifically."*

The qualitative results also underscored the need for some level of supervision by the lecturers to ensure that the feedback given was useful and appropriate. Most students felt they would benefit from the peer assessment process if they received clear instructions on how to provide effective speaking performance feedback.

**Table 3**

Effectiveness of Peer Assessment in Enhancing Speaking Performance

Feedback Aspect	Percentage (%)	Key Insights from Interviews
Significant Improvement in Speaking Skills	65.55	Feedback helps identify strengths and weaknesses in speaking.
Challenges in Feedback Quality	34.45	Feedback is often general or inconsistent, reducing effectiveness.
Motivation to Improve Performance	N/A	Peer assessment fosters accountability and effort.
Importance of Structured Guidance	N/A	Clear instructions improve the quality and usefulness of feedback.

This finding highlighted that peer assessment was an effective tool for improving speaking performance when accompanied by clear criteria, structured guidance, and constructive feedback. While the majority of students found the process beneficial, addressing challenges such as inconsistent feedback and lack of specificity could further enhance its effectiveness.

### *Identifying Challenges and Proposing Strategies for Improving Peer Assessment Implementation*

Survey and interview data revealed several challenges students encountered during the peer assessment process, along with potential strategies for addressing them. Key challenges identified included a lack of clarity in assessment criteria, inconsistencies in feedback, and students' hesitance to provide constructive criticism.

#### **Challenges Identified**

- (a) **Lack of Clarity in Assessment Criteria:** From the survey data, over 43% of the respondents highlighted that they were not able to interpret the assessment measures distinctly. This misinterpretation often led to confusion about what was required of them and how to grade their colleagues at a peer level. During the interviews, students kept saying that there is a need for more definite descriptions and examples of the criteria. One participant had this to say:

*"The examples could assist in understanding the use of rubrics. Rubrics are never self-explanatory."*

- (b) **Inconsistencies in Feedback:** Approximately 33.3% of learners acknowledged that they faced gaps or errors in their received feedback from classmates. Students lacked adequate knowledge of the peer evaluation process, leading to these gaps. One of the interviewees highlighted:

*"Different people have different styles of marking, which is a major problem. Some exaggerated assessments while others far too watered down."*

- (c) **Hesitation to Provide Constructive Criticism:** A number of students indicated that they would shy away from providing critical feedback when it was necessary due to fear that they would offend their colleagues. This challenge appeared particularly among students with little experience advocating their peers. One comment from students was:

*"I don't want to offend the feelings of my friend. This is why I only provide positive comments, even when there are things that can be improved."*

#### **Proposed Strategies**

Based on the findings, the following strategies are suggested to improve the implementation of peer assessment in EFL classrooms:

- (a) **Enhance Clarity of Assessment Criteria:** Teachers need to provide proper rubrics for each level of feedback. Exemplary student peer feedback should have clarifying guides for students' expectations. Students should have workshops or practice that teaches them how to work with the criteria effectively.
- (b) **Standardize Feedback Practices:** Feedback inconsistency is a widespread problem and is better solved through the standardization of such guidelines. Students can be taught how to provide peer evaluations through lectures that emphasize balanced feedback.
- (c) **Create a Supportive Feedback Culture:** Students' reluctance to seek feedback can be alleviated by clarifying the intention behind the feedback. Students should actively engage in learning the art of using criticism in low-stress environments to ensure they provide meaningful evaluations.
- (d) **Integrate Gradual Implementation:** For students to build confidence in peer

assessment, introducing it gradually by starting with simple tasks and advancing to more complex ones is helpful.

**Table 4**

Challenges and Proposed Strategies for Peer Assessment Implementation

Challenge	Percentage (%)	Proposed Strategy
Lack of Clarity in Assessment Criteria	43.33	Provide detailed rubrics, examples, and practice sessions.
Inconsistencies in Feedback	33.33	Standardize feedback practices through training and guidelines.
Hesitation to Provide Constructive Criticism	N/A*	Build a supportive feedback culture with low-pressure activities.
General Inexperience with Peer Assessment	N/A*	Gradually introduce peer assessment with scaffolded tasks.

\*Note: Insights marked as N/A were derived qualitatively from interview data, as these aspects were not directly measured in the survey.

This finding highlighted the challenges faced by students during peer assessment and provided potential strategies to address these issues, ensuring a more effective and consistent implementation in EFL classrooms.

## Discussion

These findings align with sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), affirming the importance of scaffolding and interaction in peer learning. Additionally, the results support formative assessment principles (Sadler, 1989), emphasizing student-centered feedback and the co-construction of knowledge.

### *Students' Perceptions of Peer Assessment*

The findings indicated that any students who had experienced peer assessment claimed it helped improve their speaking skills. This is in line with earlier works such as those of Topping (1998), which explore the motivational and collaborative aspects of peer assessment. Nevertheless, in agreement with Azarnoosh (2013), many students voiced some skepticism regarding the dependability of peer evaluations. Such unreliability, as Strijbos & Sluijsmans (2010) and Kaufman & Schunn (2010) have shown, may result from friendship biases, gender differences, and varying standards of marking.

However, collaboration among students during peer assessment activities was perceived as demotivating by most participants. This may result from cultural or contextual variations on how peer assessment is done. Most students, however, confessed that in one way or the other, their peers' assessments tended to lack coherence, thereby further corroborating Kaufman & Schunn's (2010) work.

### *Application of Peer Assessment by Lecturers*

The results revealed variability in implementation approaches and challenges. Some instructors introduced peer assessment as a formal requirement, while others used it more flexibly. This inconsistency aligns with Strijbos and Wichmann (2018), who emphasized the critical role of teacher training and institutional support in standardizing peer feedback practices. Participants noted that unclear rubrics and insufficient preparatory guidance hindered effective engagement. Such a finding aligns with Kaufman and Schunn's (2011) assertion that peer assessment must be scaffolded through proper modeling and transparent criteria. Furthermore, contextual factors such as classroom size, time constraints, and traditional attitudes toward assessment influenced how lecturers implemented peer strategies. These findings underscore the importance of professional development programs to equip instructors with effective strategies for integrating peer assessment into their pedagogy. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure familiarity with Speaking 2 peer assessment activities.

### *Effectiveness of Peer Assessment*

The research demonstrated that peer assessment improves speaking skills, especially in fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary use. Specifically, students perform better when assessed by peers as they are motivated to improve, indicating positive accountability, in line with Topping's 2017 study. Nonetheless, the variability in the quality and specificity of feedback received limited overall effectiveness. These observations highlight the comments made by Ashton & Davis (2015) which indicated the need for elaborate training in giving instructions and feedback.

### *Challenges and Strategies for Improvement*

The challenges noted—poor specifications of criteria, lack of uniformity in the evaluation instruments, as well as the unwillingness of students to evaluate their colleagues—are consistent with what Falchikov and Goldfinch (2000) found regarding peer evaluation reliability and biases. Moreover, the unwillingness to provide feedback, especially in the EFL context, resonates with Gielen et al. (2010a) findings, which imply that such students face language barriers which make the situation worse.

In light of these obstacles, several actionable strategies are recommended to enhance implementation.:

- **Enhanced Clarity of Assessment Criteria:** Providing learners with illustrated rubrics is likely to assist students in meeting requirements.
- **Standardized Feedback Practices:** Students can be taught how to provide constructive and balanced feedback to achieve greater consistency throughout their work.
- **Supportive Feedback Culture:** Opening discussions about feedback guided by set objectives can aid in reducing fear of judgement.
- **Gradual Implementation:** Starting with basic tasks, peer evaluation can be introduced incrementally, increasing student comfort and competence.

These findings reinforce the need for structured support and clear guidelines to ensure that peer assessment is both reliable and impactful.

## Conclusion

Peer assessment presents a useful alternative to traditional assessment methods in an EFL context (especially for speaking). The results of this study indicate that learners generally positively evaluate peer assessment as it could help them enhance self-reflective, collaborative learning and speaking abilities. However, effective peer assessment depends on clear guidelines, proper training, and regular usage of the techniques.

Even though students appreciated the value of peer assessment in the study, there were some challenges such as lack of clear criteria, insufficient comments, and reluctance to provide any criticism at all. As these sounds of concern are more critical than they look, there is a challenge of purposeful examination that needs to be addressed. If addressed effectively, these problems can make constructive peer assessment possible and more useful for learning vocabulary.

For maximum impact in the process of peer assessment, the following changes are suggested:

1. **Enhance Teaching Training Activities:** The training should be intense enough to ensure learners and trainers utilize the peer assessment framework as intended.
2. **Design Standardized Assessment Criteria:** Marking guides that take away subjectivity with clearly defined descriptors for a given task would assist in the evaluation process.
3. **Encourage Constructive Evaluation:** An approach that encourages senior students, along with an example, will enable learners to practice evaluation and offer constructive feedback aligned with clear learning objectives.
4. **Integrate Peer Assessment Gradually:** This approach allows learners to do more complicated assessments after completing simple tasks, which in turn builds confidence and capability for the student.
5. **Conduct Further Research:** Further research should investigate the impacts of peer assessment on the students' speaking skills over the years, as well as their prospective benefits for other skills and for other educational scenarios.

To conclude, this study endorses the proposition that peer assessment can significantly improve speaking skills in EFL classrooms when proper procedures and adequate assistance is given. By trying to meet such challenges and implementing the suggested solutions, teachers can utilize peer assessment more effectively. These results aid in the understanding of how peer assessment can be used in EFL instruction to facilitate more comprehensive and effective learning of the target language.

## Implications for Practice

This study suggests that peer assessment can contribute to the development of speaking skills if thoughtfully designed and executed. Teachers must pay closer attention to the design of rubrics, provide clear instructions, and create a feedback environment that is supportive and focuses on constructive criticism.

## Limitations and Future Research

Despite the insightful contributions of this study, its limitations stemmed from the scope of a single institution and self-reported documented information. Future studies could focus on assessing peer assessment's impact on speaking proficiency over an extended duration in a larger scale with more diverse participants, consider the influence of cultural aspects, and analyze its applicability in various educational contexts.



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## Utility and Essentiality of the Process Approach to English Writing at Tertiary-level Education in Bangladesh

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** Process approach, L2 writing, thinking, revising, tertiary-level, education

This research explores the utility and essentiality of the process approach to teaching and learning English writing at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Through a survey questionnaire, quantitative data were collected from 36 teacher candidates pursuing an M.A. in TESOL at four universities in Dhaka. The qualitative data were gathered through interviews with 6 teacher-candidates and 4 teacher-educators. The finding reveals that almost all teacher-candidates (TCs) find the process approach useful and essential for improving writing. The process approach leads the TCs to think deeply and critically as well as revise and edit their texts recursively. The identical perception among teacher-educators (TEs) is that writing should be taught as a process — whereby students should inform themselves and pre-write, write, and rewrite — to advance writing and (meta)cognition. This research presents several recommendations to enhance students' writing.

### Introduction

Writing, which is both developmental and fundamental, is a feat that is both enticing and enlightening. Writing is a process of exploring meaning by putting thoughts into words and refining them into text (Zamil, 1983). It is not done in one go, rather, it is done by multi-drafting (Murray, 1981). It entails thinking, hard work, intuition, reading, revising, and editing. Therefore, the ideal approach to teaching writing is a *process-oriented* one (Murray, 1972). The process approach helps writers produce a product that is worth reading (Ferris, 2010). The process approach can be introduced to the classroom's stakeholders (i.e., teachers and students) from the moment they have simple insights into the writing process, which is divided into three stages:- 1) pre-writing, 2) writing, and 3) re-writing (Murray, 1972). Pre-writing (which consumes 85% of a writer's time) is a prerequisite to writing the first draft. Pre-writing is the stage where a writer thinks about the audience, engages in reading and researching, creates

titles, outlines, and conducts brainstorming sessions, engages in deep thinking, and takes notes. Simply put, the pre-writing stage is preparation for writing (Murray, 1972). Writing (which requires 1% of a writer's time in that it is the fastest part) is the production of the first draft that occurs after the pre-writing stage. Re-writing, which needs 14% of a writer's time, is the critical consideration of written sentences and their embedded meaning in a draft. In the rewriting stage, sentences are made meaningful, logical, refined, and functional in a finalized draft that results from multiple drafts, involving re-revising, re-thinking, re-editing, and re-searching (Elbow, 1973).

Mustaque (2021) researched the application of a mixed-methods approach to collect data on the perceptions of 15 teachers regarding teaching writing at various universities in Chittagong, Bangladesh. He then conducted interviews with 4 teachers. It was discovered that many of the participating teachers taught their students in an antiquated, atavistic approach (that is, the product approach). Moreover, 67% of the teachers considered writing a natural gift, rather than a learned skill, and 47% of the teachers believed that students did not require multiple drafts to write effectively. 40% of them said that they did not encourage their students to revise their drafts. Mustaque (2021) therefore claimed L2 writing pedagogy was still stifled at some universities in Bangladesh due to such teachers' innocent and intentional ignorance of the process approach. In Bangladesh, the setback of students' writing is to be ascribed to those teachers' clinginess to yet bulky-burdensome-conventional product approach — which is apparently cozy for them to conduct — that is hardly likely to yield positive outputs in fostering students' deep thinking, critical thinking, editing, and revision skills and in making students autonomous and avant-garde writer to function beyond class (Hategekimana et al., 2024; Shamsuzzaman, 2023). Thus, academic education is deficient and incomplete if writing is not taught as a process (Shamsuzzaman, 2014; Shamsuzzaman, 2017).

Mustaque (2021) also explored the fact that teachers could not provide feedback on their students' drafts due to large class sizes and the emphasis on syllabus completion. In the process of completing the syllabus, some teachers disregard the essentiality of equipping students with the essential aptitude that writing was, is, and will be (this is an intellectual tapestry of thinking, critical as well as deep thinking, reading, editing, revision, which are critical to complementing humans' cognition and meta-cognition). In contemporary times, it is indeed imperative for both teachers and students to know which L2 writing approach is the most (effectively and efficiently) appropriate for developing writing. Bhowmik (2009) stated that there was an issue with praxis pertinent to L2 writing pedagogy since the discrepancy between theories and practice perennially persisted across ESL and EFL contexts. Empirical research needs to be conducted to measure whether a particular approach to teaching L2 writing works well.

However, only a few studies have been published earlier, even apparently before 2025, as there is no little new research available, on writing pedagogy in Bangladesh. Although a handful of research has revealed that inappropriate L2 writing pedagogy deteriorates students' writing, little research has not yet contemporarily explored to what extent and how teacher-educators and teacher-candidates find the process approach effective and useful for teaching and learning writing at the tertiary-level education in Bangladesh (Hossain, 2024; Li, 2025; Muniruzzaman & Afrin, 2024; Younus, 2024). Based on the experiences and perspectives of teacher candidates

and teacher educators, this research examines whether, how, and why the process approach is effective in improving English writing. It thus informs students and teachers that teaching writing as a process is effective and essential for enhancing students' L2 writing. Both students and teachers, who learn and teach writing, respectively, across EFL and ESL contexts, will be enlightened about how writing is taught and learned in the tertiary-level context of Bangladesh. This research also recommends how writing can (and should) be taught and learned through the process approach.

In so doing, the exploration of teacher candidates' and teacher educators' views on whether, why, and how the process approach is useful and essential is indispensable. Therefore, 36 teacher candidates (TCs) were surveyed, while 6 teacher candidates (TCs) and 4 teacher educators (TEs) were interviewed. The TCs could elaborate on how they perceived the usefulness and essentiality of the process approach as they used it to improve writing. On the other hand, the TEs could do so, for they taught writing following the process approach.

## Literature Review

### *Teaching and Learning of Writing*

Writing is a process-oriented and habitual activity, which is critical to education and intellectual improvement (Shamsuzzaman, 2019). Writing is a learned skill, not an inherited endowment, that can be taught as a process approach in the context of composition (Abas & Aziz, 2016; Amalia et al., 2025). It is learned through training and schooling (Harris, 1993, as cited in Maninji, 2021). English studies and composition (by the process approach) should be mutually inclusive at educational institutions. Composition professionals advocate that writing should be taught as a process. Composition is practical, which means learning by doing. An individual can create a composition if they endeavor with absolute passion to think and write, persevere, and be able to endure the pain of unsuccessful attempts (Smith, 1982, as cited in Shamsuzzaman, 2013). Composition – that is woven by writers' own thoughts, and they themselves edit and revise – creates new texts through the writing process.

Importantly, to create composition, students should do the pre-writing on their own, so that they learn to carry out the largest part of the writing process (Murray, 1972); they need to think before writing to bring their thoughts before their eyes, and they need to refine the thoughts in the re-writing stage by editing and revising (Ferris, 2010). A reasonably required amount of time should be provided to students to complete their composition using the process approach, as they need time to think, revise, and edit to produce an excellent text that merits appreciation (Murray, 1972).

### *Editing in Re-writing Stage*

Editing is the purification of grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in a text. Editing – which is a visual approach to writing, for we can see such linguistic aspects in a text as spelling and grammar – is a little piece of the gargantuan jigsaw that the writing is (Shamsuzzaman, 2023). Editing is a cultivated knack. It is sentence crafting that requires cognition and reverse-engineering (that is creative tweaking of sentences) — as Pinker (2014) suggests. He recommends that writers examine how creative sentences are constructed in sophisticated texts,



so that they can creatively revamp those sentences using their own language and thought. Ferris (2010) claimed that editing is essential to writing, but it is somewhat shabby (as neglected) by ESL writing teachers and researchers. Ferris (2010) advocates that editing, among other writing skills, is what students need to advance their writing. Students should learn to self-edit, as good writing embodies the art and utilization of editing.

### *Revision in Re- Writing Stage*

Revision, which occurs during the rewriting stage, requires critical thinking. A writer critically reads her generated thoughts (or sentences) in a draft. By critical reading during revision, a writer finalizes sentences that are functional in the finalized draft. Critical reading is a non-negotiable necessity in writing and revision. The writer critically reads each sentence in a draft, ensuring that all sentences in that draft become logically meaningful and functional. Elbow (1983) claims that a writer needs two types of thinking: first-order and second-order. The former is intuitive and creative — i.e., a writer apparently writes without much concern for grammatical mistakes in the flow of her hunch: The latter is critical thinking where the writer takes care of rhetorical aspects, i.e., idea, argument, and meaning, in her text.

Revising, however, is cognitively challenging per se, which is arduous to accomplish, for, while pre-writing requires idiosyncratic intuition (i.e., first-order thinking, that is intuitive and creative thinking for thought generation), revising presupposes immense meta-cognitive coercion (second-order thinking, rational/critical thinking) as Elbow (1983) asserts. But, on the contrary, pre-writing is apparently harder than re-writing, as the former warrants more time and energy (85%) than the latter (14%) (Murray, 1972).

### *Rhetorical Dimension of Revision*

The rhetorical dimension of language is eschewed in the product approach. Sowell (2020) found that, while teaching in the EFL context, her students were resistant to revising their writing. Such resistance can be attributed to the cultural exposure of the students, as they are culturally conditioned not to revise after writing. Bangladesh is no exception, as students are often taught to write independently of revising (Shamsuzzaman, 2023). Many students do not possess adequate knowledge of how to revise (Patwary & Sajib, 2018). In the product approach, pre-tertiary level students do not revise their texts due to time limitations. The cumbersome and undercurrent of such avoidance of revision are experienced and realized as students start tertiary-level education, and they thus confront severe pitfalls in writing well. As a result, particularly at private universities, novice and naïve student-writers are brought into the light of the composition courses. However, at some universities in Bangladesh, students are taught composition using the product-based approach (Hasan & Akhand, 2011).

### *Critical Intelligence and Factual Diligence in Writing*

A writer needs critical thinking to write effectively. Critical intelligence is becoming objective in creating thoughts/arguments, which stems from critical thinking (Setiawan et al., 2021). It is crucial to objective/close reading of written sentences (Halpern & Dunn, 2021). A writer makes her sentences logical and meaningful by critical intelligence. Moreover, the writer, who needs factual diligence, too, silos facts from opinions in a text. A writer reads and thinks critically about her produced sentences because she gets to find evidence from reliable sources to



authenticate the written arguments in those sentences. Perhaps, the writer generates biased thoughts. It is essential to eliminate biased thoughts through critical thinking. A writer requires the ability to reason, too. The writer reasons for her arguments in the text. Reasoning in argumentation is an act of critical thinking or critical intelligence. The writer thus cultivates the habit of critical thinking.

### *Avoidance of the Process Approach in Bangladesh*

Tertiary education in ESL and EFL contexts requires a proficient writing ability to succeed in the academic arena (Shamsuzzaman et al., 2014). It is a matter to marvel that in Bangladesh English literature is taught without the teaching of extensive reading and intentional writing: Literature teachers in Bangladesh and their predecessors must have presumed that, since one can read in a language, one is capable of writing too – so writing does not presuppose any teachable instructions (Alam, 2011). The academic culture of English studies in Bangladesh is impervious to the interventions and instructions of the writing process; however, that culture is not immune to the product approach (Shamsuzzaman, 2023). Rarely is the process approach to L2 writing focused on education in Bangladesh, except at the tertiary level – but not at all institutions (Hasan & Akhand, 2011).

In the product approach, students rarely think deeply to generate ideas for writing. Not thinking to write is disruptive to the intellectual development of language learner-writers, for thinking requires cognitive effort, intuition, language, and the utilization of intellect that a writer cultivates through the process approach, but not in the product. The product approach eschews the voice of writers as they are imposed on a model text. Such an imposition inhibits the thinking and autonomy of writers. As a result, writers are wrapped in not being able to generate ideas. It is considered that the product approach is inept to help learners enhance their writing (Flower & Hayes, 1977). Many L2 teachers are conditioned to study writing by following a product-oriented approach, focusing on finished writing, which is frequently futile (Murray, 1972). In the product approach, student-writers scribble something alike the model text in one go, independent of thinking, editing, and revising. This is ineffective and even insidious to students' intellectual improvement and their development as avant-garde writers, for writing is an intellectual attainment that requires a process. The process approach, on the other hand, produces positive results in developing students' writing skills (H. Hashemnezhad & N. Hashemnezhad, 2012).

However, Bilkis et al. (2021) have found that teachers in the classroom give topics, and, having memorized the topics, students write, skipping the pre-writing stage. After scribbling, they altogether submit their papers (i.e., the 1st draft) to teachers; then, teachers check grammar errors thoroughly by splitting the blood (that is, red ink) on the paper with red pen– that is akin to being much mechanic or grammar grump (Sun & Fang, 2009). Bilkis et al. (2021) have further stated that most English teachers in Bangladesh teach writing as a product that is ineffective in improving writing. Seldom do novice writers evolve their writing following the product approach. On the other hand, in the process, writers revise the rhetorical dimension – such as idea, argument, word choice, and sentence cohesion – of a language to refine a text (O' Brain, 2004).

### *Review of Empirical Studies*

Peungcharoenkun and Waluyo (2023) explored the viability of incorporating process-genre approach, feedback, and technology into teaching and learning writing in the EFL context. They employed a sequential research design, incorporating a mixed-methods approach, comprising both quantitative and qualitative methods. A total of 28 students of Walailak University in Thailand participated in the research. It was found that the process approach worked well for students due to teacher feedback. The participants preferred to get feedback from teachers over peers. They found written feedback to be more useful and effective than oral feedback. The process-genre approach was thus viable for developing the participants' use of vocabulary and writing.

Mushtaq et al. (2021) conducted research in Pakistan across different universities using a pre-test and post-test to examine the effectiveness of implementing the process approach. They collected data from eighty participants, studying Applied Linguistics, English Language, English Linguistics, and Literature. They allowed their participants to write an essay of 300-500 words, and after the post-test, it turned out that, following the process approach, a majority of the participants performed well in vocabulary, cohesion, coherence, and language.

Albeshar (2022) researched the teachers at Qassim University's perceptions of employing the process approach to enhance the writing skills of Saudi students. The researcher deployed a quantitative approach, i.e., a survey questionnaire. A total of 55 ESL teachers at the university participated in completing the survey form. It was explored that a myriad of teachers (85%) considered the process approach — which consisted of planning, brainstorming, writing, revising, and editing — useful and imperative to implement in classes; and 70 % of the teachers responded that feedback, which is one of the facets of the process approach, was significant in developing students' writing skills.

The foregoing empirical studies substantiate that the process approach is suitable when the aim is to teach and learn writing. The process approach enabled the participants in the aforementioned studies to pre-write and rewrite, thereby helping them improve their writing. Consequently, the participants could enhance their use of vocabulary in writing. They also deemed feedback important to finesse writing. Although empirical evidence of the process approach's effectiveness exists in the educational contexts of foreign countries, a gap remains in exploring how the process approach is leveraged and important in developing students' writing at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. This research helps to bridge the research gap by exploring whether, why, and how the process approach is useful and essential in improving writing in English. The teacher-candidates and teacher-educators who participated in this research, based on their experiences and perceptions of using the process approach, could broadly indicate whether they found the process approach useful, effective, and essential for learning, teaching, and improving writing.

### *Research Questions*

The teacher candidates' and teacher educators' responses are critical to the investigation into the utility and essentiality of the process approach to teaching and learning writing at the tertiary level. The following three questions, which were derived from their responses, were created to

conduct this research.

- 1) How do teacher-candidates perceive the utility of the process approach?
- 2) What are teacher-candidates' perceptions of the effectiveness of the process approach?
- 3) How do teacher-educators find the process approach essential to learning, teaching, and enhancing writing?

## Methods

### *Research Setting and Participants*

This research examines the utility and necessity of the process approach to writing in English at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. The mixed-methods approach was applied. Using purposive sampling, quantitative data were collected through a survey questionnaire from 36 teacher candidates (TCs) pursuing an M.A. in TESOL at four universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Every teacher candidate was selectively chosen because all of them completed more than three courses as part of their TESOL program, wherein writing was taught as a process. They wrote several typed-written essays for course assignments following the process approach, which were assigned and assessed by their teachers. Additionally, the qualitative data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with 6 teacher-candidates (TCs) (they were the students of the TESOL program at the universities where the research was conducted). Four teacher-educators (TEs) were semi-structurally interviewed (they were selected from three universities in Dhaka).

### *Instrument for Data Collection and Data Analysis*

This research employed two instruments for data collection: a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Survey and interview questions were formulated without any framework. Depending on the research questions, the researcher created questions for the survey and interviews. Pilot testing was conducted for both survey and interview questions, and the researcher shared the questions with his classmates. They found the questions fine. The researcher also asked the survey participants and interviewees if they could understand the questions. They understood and answered the questions without any problems. Thus, the survey and interview questions were prepared to obtain the answers to the research questions.

The survey questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed among the teacher-candidates via Gmail, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger. The survey questionnaire consisted of eight close-ended Likert Scale questions. In the questionnaire, they were given a written description of the concept of the process approach. They were then asked: 1) if they found the process approach useful for improving writing, 2) if bad writing could be attributed to avoiding the pre-writing stage, 3) whether the re-writing stage is essential, 4) if they improved writing following the process approach, 5) whether the process approach fostered their critical thinking, 6) whether they needed sufficient time for writing, and 7) if writing should be taught as a process.

Furthermore, for qualitative data collection, three teacher educators and three teacher candidates were interviewed face-to-face. Additionally, one teacher educator and three teacher candidates were interviewed via Google Meet. Consent was obtained orally from the interviewees. Each interview was audio recorded with prior permission from the interviewees and lasted approximately 20 minutes.

The quantitative data collected from the survey questionnaire were presented in a table using descriptive statistics. For qualitative data analysis, the researcher employed inductive thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that inductive thematic analysis is useful for finding proper themes from interviews. Thus, the researcher manually transcribed all the interviews. The researcher carefully read every transcription to identify recurring responses from the interviews, which were then categorized as codes. The codes were then manually categorized into several themes by the researcher.

To maintain the reliability of the codes and themes, the researcher employed peer-debriefing, which authenticates the credibility of qualitative data (Spall, 1998). The researcher shared the gleaned codes and themes with a colleague, who is a researcher and competent in identifying themes from interviews. The colleague then examined and evaluated the transcriptions, codes, and themes to verify their accuracy and reliability.

## Results/Findings

### *Quantitative Data Presentation*

In the survey, as can be seen in the Table 1, the teacher candidates answered four questions and responded to the subsequent four statements. The data is presented in the following table, where serials 1st–4th represent the questions, and serials 5th–8th represent the statements.

Out of the 36 teacher-candidates, most (80.6%) think the process approaches very much lead writers to produce a refined text. The majority (69.4%) think that bad writing can be attributed to the avoidance of the pre-writing stage; on the contrary, roughly one-third (33.3%) consider that bad writing can often be attributed to the avoidance of the pre-writing stage. These findings, which answer research question 1, indicate that most teacher-candidates find the process approach useful.

The preponderance (83.3%) think the re-writing stage is very much essential to refining the first draft. The majority (58.3%) have improved, and slightly more than one-third (36.1%) are improving, with their writing following the process approach. These findings answer research questions 1 and 2. The findings indicate that the utility, effectiveness, and essentiality of the process approach have been enhanced by the bulk of the teacher-candidates who have improved their writing using this approach.

Moreover, (30.6%) and (66.7%) respectively agree and strongly agree that the process approach fosters their critical thinking. 72.2% strongly agree that they should be given the required time to carry out the writing process. In addition, slightly more than two-tenths (22.2%) and the majority (75%) agree and strongly agree, respectively, that learning writing as a process is essential to enhance writing. The preponderance (94.4%) strongly agrees with the statement

that writing should be taught as a process. These findings not only answer Research Question 1 but also address Research Question 2.

Table 1

The Presentation of the Collected Data from the Survey Questionnaire

1) Do you think that the process approach leads writers to produce a refined text?	Very Much (80.6%)	Not at all (0%)	Often (11.1%)	Sometimes (5.6 %)	Rarely (2.8%)
2) Do you think that bad writing can be attributed to avoiding the pre-writing stage?	Very Much (69.4%)	Not at all (0%)	Often (33.3%)	Sometimes (5.6%)	Rarely (0%)
3) Do you think that the re-writing stage is essential to refine the first draft?	Very much (83.3%)	Not at all (0%)	Often (11.1%)	Sometimes (5.6%)	Rarely (0%)
4) Did you improve your writing by learning as a process?	Yes (58.3%)	Improving (36.1%)	No (0%)	Slightly (5.6%)	Rarely (0%)
5) The process approach fosters your critical thinking.	Agree (30.6%)	Strongly Agree (66.7%)	Neutral (2.8%)	Strongly Disagree (0%)	Disagree (0%)
6) Required time should be given to you for the writing process to take place.	Agree (25%)	Strongly Agree (72.2%)	Neutral (2.8 %)	Strongly Disagree (0%)	Disagree (0%)
7) Learning writing as a process is essential to enhance writing.	Agree (22.2%)	Strongly Agree (75%)	Neutral ( 0%)	Strongly Disagree (0%)	Disagree (2.8%)
8) Writing should be taught as a process.	Agree (2.8%)	Strongly Agree (94.4%)	Neutral (2.8%)	Strongly Disagree ( 0 %)	Disagree ( 0% )

### *Qualitative Data Analysis*

Grounding on the semi-structured interviews with 6 teacher-candidates and 4 teacher-educators, the explored themes are: 1) scope of adequate thinking in the process approach, 2) improving writing by the process approach, 3) the necessity of polishing draft by editing, 4) the importance of improving draft by revision, and 5) effective teaching of writing through by the process approach.

### *Scope of Adequate Thinking in the Process Approach*

According to the interviewed teacher candidates (TCs) and teacher educators (TEs), the process approach is essential for enhancing students' thinking. Writers can think so deeply in the process approach that it facilitates their thoughts (and writing) to be profound. To generate meaningful thoughts, writers need to think a lot. Deep thinking can be better done in the process. In this regard,

TE 3 said that,

In the process approach, students do not imitate others' thoughts, rather, they write on their own. They get enough time to think during writing, but they do not get that time in the product approach. By writing, they are improving their thinking. It is the students' responsibility to think critically about writing and content. They have to think so that they can create good thoughts [TE 3, female, teaching experience 16 years].

TC 5 claimed,

For me, it's impossible to write something creatively in one go. I need time to prepare myself for writing. I need a process approach where I can at least think about what to do and what not to do to make my writing good. I know that writing stems from thinking, and I am required to think more and more. However, if we cannot think in a relaxed manner, how will I write a good text that my teachers want? So, I need at least enough time to think. [ TC5, female]

TC 2 stated that,

The process approach teaches us the right way of writing because we do not memorize. We do not try to write in one attempt without thinking much. Brainstorming creates new ideas in the pre-writing stage. I can read a lot before writing. I have enough time to collect data, brainstorm, and take notes during my pre-writing stages, and then I write. [ TC 2, Male].

TE 4 mentioned,

I assign my trainee students to write on critical topics, where they are required to think deeply. So, I give them time to think because without thinking they will not be able to answer. Most of the topics are not simple. For example, I recall that in one of my courses this semester, I asked my students to write about their teaching philosophy. They wrote about how they philosophized their teaching, which needed critical thinking, writing, drafting, and revising to produce a final text. [ TE 4, male, teaching experience 14 years].

The foregoing findings answer research questions 1, 2, and 3. According to the TCs' and TEs' excerpts and experiences, writers can think deeply beyond shallow thinking in the writing process, generating thoughtful thoughts that are refined through revision and editing. Writer-students require a peaceful environment to generate ideas and revise their texts. Good writing demands creative and critical thinking, just as Elbow (1983) claims that first-order thinking transpires when writers write with intuition without much concern for errors and grammar. Critical thinking is a form of second-order thinking that helps writers revise and refine their written ideas and arguments. The process approach is cardinal for creative and critical thinking to transpire. Patwary et al. (2023) suggested that students should write in a convivial environment, where they can write comfortably and calmly, and EFL teachers should maintain such an environment. What Patwary et al. (2023) suggested seems accomplishable if writing is taught as a process. For, in the process approach, student-writers can think, edit, and revise until they come up with a well-revised and edited text.



### *Improving Writing by the Process Approach*

The TCs and TEs find the process approach to be appropriate for advancing writing. The TCs were assigned typed-written assignments, which were then evaluated, by their teachers with necessary feedback. TC 2 believed that he would not have honed his writing — nor would he have improved editing, revising, and critical thinking skills — had he not followed the process approach. He could think, write, edit, and revise; whereby, he could produce good text. In this respect, TC 6 said (that is almost akin to TC2's comment).

At university, I have written assignments following the process approach, which has helped me to improve my writing. The process approach gives me the chance to develop my writing, and I can revise my draft as many times as I want. I revise my text many times before submitting it. My teachers would then review my writing and provide feedback. The good thing is that, thanks to good writing, I was able to publish my articles in newspapers [TC 6, age 25, male].

TE 1 mentioned,

Pre-writing and revising are the two pivotal dimensions of writing. If a writer can produce sophisticated thoughts through thoughtful consideration, they can then refine their writing by editing and revising. My students can verify whether they have used the correct word in the correct context, and they can eliminate unnecessary words from the sentences. That is ellipsis. In the rewriting part, sentences can be edited uniquely, and the meaning of the sentences can be made more accurate as they can revise each sentence [TE1, male, teaching experience 21 years].

TE 3 said,

I always try to teach my trainee-students following the process approach because it addresses writing in a structured manner. When students follow the process approach, they have a proper structure to think, revise, and provide a final version of their writing. The structure is valuable for students to produce a good piece of text. Every approach has its own advantages and disadvantages. However, I believe the process approach is the most effective way to move forward in learning and teaching writing. That's why I follow it; otherwise, it will not help students to think critically and analytically.

These findings, from the TEs' and TCs' excerpts, answer research questions 1, 2, and 3. In the process approach, student-writers develop the habit of pre-writing (i.e., researching, deep thinking, generating ideas, and outlining), writing, and re-writing (i.e., editing and revising). In the pre-writing stage, the TCs generated thoughts by thinking and gathered information to write. In the re-writing stage, they edited and revised their drafts as many times as they wished. Such a disposition — made of thinking, editing, and revising — leads a student-writer to gradually become a skilled writer. Demirel (2011) claimed that the step-by-step implementation of the process approach would have positive ramifications, for revision and peer feedback were effective for student-writers to enhance their writing. Likewise, Asriati and Mahrída (2013) explored in their research that the observed students developed their writing after following the process approach. They recommended that English teachers implement the process approach to help students learn and improve their writing.

### *The Necessity of Polishing Draft by Editing*

The TCs and TEs stated that editing was essential to writing. Wonderful and lucid writing is an outcome of extensive editing. In the same vein, TC3 said he used to detect grammatical errors, make writing cohesive, and omit redundant words by editing. TC3 claimed that she was a



compulsive editor of her course assignments and edited them numerous times before submission.

TC 3 stated,

I have learned to multi-draft. I edit my draft as much as I can. I also change the position of my sentences to put them suitably in paragraphs. In this way, I make my paragraphs cohesive. I review my writing multiple times to catch mistakes. I check grammar and punctuation. When necessary, I cut off redundant words from my draft. Though it is difficult to cut redundant words, it makes my writing polished. (TC 3, female).

TC 1 mentioned,

In the re-writing stage, we must think for our readers. A text might be confusing unless it is well-edited. In the process approach, I get a chance to edit my writing, which is important. I let my classmates read my assignments to check whether my writing flows or not. I make some sentences short and some sentences long. Gradually, I can see the variation of good sentences in my writing. (TC 1, male).

TE2 suggested,

Without recurrent editing, writing can never be developed. First, students select a topic in consultation with me, and then they write an article to be published in an English newspaper. I provide them with feedback. I tell them to rewrite their articles. If I find any mistakes, I tell them to fix the mistakes they make. I advise them to correct their grammar, but I say their message is fine [TE 2, male, 25 years of teaching experience].

Likewise, the rest of the TCs asserted that editing was not expendable, but rather, essential. And they were autonomous and extensive editors of their texts. As per the TCs, what makes writing good is also editing. Editing is a practiced prowess whereby they can (re)structure their writing. Editing is a means of cognitive development, for it requires cognition, as writers think to edit their sentences to be suitably emplaced in paragraphs, which become at once concise, cohesive, and correct. It is apparently impossible for humans to write something in one go that is independent of editing (Ferris, 2010; Dinh, 2023). In editing, writers punctuate sentences in a way that allows readers to easily follow and understand the sentences. Editing also entails cutting redundant words from sentences. The first draft is apparently riddled with redundant words. The TCs mentioned that they edited and cut off redundant words from drafts, making their writing flawless and facile to follow. The TEs also emphasized the importance of editing, saying that writing cannot be completed without editing. It is hence plain that the TCs and TEs were cognizant of the cruciality of editing in the refinement and completion of a text; these finding answers research questions 1, 2, and 3.

### *The Importance of Improving Draft by Revision*

All the interviewed TCs revise their texts and find the revision stage substantive. They believe that revision fosters their critical thinking as they are required to check and critique their produced sentences in a text. In this respect, TC 1 said,

I often find logical loopholes in my sentences after I've written them. I revise them. I better the ideas and arguments in sentences so that I can make them more meaningful and logical. Although revising is time-consuming, I do not skip that.

TC 4 mentioned,

I produce the first draft that is meant to be improved further. Revising is too crucial for my writing. I can fix my meaning and message by revising. I try to find better words and sentences while revising. [ TC4, female].

TE2 recommended,

The quality of writing produced by the product approach is not as good as the quality of writing produced by the process approach. An article typically requires feedback and revision at least three times to improve it. Yes, I've had many students who have developed writing by following the process approach. My trainee-students have improved their writing. Their writing is more polished than their first drafts. The good thing is that they now know how to write.

TE 3 said,

Students' focus should shift from editing to revising. That means they will be checking their word choice, ideas, arguments, logic, cohesiveness, and coherence in sentences and paragraphs, which are only possible if writing is taught through the process approach. What are you trying to say? This is my question. What is your message? What is your argument? That is the focus. And then what is your structure? What is your organization? How are you organizing your writing? Give me your structure.

TC 3 said,

Revision gives me the scope to develop my writing, and I can improve my text as much as I want. It gives me mental security that, yes, I can make my text good. I critically read each sentence in my paragraph as many times as I can. I revise my draft until I am satisfied with it and until the last moment before submission.

The aforementioned excerpts not only answer Research Question 1 but also address Research Questions 2 and 3. The TCs and TEs are informed that writing presupposes recursive revision of the first (and later) draft, and the other way around might not help writers linguistically purify the draft. Revision is the rhetorical refinement of a text. Revision is to review and refine the idea and argument in sentences, which is not concrete, but abstract. Revision is a learned prowess that requires (meta) cognition as it emanates from critical thinking. Revision is essential for effective writing and the enhancement of students' critical thinking. Therefore, the TCs and TEs considered revision required and instrumental in improving writing.

### *Effective Teaching of Writing by the Process Approach*

The TCs and TEs averred that the process approach is a viable avenue to teach writing. The TCs furthered their writing following, and they would teach writing to their students by, the process approach. Writing is a learned skill that can be taught to students by assigning them to write articles and essays. The TEs helped their students enhance writing using the process approach. According to their belief, being a writer requires being a deep and critical thinker, as

well as a compulsive editor and reviser. The TEs believed the process approach fostered their students' deep and critical thinking, which was imperative to those students' education and cognitive progress.

In this regard, TC6 mentioned,

As a teacher, I will always teach writing to my students using the process approach that has helped me and will help them improve their writing. Through this approach, my students will learn how to write effectively.

TC 4 stated,

Therefore, a process approach must be implemented across all educational levels. It is very useful because without this process, we cannot produce a product. It is so useful that we are taught how to write and then we use it to write. Just knowing is not enough; we have to go through the process of writing on our own. We work hard, and we use our brains. And we develop writing.

TE 1 said,

I provide feedback, and then, based on the feedback, they revise their write-up and resubmit it to me. And, again, I provide feedback. Again, they rewrite, and this way, their writing is improved day by day. Yes, I assign tasks to students, and the length of each assignment is 1000 words, plus or minus 10 percent. For every assignment, there are 10 marks allotted. I give them enough time to write it. I encourage them to submit their assignments before the final date so that I can provide feedback for correction, allowing them to improve their texts before their final submission.

TE 3 suggested,

I suggest the process approach, as without it, writing cannot be developed. Although teachers must use the process approach and spend more time and effort teaching students writing, they should be prepared to do so. I prefer assignments because our students need to be exposed to effective writing. My students are now conducting research. They perhaps could not do that if they followed the product approach, as writing a research article requires specific steps that they should be familiar with.

TE 4 mentioned,

If we can show them the step-by-step process, they can assess themselves. They can monitor themselves, and obviously, it will put them on track. They can measure how much they have developed their writing skills. Month by month, week by week, project after project, they can compare. How far they have come. Yes, I usually dedicate marks, exclusive marks, to the process. I inspire my students to go through a rigorous process. They learn to write. They have some good confidence boost. They do better on the next course.

TE2 recounted,

If trainee students want to develop their writing skills, they must practice. Practicing alone is not enough; if they receive feedback from a better writer, they can gradually improve their writing. However, there is another approach called CTL (Contextual Teaching and Learning) in writing. It is also a process approach. It means the students will observe something and make a list of the things they observe. For example, if I ask my students to write a paragraph on a garden, I will take them to the garden. They observe what plants, trees, and flowers are there. Then they use the list to write a

paragraph on the garden. Again, they will receive feedback from me to finalize and improve the paragraph.

The abovementioned comments of TE1, TE2, TE3, and TE4 answer research question 3, whereas TC1's and TC6's foregoing excerpts answer research questions 1 and 2. All the TEs shared nearly identical views regarding teaching writing through the process approach. In their opinion, no other approach is as vital and viable to teaching, learning, and advancing writing as the process approach. TE 3 recommended that teachers teach writing using the process approach, allowing students to micromanage and supercharge their writing. Teaching writing, following the process approach, is an essential means of leading students to develop deep and critical thinking. In the process of writing, students-writers learn to logically and persuasively express their ideas, arguments, and reasons (Trang & Oanh, 2021): what is more, according to the TCs' and TEs' statement, is that the rewriting stage leads novice-writers to cultivate, sustain, and solidify the habit of rigorous editing and revising which are instrumental in improving writing. All the TEs thus preferred to teach writing through the process approach. They preferred to do so because they could provide feedback on their students' drafts.

## Discussion

The discussion reviews and interprets the survey and interview findings, relating them to previous studies. The majority of the surveyed TCs find the process approach to be useful and essential for learning and teaching writing. All the interviewed TCs and TEs consider the process approach to be the most vital, reliable, and viable for improving writing.

According to most of the surveyed TCs, the process approach helps writers produce a refined text; poor writing can be attributed to avoiding the pre-writing stage; rewriting is essential for refining the first draft. Furthermore, the bulk of them have improved their writing following the process approach. These findings, which answer research questions 1 and 2, highlight the utility and effectiveness of the process approach. Likewise, research conducted across EFL and ESL contexts has elicited positive ramifications of the process approach, as it has facilitated novice writers in furthering their writing (Bayat, 2014; Bharati, 2017; Firoozjahantigh et al., 2021; Sun & Fang, 2009).

On the contrary, in the product approach, scarcely students can write a well-edited and revised text within a limited period (Harris, 1993 as cited in Tangpermpoon, 2008). Most of the surveyed TCs thus strongly agree with the statement that *'required time should be given for the writing process to take place.'* Unlike the product approach, the writing process requires adequate time. In the writing process, writers engage themselves in thinking, meta-thinking (thinking about thinking), reading, researching, and multi-drafting by re-thinking, re-editing, and re-revising; these are the deeds to develop a good text. Without any constraint of a stringent time limit, they refine their texts to make them polished for submission (Rimes, 1983). Moreover, deep thinking should precede writing. Deep thinking appears to be absent from the product approach, resulting in poor writing. Producing profound thoughts through deep thinking is effective and essential in learning to write and being well-educated (Brown, 2001).

The interviewed TC1, TC2, TC3, and TC4 do multi-drafting. They refine their drafts by editing and revising to ensure they are precise and concise. TC2 condenses sentences, both short and long, through editing. TC1 suitably rearranges the position of sentences, allowing him to make his text cohesive. According to TC 2 and TC1, the process approach is effective not just because it provides students with enough time to eliminate redundant words from text, but also because it is conducive to revising and punctuating sentences. They thus produce readable texts. TC6

asserted that he will deploy the process approach to teach writing to his students. These findings, which answer research questions 1 and 2, align with the study by Sangeetha (2020) and Vandermeulen et al. (2024), where the enactment of the process approach resulted in enhanced writing, as evidenced by their participants' pre-writing, writing, and re-writing. Abed (2024) discovered that Palestinian university students, having followed the process approach, significantly improved their writing skills; namely, not only could those students write better, cohesive, and coherent sentences, but they also corrected their errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

TE1 prefers to teach writing as a process, and so do TE2, TE3, and TE4, for not only is the process approach viable in teaching students to think deeply and critically, so students can produce profound and persuasive thoughts, but for it leads students to edit and revise every sentence of a text. The process approach also allows TE1, TE2, TE3, and TE4 to provide feedback on their students' drafts. In this way, they improve their students' writing. Likewise, the preponderance of the surveyed TCs strongly agree with the statement – '*writing should be taught as a process*'. These findings answer research questions 1, 2, and 3. In the same vein, studies find that the process approach fosters writers' formulation of ideas and helps them refine a text until it is finalized through multi-drafting (Harmer, 2011; Patwary & Sajib, 2018). The process approach is a proven resolution to enhance writing and is considered the most appropriate alternative to the product approach (Maninji, 2021; Tribble, 1996). Across EFL and ESL contexts, composition professionals, hence, recommend the teaching and learning of L2 writing as a process (Sun & Fang, 2019).

In this regard, the preponderance of the surveyed TCs strongly agree with the statement – '*the process approach fosters critical thinking*.' Students cultivate critical thinking by the process approach (Alsaleh, 2020). During revision, they are required to read and refine their generated ideas and arguments in a draft(s) through critical thinking. As a result, gradually, students develop their critical thinking skills (Çavdar & Doe, 2012). In the same vein, TC1 disclosed that he discovers logical loopholes in his sentences while revising. Identifying logical shortcomings in sentences requires critical thinking, which is developed effectively through the process approach. TE 4 mentioned, as did TE1, TE2, and TE3, that no other approach is as effective as the process approach when it comes to advancing students' writing and critical thinking. Students ought to learn (deep) thinking and critical thinking lest they risk their activation and advancement of the autonomous ability to produce profound thoughts, edit, and revise. And their likelihood of becoming genuinely good writers is hence at peril. Earlier studies back up such a claim (Ahmad et al., 2023; Duong, 2024; Fatimah, 2018; Kosmyna et al., 2025; Uyen et al., 2022).

All the TEs, therefore, stressed the indispensability of students' brain work to improve critical thinking (cognition) through writing as a process. Li and Yuan (2022) assigned their participants to revise a collaborative translated text. The objective of the revision was not only to hone those participants' discretion in improving translation and revision skills, but also to advance their critical thinking. The participants, S7, S4, S5, and S8, employed the process approach for translating. They outlined their process for translating the text. They rewrote (revised) the translated text, thus improving their critical thinking, translation, and writing skills.

Improvement of critical thinking warrants metacognition. It is the process approach itself that helps writers advance their metacognition. Metacognitive ability, which is thinking about how a task can be done, is conducive to enhancing writing. In other words, it helps students assess the steps and stages of the writing process. They can strategically draw on their mental and social repertoire of knowledge for writing through metacognitive strategies. Teachers need to

assign writing tasks that will improve students' metacognitive knowledge, strategies, and critical thinking (Bloushi & Shuraiaan, 2024; Nguyen, 2022). Writing should be taught in a systematic process so that students learn to create sophisticated and refined texts through deep and critical thinking, refining sentences, eliminating grammatical errors, and refining ideas and arguments in their writing. In so doing, pre-writing, writing, and re-writing are indispensable, which lead students to become better citizen-thinkers, making them autonomously thoughtful, critical, as well as humanly good writers and communicators (Alsaleh, 2020; Çavdar & Doe, 2012; Stanton et al., 2021).

## Conclusion & Recommendation

This research has divulged teacher-candidates' (TCs) and teacher-educators' (TEs) opinions as to the usefulness and essentiality of the process approach. The mixed-methods approach was employed. The survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from 36 TCs enrolled in the TESOL program at four universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Additionally, for qualitative data, six TCs and four TEs were interviewed.

They responded positively to the utility and essentiality of the process approach. For learning, teaching, and improving writing in English, almost all the TCs and all the TEs preferred the process approach. Moreover, the TCs were the beneficiaries of — for they honed their writing learning to think, write, edit, and revise by — the process approach. Their opinions aligned with the statement that *'writing should be taught as a process'*; the TEs advocated that writing pedagogy should be carried out in a sequence of pre-writing, writing, and re-writing, whereby their trainee-students improved their writing. The effectiveness and essentiality of the process approach are therefore evidently conspicuous. The process approach is both vital and viable for students to develop deep thinking, critical thinking, linguistic autonomy, creativity, and diversity, as well as editing and revision skills.

This research presents several recommendations to enhance students' writing. Student-writers should learn how writing works in the process. Hence, insights into composition studies should permeate the academic culture of English Education in Bangladesh and beyond. The focus should shift from a single draft to multiple drafts. In other words, the focus should shift from writing (i.e., considering the product only) to writers (i.e., considering and caring for writers); editing (spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation) to revision (idea, argument, logic, word choice, cohesion); and assessment (i.e., grading) to evaluation (i.e., improvement). Writer-students should be educated in aspects of rhetoric – i.e., audience, purpose, idea, argument, voice/signature, word choice or semantic sophistication, sentence fluency (cohesion) – that make prose lucid and meaningful (Raimes, 1985).

Teachers should engage students in voracious reading and regular writing. Students should avidly and amply read newspapers (e.g., The Daily Star, The Guardian, and The New York Times), for newspapers gather good writing and give writers an abundance of syntactical options to follow and (newly and creatively) formulate. In other words, writer-students can read like a writer. They can examine and creatively imitate how a writer has constructed creative sentences (which can be called 'archetypal syntax') so that they can revamp the sentences using their language and thought to craft more creative syntaxes with their new meanings. To improve writing, teachers and students can read such books on writing as 'On Writing Well' by William Zinsser, 'The Sense of Style' by Steven Pinker, and 'The Elements of Style' by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White.

The whole process of writing — re-thinking, re-editing, and re-revising, which are the ways for

humans to develop cognitively and linguistically — should be done by student-writers. Given that students should hone their autonomous, deep thinking, critical thinking, editing, and revision skills, they would be better off avoiding the use of AI tools for writing. When it comes to education, students' cognitive and (meta-) linguistic progression is much more important than AI's productivity in writing (but not students' linguistic productivity). Therefore, they must do the brainwork (write) themselves. They must regularly write, edit, and revise their texts themselves. Academic integrity must be maintained. Educational institutions must provide teachers with reliable plagiarism detection software, enabling them to determine whether students have plagiarized or not. Teachers may conduct one-on-one post-written discussion/viva with student(s) to find out if the student writes the assignment. Critical questions about the process and content of a written assignment will help teachers do so. Using their discretion, they may ask the student questions about the what, why, where, and how of the written assignment.

The required time should be given to students for the writing process to take place. As a result, a produced draft can be edited and revised as many times as feasible. After evaluating a text, teachers need to provide feedback to student-writers to further improve the text. (Caveat: Feedback should be useful, but not authoritative, as education requires students to be autonomous writers.) The teachers' training/education is critical to the implementation of the process approach. Moreover, teachers, who must write daily and deeply as well as correctly and critically, should possess knowledge of and a knack for teaching writing. And they should have their own credible, published compositions to establish credibility as writing instructors.

### *Limitation*

The number of participants in this research is small, which may limit the power and potential of this research to represent the perceptions and experiences of a wider population regarding the use of the process approach. The research setting is limited to only four universities in Dhaka; this restriction limits the research to exploring whether students and teachers at other Bangladeshi universities find the process approach useful, effective, and essential. This research would be more robust if the author could use inferential statistics with a larger sample size. Even a pre-test and post-test would be much better. Using pre-tests and post-tests with inferential statistics, future research may explore how the process approach helps student-writers elevate their writing, deep thinking, and critical thinking, while the prevalence of AI looms large.

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## Biodata

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## Teachers' Perspectives on Using Performance Tasks for Teaching and Assessing English Reading

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** blame game, punishment, narrative, school, rapport

This study examines the blame game among three key agents—parents, teachers, and students—with academic and disciplinary issues in the Nepalese context. In Nepal, no substantial studies have been conducted on this issue. The researcher adopted qualitative and narrative inquiry to examine and analyze participants' lived experiences. The participants were five teachers, three students, and three parents. The findings suggest that parents' consistent involvement in their children's education yields positive outcomes. However, teachers are sometimes not supported by administrators and teachers also need motivation in the same way students aspire to. It is recommended that parents sacrifice certain things for their child's education. Teachers must seek better ways to keep students engaged in productive activities, and schools must take the initiative to build a good rapport with parents and the community for the well-being of all their members. Students, parents, teachers, and school administrators should work in collaboration to achieve their common goals.

### Introduction

"Teacher, if you punish me, my mom will not spare you." A colleague of mine was once shocked to hear such a menacing remark from a student in class. On hearing such a rude remark anyone can start assessing the merits and demerits of teaching as a noble profession. In Nepal, a school was understood to be a temple of learning and teaching, and the teachers were likened to a burning candle. Teachers were compared with God. Students and parents would greet teachers at school and everywhere. For the past decade, this culture has declined sharply. Schoolchildren have started to challenge teachers. A series of questions may have to be considered: 'How have students gotten the courage to demean their teachers? Who is backing them to do so? Who is to take moral responsibility? Have moral values been declining in our society? What approaches can be embedded into school curricula?

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Nowadays, discipline has become a thing of the past and a lack of it has only increased the woes of teachers as well as the school administration. “Poor behaviour in class has been on the increase since the pandemic” (“Rushing to blame parents,” 2024, par. 4). Since the pandemic, more students have been exposed to the internet and gadgets, making them more sensitive and pampered than ever. One of the underlying, disciplinary problems is the defiant attitude the students have developed. And, when it comes to accepting responsibility, teachers, parents and schools often remain silent or blame each other. Venkatesan (2011) argues that “Parents are out to blame teachers or their own children. The teachers are out to fault children or their parents. The children are set to hold responsible their parents and teachers as reasons for their academic problems” (p. 213). A parent coming to school to accuse and argue with the school staff is a common occurrence that can be witnessed in any school office. Often these accusations and arguments take an ugly turn, and the school authorities confront with parents’ threats of calling the media to tarnish the institution’s image and damage teachers’ careers. On the other hand, schools have failed to establish and enforce a clear set of rules and regulations, as well as a code of conduct, among students. Students believe that no teacher or principal is permitted to punish them.

The Constitution of Nepal (2015) includes a section on the rights of children and states in article 39: “No child shall be subjected to physical, mental, or any other form of torture at home, in school, or in any other places or situations.” It also provides for the right of every person to “live with dignity” (article 16) and to “equal protection of law” (article 18). However, it does not explicitly prohibit all forms of corporal punishment. Therefore, teachers must endure various hardships to avoid potential confrontations and criticism. The concept of punishment is not limited to human life. For disciplinary cases, punishment mechanisms are adopted at schools, universities, offices, markets—everywhere.

Despite increasing tensions among students, teachers, and parents in Nepali schools regarding discipline and accountability, there has been a notable lack of empirical research exploring these dynamics through the lens of lived experiences. While anecdotal accounts and media reports highlight the growing blame game, no substantial studies in Nepal have systematically examined how each group constructs its narrative of victimhood and responsibility. This study addresses that critical research gap by using a qualitative narrative approach to foreground the voices of the involved stakeholders. Its significance lies in providing a deeper understanding of the fractured rapport among parents, teachers, and students, and in proposing actionable steps toward restoring mutual respect and collaboration in the educational ecosystem. To fill the study gap, the researcher interviews all three parties—teachers, students, and parents and finds out what components are dividing them rather than uniting them.

## Literature review

The disciplinary issue has become more pressing than ever. Several child psychology programs and workshops have been developed, yet it remains growing concern, and it may be a challenging issue to address in the future. Chalk and blackboard teaching alone can make great teachers. Creativity, energy and passion are what make teachers great, but gadgets in class can induce students to disrupt the class environment (Khanal & Khanal, 2014). To some extent, Khanal and Khanal are right. Countless leading and successful people saw only white chalk and a blackboard in their classroom.

### *Gadgets and students’ disruptive behaviour*

Technology in the classroom has inspired students to think about innovation, sparked their



curiosity and helped teachers keep students engaged. Albataineh (2024) found that “incorporating Chromebook technology into lessons effectively increased student engagement and motivation” (p. 138). Technology is used to engage students in class activities and facilitate their understanding. The NASUWT teachers’ union states that a lack of parental support is a significant issue contributing to pupils’ poor discipline. A survey from the union also claims that pupils turn up at school with iPods and phones, but without basic equipment such as pens. School minister Nick Gibb said the government was boosting teachers’ powers to tackle inappropriate behavior (“One-in-10 head teachers,” 2011). Excessive freedom does not bring expected outcomes. It may misfire. Nothing is good in excess. Overdose of anything is harmful. Teachers should be authorized to discipline in a manner that minimizes the risk of injury, thereby reducing misconduct. Alternatively, specific mechanisms must be established to ensure the well-being of every school member.

### *Need for a common ground between teachers and parents*

Some parents and teachers have no respect for each other. Alaimo (2024) states that parents can be patient and deal with the various problems their children face without blaming teachers. If parents forget that they are discouraging the mentors of their offspring, mentally disturbed teachers barely yield good results for the children they teach. Parents must collaborate, cooperate and communicate frequently to bridge the gulf existing between school and home. “The child is the main object of critique, but parents do bring up a critique of the school or the teacher, and teachers are also critical of parents” (Munthe & Westergard, 2023, p. 6). Janeh S. Darboe writes that the topic itself is controversial at the school level. However, people want to discuss the topic of disorderliness not at the school level but to provide a holistic view in order to bring the author into line with the teachers and school administrations as a real-life state of affairs in the school system. He further writes that it is necessary to provide a detailed justification of restraint and unruliness before we can point an accusing finger at each other, and determine where to place the blame (The Point Newspaper, 2011).

Sociologist Willard Waller (2024) suggested in his book, *Sociology of Teaching* the reason for some tension between parents and teachers is inevitable due to the different roles and functions they play in the lives of children. Parents have a ‘particularistic’ relationship (passionate) and teachers have a ‘universalistic’ relationship (distant). He hints that parents have blood relationships. He is to reinforce a saying, ‘Blood is thicker than water.’ Sarah R Smith (2001) states parents should be willing to listen to the teacher’s needs and follow the guidelines if a problem arises. With today’s extended families, teachers sometimes are not unsure whom to call when there is a problem. Even if a child comes from a nuclear family, parents rarely attend parent-teacher meetings due to their hectic schedule.

### *Relationship between schools and parents and student achievement*

Parents of African American high achievers had conversations about encouragement, support, praise, goal setting. However, parents of low achievers tended to focus their conversation on their children’s behavior. Parents of high achievers felt the school and parents should be responsible for the intervention. However, parents of low achievers expressed concern that teachers were too focused on their children’s home lives rather than their education (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000). If a child’s teachers are not aware of the home environment and surroundings in which the child is being raised, they fail to identify the factors that affect the child’s learning. A good rapport between home and school is important for the outstanding achievement of each student.

Teacher attitudes and practices have been shown to be highly influential in determining parents’

level of involvement (Kohl et al., 2000). Some parents do not attend school to inquire about their children's overall performance. Parents think it is teachers who are solely responsible for encouraging parents to attend school meetings as often as possible. Parent involvement in elementary school is stronger than in older gender.

Teachers who have fewer students are more apt to make frequent and diverse contacts with parents (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Parents of very young children are more aware their children's learning pace, difficulties and achievements. Children need a lot of encouragement and strong morale to outdo their classmates. Children can be easily misguided. Hence, it is natural to expect parents of young children to be conscious.

### *Teachers' working conditions and outcomes*

"Despite all of their training, nothing really prepares teachers for work with some of today's parents" (Tingley, 2006, p 8). Training enhances the professionalism of teachers. Trained teachers improve their teaching. Ultimately, students and schools can reap countless benefits. Yet, some teachers usually face tussle with parents. Unlike in the past, today's parents are more authoritative, arrogant and conscious. If teachers are not motivated or demoralized at work, they cannot be committed to imparting quality education. The happier teachers are, the better quality of education students acquire. Kristina Roque, parent of two students said, "We want a fair contract for the teacher because their working conditions are our kids' learning conditions" (Gutierrez, 2013). Some parents have good insight into the life of teachers. Some parents understand, analyze and realize how teachers work and what sort of life they lead. Good condition of teachers can be directly associated with the success of students at school.

While previous studies have addressed various dimensions of student discipline, parent-teacher relationships, and the role of technology in classroom behavior, much of the existing literature is context-specific to Western or urban educational settings. Research in Nepal's school context—particularly focusing on the interplay between parents, teachers, and students regarding disciplinary issues—remains notably scarce. Most studies emphasize either parental involvement or teacher attitudes separately, without holistically exploring how these factors interact within Nepal's unique socio-cultural and legal framework. This study aims to fill that gap by examining the lived experiences of teachers, parents, and students through a narrative inquiry approach. The specific objectives are: (1) to explore which group—parents, teachers, or students—is perceived as more responsible for students' disciplinary issues and academic performance; and (2) to identify key factors contributing to the widening gap in rapport and responsibility-sharing among parents, teachers, and schools in Nepal's educational context.

### *Research Questions*

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey sought to answer the following two research questions:

1. Who are more responsible for students' disciplinary issues and poor academic performance in Nepal's school's context?
2. What factors are contributing to the widening gap between parents, teachers, and schools in Nepal's context?

## Methods

### *Pedagogical Setting & Participants*

To conduct this study, a Basic level private school (grades 1-8) was chosen. The school is located in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. The school was chosen randomly. To further the research, a qualitative and narrative inquiry was employed, enabling participants to share extensive information that supports the study. Creswell & Clark (2009) note that narrative research enables researchers to investigate the lived experiences of participants, allowing them to narrate their stories in detail. The participants consisted of 5 teachers, 3 students and 3 parents. These participants did not have direct relationship with each other. However, they were conversant with the researcher, which allowed them to be expressive and open. Moreover, Creswell & Clark (2009) contend that the number of participants is not fixed. One to two participants is considered the ideal number for narrative inquiries. The fewer participants, the more detailed information can be elicited. According to Setia (2016), research questions determine the selection of samples. As the researcher had few questions, the purposive sampling shrank.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were used as the primary research instrument to gather detailed narrative data from participants. The interviews were designed to elicit participants' personal experiences, perceptions, and opinions regarding disciplinary issues, academic performance, and the relationship between parents, teachers, and students. Each interview was conducted in Nepali, recorded using a mobile phone, and later translated into English for analysis. Transcriptions captured all spoken content, including hesitation and overlaps to maintain fidelity to participants' responses. The author did not use any software to use code and create themes. The researcher did it herself manually. The researcher prepared a flexible set of guiding questions aligned with the research objectives while allowing participants to share additional insights spontaneously. To ensure the validity of the interview questions a protocol was developed based on current scholarship on task-based instruction. The questions were also reviewed by two friends who experienced researchers in this field are. Reliability was ensured by using semi-structured formats across all interviews and follow-up prompts. This approach ensured both consistently across interviews and the depth of individual narratives essential for qualitative inquiry.

## Results/Findings

The researcher arranged a fixed time with all Nepali participants in advance and conducted interviews in one of the school's peaceful rooms. The interviews were conducted in Nepali and recorded using a mobile phone. The researcher listened to the recordings several times and translated them into English. After gathering information based on the research questions, the data was summarized and analyzed.

### *Student behaviour and sense of entitlement*

Teachers observe that students' behavior and sense of entitlement have shifted, partly influenced by digital exposure and the disclosure on child rights. This suggests a cultural shift in which traditional respect for teachers is weakening, and performance is becoming increasingly detached from discipline.

Teacher 1:

*Teacher 1 is a man who has been teaching English for the past eight years. He believes the internet has spoiled children. Students are aware that in the most developed countries such as the United States of America, Canada, and Australia, students are not physically or mentally punished. Even they do not have assignment loads. Moreover, Nepali children are intelligent enough to discuss child rights with their teachers. They want to be treated the way European and American children are treated. However, they have not learned about the cultural and social backgrounds of those children. They discuss their rights but not their responsibilities. Parents can teach their children how to behave and treat their teachers. He further notes that some undisciplined students are performing well academically.*

Teacher 3:

*Teacher 3 is a highly experienced teacher. He has been teaching Science for around 17 years. When he began teaching at a private school, he had considerable autonomy and was highly respected by school administrators, students, and parents. However, the situation has changed significantly. Nowadays, parents hesitate to greet teachers. In the past disciplined students used to excel in exams, but these days, even naughty students are performing well. He believes some naughty students have home tutors to help them with their studies.*

### *Teacher-Student-Parent Relationship*

This triangular relationship indicates a gendered aspect of teacher authority and parent-school dynamics, where female teachers feel less supported and more scrutinized, suggesting gender bias as an underlying factor

Teacher 4:

*Teacher 4 is a young teacher. She has been teaching for 3 years. She believes students behave according to gender. Female teachers are challenged or disobeyed by students. But most students tend to fear male teachers. She has felt that if female teachers punish students mildly, the students complain to their parents and the parents complain to their principals. In contrast, if male teachers punish students harshly, the likelihood of students complaining against them is comparatively lower. She believes parents treat male teachers and female teachers differently.*

### *Profit motives and administrative inaction*

Both teachers point to structural issues in private schooling where financial priorities override educational and disciplinary concerns. This highlights a systemic challenge, not just interpersonal or classroom-level issues.

Teacher 2:

*Teacher 2 is a man who has been teaching Math for seven years. He believes that private schools are struggling to retain students. There are growing numbers of private schools. Private schools are willing to accept any student regardless of their disciplinary issues. Some private schools are merely collecting students, much like childcare centers, without focusing on students' academics and well-being.*

Teacher 5:

*Teacher 5 is a highly experienced female teacher. She has been teaching Social Sciences*

for 13 years. She believes that these days most parents have only one child, and they tend to pamper them excessively. She adds that parents do not want to hear any complaints about their children, but they want their children to excel in academics. Some parents never show up in Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs). When students know that their parents will not be in touch with schools, they will definitely take advantage of it. They will be more intimidating. If problematic students are reported to school principals, they are provided with sweets and students return to class with a sense of victory. Most schools fear taking action against problematic students. Profit-oriented private schools do not consider hiring socio-psycho counselors to deal with disruptive students. Everything is to be shouldered by teachers. Teachers are treated like machines. Even machines are switched off at night for a rest.

### *Discipline approaches and Student viewpoints*

Students show mixed views on discipline. Younger students tend to value authority and strictness, while older students emphasize the importance of understanding and emotional support. This suggests a developmental perspective in discipline preferences

Student A:

*Student A is a fifth grader. She loves singing and playing basketball. She is believed to be a disciplined child. She believes the home environment is crucial in instilling discipline and self-respect in students. Her parents always remind her to value education, respect teachers, and consider becoming a responsible citizen. Her parents never talk about negative things such as robbery, rape, scandals, and academic loopholes. Her parents always ask her to share her whole day's activities, and they always attend PTMs, focusing on her overall performance rather than grades.*

Student B:

*Student B is a little mischievous. He is a fourth grader. However, he is one of the best students in his class. He loves playing football. His parents are job holders. They return home at around 6 in the evening. His grandparents look after him. His grandparents give him what he wants. But they always tell him to study seriously. They do not talk about discipline. His grandparents attend PTMs. However, due to their age and poor memory, they often forget most of the issues that their class teacher brings to their attention. His parents have bought him expensive gadgets. He plays with those gadgets all day on holidays. According to him, schools must impose strict rules to discipline disruptive students. He shared that he is afraid of his principal.*

Student C:

*Student C is a seventh grader. He is an average student in academics. He is weak in maths and science. He loves listening to music and playing table tennis. His parents work in a bank. Their housemaid looks after him. He also attends a math coaching class every evening. In his opinion, strict rules alone may not be effective in disciplining students. Students need to be motivated and loved. Yelling at them makes the situation worse. Sometimes students are detained for their misconduct, but they continue to behave in the same way. Both teachers and parents tell them to study and study. Nobody attempts to understand what is happening inside their minds. He hates attending PTMs because both parents and teachers blame students for failing exams.*

### *School accountability and aspirations*

Parents largely expect schools to take on more responsibility for students' discipline, moral

education, and practical skills. There's dissatisfaction with the perceived commercialization of private education and a call for systemic reform.

Parent 1:

*Parent 1 is a man. He is an engineer. He thinks schools must teach students cultural values. Parents go to work, and when they return home their children are busy with their assignments. They hardly have any time interacting with their children in the evening. He believes their children spend 8 to 9 hours at school, so schools must take care of children's emotional, intellectual and physical development. Parents work harder to pay their offspring's tuition. Tuition is getting higher every year. He pays an exorbitant fee every month on time. When the homeroom teacher of his child calls him to discuss disciplinary things, he does not feel like visiting his child's school. He expects teachers to find creative ways to teach students and prevent them from indulging in unwanted activities.*

Parent 2:

*Parent 2 is a man. He is a businessman. He believes that private schools are primarily concerned with making profits rather than improving the quality of education. He believes that if students are involved in many creative activities at school, they will also continue with such schoolwork at home. Most private schools have built big buildings, but their teaching style has remained unchanged. He wants his children to become entrepreneurs. He emphasized that most Nepali students pass exams to advance to higher grades, but they often struggle to start a business or become self-sufficient. Teachers are often not well-trained to manage classes and hold their students accountable. For minor issues, homeroom teachers or principals contact parents and request that they attend a meeting at school. Businesspeople cannot leave their businesses and rush to school. Classrooms are overcrowded. Moreover, some teachers are too young to control their classes. Schools and teachers must come up with certain strategies to mitigate disruptive behaviors.*

Parent 3:

*Parent 3 is a woman. She is a nurse. She seemed highly critical of modern education. She said that when she was a student, teachers were very strict. They were role models. But she does not find teachers professional and strict now. She argues that nowadays teachers and students are friendly. Friendliness is a must, but they lack a clear boundary. She even added that the incidence of affairs between teachers and students is on the rise. According to her, working mothers often struggle to manage their time to attend in-person meetings on a workday. Schools and teachers must understand that parents face the challenge of balancing their professional and family lives. When she is free, she sits down with her kids and helps them with their homework.*

After interviewing teachers, students, and their parents, some key findings have been documented. A complex shift in disciplinary culture, teacher authority, and school culture has been observed. Students tend to show less respect for teachers. They expect more freedom in their classrooms. Teachers often face difficulty disciplining children due to a lack of a clear disciplinary protocol. Private schools often prioritize making a profit over fostering a healthy learning and teaching environment for students and teachers. Parents often hold schools responsible for poor academic performance and disciplinary issues. These three parties seem to be heading in three different directions. Effective conversations among them are necessary to achieve academic goals.



## Analysis and Discussion

The interview has brought to our attention many ideas about Nepal's private schools, with some of the interview results echoing the findings of the literature review. During the interview, I found that most parents' opinions aligned with the idea that parents' constant engagement and alertness can have a positive effect on their children's results (Kohl et al., 2000; Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Parents' regular presence at PTMs can inspire their children to stay focused on academics. Parents can also interact with their children at home for their everyday activities. Both rewards and punishments are important in human life. Therefore, schools must prepare a protocol and enforce it to maintain a safe and peaceful atmosphere for all the members of school. A single person is not responsible and cannot change the entire disciplinary and academic system. There is no direct correlation between academic success and disciplinary issues. Parents must be strict and friendly. Unnecessary pampering can lead students to engage in poor behavior. Parents can play a key role in instilling more educational values in their children at an early age. "Home is where the developmental process begins on the first day of life" (White, 2021, as cited in Nuswantara and et al., 2022, p. 99). Parents' guidance and positive attitude can shape students' attitudes and behavior. Parents are the first teachers and have a biological relationship with them.

The interviews highlight how students like Student A benefit from engaged and communicative parents, while others, such as Students B and C, exhibit signs of behavioral and academic challenges associated with less direct parental supervision. Similarly, both sources highlight the tension between teachers and parents, with Waller's (2024) sociological insights reflected in teachers' comments about feeling disrespected and overburdened due to shifting parental attitudes and school policies that prioritize profit over discipline. However, while the literature stresses the role of trained teachers and structured school policies (Tingley, 2006; Gutierrez, 2013). As the culture of living in extended families has been disrupted, in cities of Nepal, children are often not nurtured by their biological parents but by housemaids and home tutors. Parents' financial security and their children's academic success may not happen simultaneously. At some point, parents must compromise certain things. The idea of merely punishing students for their disruptive behavior does not guarantee positive conduct and academic excellence. Parents, schools and teachers must treat students with psychological care. Teachers must be considerate and understanding but not too friendly with their students. Teachers can always seek better strategies to keep students engaged at school and at home. "Professional teachers are always on the lookout for substituting their old-fashioned method of teaching" (Sherma, 2023, p. 336).

The interviews reveal a ground-level frustration among teachers, who feel unsupported by administrators and constrained by parents' reluctance to accept disciplinary measures. Additionally, the literature highlights technology as a double-edged tool, and interviews with teachers and parents confirm its influence: while some acknowledge its educational potential, many perceive it as exacerbating distractions and entitlement among students. If schools run smaller classes, teachers can be free and devote their time to contact and cooperate with parents to groom students more effectively. Epstein and Dauber (1991) emphasized that teachers who teach smaller classes are more likely to have a good rapport with parents.

Upon analyzing the comments of three groups, I have observed some similarities. To the three groups, discipline was a pressing issue, resulting in a blame game. Teachers held parents responsible for disruptive behavior, students held schools responsible for a lack of clear guidelines or protocols, and parents viewed schools as incapable of handling students efficiently. Moreover, some teachers admitted that their teaching loads and student populations did not

allow them to pay attention to each student and manage them effectively. Teachers are expected to resolve all classroom issues. “A teacher's enthusiasm can have a significant influence on the level of learning that students are able to achieve in the classroom” (Tran and Le, p. 2022, p. 136). Nonetheless, we should not forget that teachers also need motivation. Teachers alone cannot investigate and resolve any problem that derives from outside the classroom. Workloads, inadequate training, salary, and working environments may demotivate teachers. Some parents were sympathetic with teachers' workloads and poor outcomes. Students felt that they were victimized due to the conflicting ideas of their parents and teachers. A single party or entity cannot be held accountable.

Even though Nepal's Constitution 2015 restricts parents, schools, and teachers from punishing students in any form, students can be engaged in a productive task as a form of punishment. Waller (2024) argued that disagreements and differing opinions between parents and schools should be regarded as normal, given their distinct rules and working environments. However, there are possibilities for building a rapport and working toward common goals through positive dialogue. In the past parents were often illiterate and unaware of child psychology, so they were less cooperative with teachers. But in today's context, according to Tingley (2006), some parents tend to demonstrate their audacity and ego, which is not addressed in most teacher training sessions. Schools must be transparent about their policies and take the initiative to establish and maintain relationships with parents and the broader community.

## Conclusion

The study has indicated that every party—parents, teachers, and private schools seem right from their individual standpoint. Parents have a huge responsibility to pay their children's tuition. Teachers are often compelled to teach larger classrooms and adhere school rules and policies. Similarly, private schools do not receive funding from the government or other generous donors. They depend on tuition to operate successfully. Therefore, it is understandable that private schools are profit-oriented. However, these three parties have agreed-upon goals to achieve. These goals cannot be achieved until and unless they are committed to shouldering certain responsibilities under any circumstances. Nobody is ultimately right and wrong. They need to find common ground to work from. Receptiveness and positivity can unite these three parties to maintain discipline at school and gear their efforts toward academic achievement.

This study holds important implications for EFL contexts, particularly in settings where private schools face similar parent-teacher-student dynamics. It highlights the need for clear, culturally sensitive discipline policies that respect student rights while maintaining classroom order—an essential balance in language learning environments where consistent engagement is key. The findings suggest that fostering strong parent-teacher rapport and involving parents in students' learning processes can enhance student motivation and behavior, both of which directly impact EFL learners' participation and achievement. Whenever schools design disciplinary or academic protocols or handbooks, there must be representatives from experts, teachers, parents, students, and school administrators. The guidelines must be transparent. There should be frequent workshops or orientations for teachers, parents, students, and schools on how to foster a mutually beneficial relationship. There should not be separate or individual training. Everything has to be done in the presence of these four parties. Parents, teachers, students, and school administrators should remember that they are working for their common goals. Additionally, recognizing teachers' need for support and professional development in managing diverse classrooms becomes crucial for sustaining an effective EFL learning atmosphere.

This study has some limitations. The research findings are based on only 11 participants from Nepal. School administrators could not be included in the study. The outcome can be something to reflect on, but it cannot be generalized. More research can be conducted, choosing a large sample in the future. Both private schools and public schools from urban areas and remote areas can be included in future ventures.

## Declaration

The research included human participation, and consent was sought, with permission granted by the school.

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## Biodata

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## Exploring the Organization of Consecutive Group-Work Activities in English Lessons: A Case Study at a Public University

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** Group work, classroom activities, enhance, English lessons

Group work is considered a practical pedagogical method applied at all educational levels, especially in fostering students' collaboration, learner autonomy, and engagement in language learning. However, how to implement group work activities efficiently depends on various factors, among which the teacher's role is centered as a designer, organizer, and facilitator. This study presents a groupwork application in classroom management technique, in which students are grouped once and remain in fixed groups for all English course activities throughout the semester. The method has been implemented on multiple occasions with consistently positive outcomes. A qualitative study was later conducted through interviews with nine students and two teachers following the application of this technique during a semester-long English course. The findings indicate that fixed group structures fostered the students' engagement, responsibility, and teamwork skills. Based on the results, the study offers practical recommendations for organizing and sustaining effective group work in English language classrooms to enhance student participation and learning outcomes.

### Introduction

Group work activities have been widely applied in classroom lessons, offering the undeniable benefits of enhancing students' academic performance and developing their soft skills. Specifically, group work has been proven to foster team collaboration, increase learning autonomy, and improve students' intrinsic motivation. These benefits make group work a valuable strategy in modern educational settings, especially in language learning classrooms where interaction and communication are mainly oriented.

However, the success of group work activities is not guaranteed solely by their implementation. Various factors influence its effectiveness, including the teacher's role, students' engagement, students' learning autonomy, the relevance of group work tasks, and the students' English

proficiency level (Homayouni, 2022; Tanaka, 2022; Ulla & Perales, 2021). As the teacher plays the roles of designer, organizer, and facilitator of group activities, the teacher can determine the level of students' engagement, interaction, and communication in English learning activities. Without careful planning and continuous management, group work can result in unequal participation, dissatisfaction, and missed learning opportunities (Awuor, 2022; Zhang et al., 2022).

With the aim of exploring the effectiveness of different ways to organize group work activities in the English course, this paper introduces a structured method for organizing group work settings in English language learning classrooms. This method involves assigning students to fixed groups for the entire 10-week semester and establishing group working regulations from the outset. This group work implementation has been applied by researchers many times and has consistently shown positive results. To further explore its effectiveness, a qualitative study was conducted, involving interviews with nine students and two teachers following a semester-long implementation of group-work activities in an English course.

## Literature Review

### *Group work*

Group work is commonly known as a teaching approach that facilitates collaboration among students in a classroom environment to achieve their learning objectives (Wilson et al., 2018). Group work activities typically involve a number of students working together in small teams, usually with more than two members, to complete a given task by exchanging their opinions and sharing their knowledge. This will provide opportunities for students to communicate, interact, practice, and promote their language competences, together with other skills. Collaborative learning was described as a dynamic and interactive process that promotes not only communication competence (Johnson & Johnson, 1991) but also critical thinking and learner autonomy (Bui & Nguyen, 2024).

Although the term "group work" has been defined in a number of ways, this paper will employ Johnson's (2005) definition, which states that group learning is a teaching strategy in which students of various skill levels work in small groups to complete tasks that will ultimately improve their comprehension of the subject. Each student is in charge of both their own education and the education of the other students in the group. Students collaborate to complete the assignment effectively. Other research has revealed numerous benefits to working in groups (Wenjing, 2011; Hanan & Nowreya, 2014).

### *Benefits of Group Work in Language Learning*

Group work has consistently demonstrated positive effects on language learning outcomes in international contexts. Wang (2023) employed the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model and found that EFL students significantly improved their academic motivation, resilience, and self-efficacy in collaborative tasks.

Moreover, Liu et al. (2024) reported in their systematic review of cooperative learning in higher education that students would improve their English language competence, classroom engagement, and critical thinking skills by working in groups. These studies suggest that well-structured group work environments not only foster language acquisition but also promote essential soft skills, such as self-efficacy and accountability, which are crucial for long-term academic success. Nonetheless, group work was reported to improve students' interactions in English classroom environment better than other pedagogical methods. Students could share



their views and engagement in speaking activities in their English lessons when working in groups (Jeon et al., 2024).

One of the major benefits of group work activities is that they support students in improving their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. When students work in groups to complete tasks, they encounter diverse perspectives, which encourage their deeper analysis and foster more critical thinking, along with broader views (Gillies, 2023). Meanwhile, Keiler (2018) confirmed that this collaborative approach resulted in higher-order thinking, as students were obligatory to justify their ideas and confront contradictions.

In Vietnam, several previous studies have validated the effectiveness of group work activities in enhancing English learning outcomes across diverse academic settings. Le and Nguyen (2017) emphasized that consistent group interaction significantly increased students' responsibility and engagement, although group work activities would be more challenging due to mixed ability levels and the use of Vietnamese language in English classrooms. This result supports Do and Le (2019), who shared that group work enhances stronger affective engagement and peer learning, although challenges such as unequal participation and dominant members persist. In another study, Phan (2024) reported notable benefits in speaking fluency and confidence among non-English majors at a technical university following a semester-long implementation of fixed group tasks. Moreover, these findings affirmed that group work not only facilitates language skill development but also encourages social cohesion and learner autonomy in the Vietnamese tertiary EFL context.

However, group work activities were reviewed, and some unavoidable challenges were identified. One of the most commonly challenging issues is the unequal participation among group members, where stronger students often dominate while weaker ones remain passive, reducing the effectiveness of collaborative learning (Do & Le, 2019). Additionally, conflicts within groups, such as those stemming from differences in personalities, learning styles, or language proficiency levels, can hinder group cohesion and learning outcomes (Le & Nguyen, 2017). Time management and over-reliance on the first language are also recurring concerns; students often switch to their native language for convenience, limiting opportunities for English practice (Phan, 2024). From the teacher's perspective, facilitating multiple groups simultaneously, ensuring fair assessment, and keeping learners accountable pose significant challenges in terms of workload and classroom management (Zhang et al., 2022). Furthermore, cultural attitudes toward individual achievement over collaboration may discourage students from fully engaging in group work, particularly in exam-oriented educational contexts such as Vietnam (Tran & Nguyen, 2021).

### *Learning Autonomy*

The concept of learner autonomy has emerged as a pivotal factor influencing the efficacy of language learning, particularly in collaborative settings such as group work. This notion of learner autonomy encompasses not only the capacity for self-directed learning but also active engagement in collaborative environments that foster critical thinking and interpersonal skills.

The intersection of autonomy and group work highlights the importance of social dynamics in language learning. It has been established that collaborative tasks can foster a supportive peer culture that encourages learners to take risks and experiment with language use (Egitim, 2025). Such environments not only promote language acquisition but also cultivate essential interdependent skills, as learners must negotiate roles and responsibilities to function effectively as a group (Zhang et al., 2022). Learners are considered capable of determining their own learning objectives, appropriate content, progression, and selecting proper methods and suitable

techniques to use during their learning process (Cotterall, 2000; Pham, 2023). This explanation seems to be better understood by Smith (2007), who states that learner autonomy is activated when learners have the power and right to learn for themselves (p. 2).

Moreover, in the context of learning English, teachers and researchers have demonstrated their interest in identifying factors that facilitate language learning (Sato, 2022; Pham, 2023). Learner autonomy, indicated in learner reflection and taking responsibility, has become a crucial concern in language teaching and learning (Little, 2022; Ly, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2024). According to Nguyen et al. (2024), learning autonomy is one of the key factors influencing learning outcomes. Students are determined to be responsible and autonomous for their own learning process.

Zhang et al. (2022) demonstrated that group work tasks can both foster students' learner autonomy and expose students to the complexities of group dynamics. Furthermore, recent studies by Chowdhury (2021) and Dahal et al. (2022) have emphasized that group work facilitation enhances learner autonomy and task achievement significantly in an English learning context.

### *Teacher and students' roles in group work*

Teachers and students are both key stakeholders involved in groupwork activities in the classroom. The teacher's role is emphasized as a facilitator, guiding the implementation of group work. They also need to maintain a balance between independent and scaffolding activities (Keiler, 2018). According to MacAllister (2025), teachers are not only knowledge deliverers; their strategic interjections and support can significantly impact group outcomes by setting clear expectations and fostering their learning environment. Conversely, students are increasingly recognized not just as passive participants but as active contributors to their learning processes, responsible for negotiating tasks and facilitating peer relationships (Silva et al., 2021). This shift in perspective, from viewing students as receptacles of knowledge to seeing them as co-creators of their educational experiences, is pivotal in understanding the collaborative process in group work.

In addition, Roberson and Franchini (2014) reported that group work is only effectively implemented when students are aware of its role in serving the stated learning goals and disciplinary thinking goals of the course. Meanwhile, the teachers play the roles of facilitators, supervisors, recorders, reporters, harmonizers, innovators, and checkers in the chain of group work activities for the entire course (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2005).

The teacher's role in the classroom is significant when implementing group work activities. Studies by Chowdhury (2021) and Bui and Nguyen (2024) demonstrate that teachers who facilitate group interactions effectively can significantly influence the group's overall success, as their strategies often shape student perceptions of group work. This aligns with the research of Pedersen, S., & Liu, M. (2003), which confirmed that the teacher's flexibility is a factor in the effectiveness of group-work implementation. Moreover, Rohmah et al. (2023) and Leslie (2018) articulate that effective teacher facilitation can enhance collaboration and engagement, illustrating the critical influence of teacher interventions on group dynamics.

The students' roles in the group-working procedure would be essential, specifically in their leadership and friendship among group members. For instance, MacAllister (2025) and Silva et al. (2021) reveal that clearly defined roles among students can lead to improved performance, suggesting that role allocation is essential for optimizing group work. In a design-based study by Bao and Pham (2021), the findings showed that students agreed on the effectiveness of group work in a friend-related group with their appointed leaders compared to mixed-ability groups

with unfamiliar classmates.

The students' roles in group work activities have been investigated significantly beyond the academic achievement, to the social and emotional dimensions of learning (Huang & Lajoie, 2023). The students' performance has been demonstrated in various roles, including leader, mediator, and contributor. All of these roles can significantly affect the collaborative experience and the level of individual accountability that participants feel (Zitha et al., 2023). Furthermore, recognizing and explicating students' roles leads to more strategic group formations that account for individual strengths, weaknesses, and varying levels of engagement in classroom activities (Barkley et al., 2005).

With all the significant benefits of group work activities mentioned, the students and teachers at this technical university still do not find the implementation of group work in their own English lessons to be effective and satisfactory. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate an alternative approach to designing group work activities consecutively across all lessons in an EFL course. This research is aimed to answer the two research questions below:

1. How were group work activities implemented consecutively in the English course?
2. What are the students' and teachers' feedback on this implementation?

## Methods

### *Pedagogical Setting & Participants*

To explore the effectiveness of consecutive group work activities in English learning lessons, a different group work tool was introduced and implemented in the researchers' EFL classes at a technical university in Vietnam. The participants comprised 68 technical students, who are currently learning English for their technical occupational purposes. They are the second-year students majoring in Electrical and Electronics Engineering. Their ages range from 19-21 years old. Seven of nine interviewed students are boys and only two are girls. Their English level is assumed to be at A2 level. They are learning the course English for Electrical and Electronics Engineering 4. This course is provided for second-year students majoring in Electrical and Electronics Engineering. It was established with English for Occupational Purposes and delivered in a blended format (35 periods of online learning, including vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, and writing practice, together with 40 face-to-face periods concentrating on speaking skills). They have learned English for three semesters of 225 periods before joining this English course, so their English level is expected to be at the A2 level. They were guided and instructed to work continuously in one group for the whole English course in ten weeks.

The teachers involved in the research were two of the author's colleagues, who taught the same English course program at the same time. They shared the methods for implementing and controlling group work during the course.

### *Implementation procedure*

Consequently, three stages of consecutive group work approach were established. First, the teacher instructed the students to work in groups for the entire semester, and then asked them to divide themselves into groups of four to six students, depending on the number of students. In our classroom context, with 30-35 students, the number of groups usually ranges from 5 to 7, with 4-5 students per group. This division was believed to be suitable and it would enhance students' roles in the group.

The second stage involved establishing discipline rules for group work performances, in which

the teacher and students discussed and decided on the rules for bonuses and fines for every group work activity. This would encourage the students to work actively and responsibly in groups. The final stage is to implement group work in all classroom activities and adhere to the rules for the entire course.

### *Group work disciplines*

The teacher is usually the person who sets the rules for the classroom. However, for this particular classroom, both teacher and students are required to establish rules for group work actions altogether. The rules, then, must be in written form and announced to the whole class so that students can figure out what to do for themselves. Setting the rules independently will make students more responsible for their roles and duties in group work. The students discussed and set rules regarding members' attendance, homework completion, private conversations in the Vietnamese language, mobile phone use, and task fulfillment. The scores for each action range from 5 to 100, depending on the complexity level of the tasks. In fact, these activities could become task-based, allowing each group to earn competitive points. Accordingly, for each response the group would receive 20 points. These types of tasks require the cooperative contributions and responses from all students in the group to achieve success and competitive environment among groups in the class.

### *Data collection and analysis*

After applying the grouping technique, where students were assigned to one group at the beginning of the semester and remained in the same group for all English lessons, data were collected through in-depth interviews. The participants included nine university students and two English language teachers who had implemented and experienced the group-work model.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the semester to gather insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and evaluations of the group-work process. Interview questions focused on students' engagement, collaboration, learning outcomes, and the challenges or advantages of working in fixed groups over time. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns related to student participation, group dynamics, and the teacher's role in facilitating group-work.

The qualitative nature of the study enabled a deeper understanding of how group work functions in real classroom settings and provided practical implications for improving group work strategies in English language teaching. The findings served as the basis for developing recommendations aimed at enhancing student involvement and learning effectiveness in group-based activities.

## **Results/Findings**

### *The students' feedback on the continuous groupwork implementation*

The findings from the interviews revealed several key themes related to the effectiveness of using fixed groups throughout the semester in English language classrooms. Overall, both students reported positive experiences, noting improvements in group cohesion, student participation, and learning motivation. The interview data were interpreted qualitatively to uncover underlying themes related to student motivation, responsibility, and engagement.

### *Students' attitudes towards group-work activity model*

Almost all of students expressed their positive attitudes toward the group-work activity model. Many of them indicated that they enjoyed this form of collaborative learning, with many noting

that it enabled them to develop not only their English proficiency but also a range of transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, and time management. This suggested that students perceived group-work as a holistic learning experience rather than one limited to linguistic outcomes. Student #2 reported that

*“I really like working in groups in my English course. It is completely different from what we have studied before. I enjoy collaborating with my team to complete all the tasks assigned by my teachers. My teammates are very engaged and united so we can earn more scores from our teachers’ activities...”*

### *Students’ engagements*

Significantly, most participants agreed that their groupwork experiences in the English course increased their sense of responsibility substantially. Students described a heightened awareness of their individual contributions, as well as a collective commitment to achieving shared goals. As Student #7 shared

*“At first, most of my teammates didn’t care about the regulations of groupwork performance. However, after two lessons with many minus scores due to homework incompleteness and late attendance, they became more responsible for their roles within the team. They changed their awareness and follow the rules much better...”*

Additionally, some of students felt that working consistently within the same groups introduced a healthy sense of competition, motivating them to perform better in English tasks. For instance, Student #9 reported that

*“Well, I really like my teammates. At first, we knew little about each other, but after participating in some group work activities, we got to know each other better. And then, we can share not only our study but also our student life every time we learn English together...”*

### *Students’ challenges*

While this competitiveness was generally viewed as positive, some students noted that it occasionally led to stress or pressure, suggesting the need for balanced group expectations and emotional support from instructors.

*“The English course this semester was very difficult and stressful to me. I had to follow a lot of regulations, which made me under pressure to study English. I had to complete all the homework or my team would lose our score. I couldn’t find any spare time for relaxation, as we had to participate in all activities in groups for the entire time. However, I learnt a lot about the discipline and responsibility in teamwork performance.”*

(confessed by Student #6)

Furthermore, most students showed their willingness to continue working in their fixed groups in future English courses. This finding reflects a sense of continuity and satisfaction, indicating the potential for the long-term integration of group work into language curricula. However, the response also revealed concerns about group imbalances and the need for clearer role assignments, indicating that sustained motivation requires ongoing teacher facilitation and adjustment.

*“I think groupwork was very good for us to be more confident in learning and practicing our English skills. However, I sometimes found that my teacher missed counting the scores of some activities, which led to our demotivation and lack of motivation in the next*



*activities. As a result, we usually lost our scores for other groups due to our under attention...”*

noted by Student #5.

### *The teachers' feedback on the continuous groupwork implementation*

#### *Teachers' attitudes*

According to two interviewed teachers, they expressed their satisfaction and positive attitudes towards implementing consecutive groupwork activities in their classrooms. Teacher #1 shared that

*“I found this groupwork implementation so great and useful for my English class. The teacher no longer cared about the noise and private talks in the class during the lesson. Once the teacher gave the instructions for the activities, the groups followed right immediately. The teacher just walked around and guided students to complete their tasks.”*

She also mentioned the benefits of this grouping approach that

*“I did not worry about the students' homework because after some reminding times, the group members would remind their partners for homework completion. I realized that my students became more active, engaged in the lessons and practicing their English skills, surprisingly more responsible for their study and teamwork performance.”*

The Teacher #2 eagerly told that

*“Since I applied this groupwork style for the whole course, the most favourite but challenging task is summing the scores for my students' teamwork. Other classroom activities seemed to be implemented in a more straightforward and enjoyable manner. I found this groupwork performance so practical and beneficial to learning style and learning autonomy...”*

#### *Teachers' feedback on students' engagement*

Overall, the findings point to a shift in classroom dynamics, where both teachers and students are more actively engaged in the learning process. For teachers, the implementation of structured group work implies a redefinition of their roles - not only as knowledge transmitters but also as facilitators of collaboration. To sustain these positive outcomes, educators are encouraged to invest in thoughtful group design, continuous monitoring, and responsive adjustments based on student feedback and group performance.

However, the findings show that the group work experience has significantly impacted the students' attitude toward learning English. Furthermore, it has been seen that this pedagogical approach facilitates improved interactions between group members.

Last but not least, the consistent use of group work in EFL courses has revealed how well the group work approach supports and improves students' engagement in English classes. This useful method fosters a friendly learning community where students can share their thoughts and concerns about studying English with other group members collaboratively and competitively. Additionally, it fosters teamwork skills as well as English proficiency, which helps students gain more valuable group work experience.



## Discussion

These findings align with previous studies that have proved the pedagogical value of collaborative learning models in language teaching and learning. For instance, Johnson et al (1998) investigated that cooperative learning enhances not only academic achievement but also interpersonal and social skills. Similarly, the interviewed students in this study reported improvement in communication, teamwork, and time management.

One salient theme emerging from the data of this research is students' increased sense of responsibility and effort over their groupwork learning tasks. This finding is consistent with the study by Dörnyei and Murphey (2003), who emphasize the role of group dynamics in sustaining motivation and fostering learner autonomy. As mentioned in the findings, the fixed group format prompted accountability, especially as peer pressure and group expectations in incentivized timely homework completion and regular participation. These outcomes align with Slavin's (1996) claim that group interdependence is a crucial factor in pushing student effort and academic outcomes. Similar observations have been made in recent studies on gamified cooperative learning (Lee & Lai, 2024), which highlight how structured, reward-based systems keep learners engaged and accountable over multiple sessions.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Dörnyei and Murphey (2003), supporting the notion that stable group membership can strengthen learner motivation by creating a sense of belonging and fostering peer accountability. However, the significance of this study lies in its further exploration of how motivation evolves over time, particularly when combined with performance-based scoring systems and teacher monitoring.

While Johnson et al. (1998) and Gillies (2016) have emphasized the academic and social benefits of cooperative learning, this study extends their findings by documenting students' perceptions of acquiring time management and team discipline skills, which attributes less commonly detailed in prior research.

The present study contributes to this gap by documenting student-reported improvements in time management, task delegation, and discipline—skills increasingly emphasized in recent Asian research. In this sense, group work not only facilitated language learning but also served as a platform for practicing workplace-relevant soft skills, a dimension underrepresented in earlier cooperative learning literature.

## Conclusion

The findings from this study highlight the significant pedagogical value of implementing consecutive group work throughout an English language course. Both students and teachers reported their enhancements in participation, motivation, and responsibility as a result of consistent group work performances. Students not only developed their English language proficiency but also improved essential soft skills, including teamwork, time management, and interpersonal communication. Importantly, the group work model encouraged a sense of shared accountability, mutual support, and healthy competition, all of which contributed to a more engaging and dynamic learning environment. However, the research also revealed some challenges, such as unequal participation, group imbalances, and stress due to continuous assessment, which emphasized the need for thoughtful teacher facilitation and ongoing monitoring.

Overall, this study reinforces the potential of group work as a powerful instructional strategy in English teaching, especially when implemented with clear expectations, supportive structures,

and responsive pedagogical adjustments. Despite its promising findings, this study was limited by issues of unequal participation and group imbalances, which may have affected the consistency of learning outcomes across students. Additionally, the stress induced by continuous group assessments may have overshadowed the engagement or motivation of some learners. These challenges suggest that while consecutive group work holds great pedagogical value, its effectiveness is highly dependent on careful facilitation and ongoing teacher intervention. It is recommended that future research further explore the long-term effects of group work on learner autonomy and performance across diverse educational settings.

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## The application of project-based learning in English for a Basic Marketing class to enhance Oral presentation skills at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade (HUIT)


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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** Project-based learning, students' perception, effectiveness

This research aimed to investigate the efficacy of problem-based learning (PBL) and students' perspectives regarding its application in a fundamental marketing course at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade. The experimental class has 41 third-year participants. To achieve the study's goal, a combination of research methods was employed, including pre- and post-course tests, surveys, interviews with ten students, and observations of Basic Marketing classes at the university. The data analysis revealed that students who engaged in PBL demonstrated notable enhancements in their oral presentation abilities, as seen by their post-test scores. Students generally have a favorable view of project-based learning (PBL) in the classroom, largely due to its potential to make lessons more engaging and improve their oral presentation skills; however, obstacles related to time and resources arise during the implementation of PBL activities. This study provided a modest contribution to educational implications for educators and future research in the same domain.

### Introduction

There is a growing need for English proficiency to access global opportunities (Mahjabeen, 2025). Project-based learning (PBL) has become a favourite approach in English classes worldwide because it builds language skills along with vital 21st-century competencies. Beckett and Pae (2024) note that PBL sharpens students' ability to think critically, collaborate with peers, and deliver polished presentations —habits that employers increasingly demand. Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia have incorporated PBL into their language courses to enhance learner independence and promote the use of language in real-world contexts (Stoller, 2006). Interest in the method is growing across Asia. Research from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Indonesia indicates that PBL-style English lessons enhance speaking skills, foster responsibility, and improve overall communication (Aldobekhi & Abahussain, 2024; Al-Bahadli, Al-Obaydi, & Pikhart, 2023; Luhulima, 2023).

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In the Vietnamese higher education context, language acquisition is an emotionally charged learning environment, as English serves not only as a subject but also as a fundamental skill integrated across other academic fields (Le, Pham, Than, & Nguyen, 2025). In Vietnam, though the approach is still new, PBL has already been linked to higher student engagement, greater autonomy, and gains in speaking, listening, and intercultural competence (Ngo, 2014; Nguyen, 2017; Le & Nguyen, 2021). Adapting to the model can be challenging, especially when learners lack background knowledge or are unfamiliar with self-directed tasks. Partly for that reason, English-medium introductory marketing courses at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade now pair the discipline with PBL in an effort to improve students' shaky oral presentation skills. Although the initial findings are promising, further empirical research is needed to determine the efficacy of PBL in improving English communication in this discipline-specific setting.

## Literature review

### *Definitions of Project-Based Learning:*

Scholars writing about classroom practice use a mix of names for project-based learning. Beckett (2002) refers to it as project work, a project approach, a project-oriented strategy, and even project-based training; however, he ultimately settles on the phrase "project-based learning" as his core definition. In constructivist PBL, students tackle real-world problems, an idea demonstrated in the work of Barron (1998) and later by Sidman-Taveau and Milner-Boloti (2001). For Miller (2006), PBL is an active, learner-centered approach that rests on goals, teamwork, clear communication, growing independence, worthwhile questions, and thoughtful follow-up in everyday settings. Blank (1997) and Harwell (1997) describe project-based instruction as genuine because learners plan, create, run, and review projects that matter outside the classroom. Mamakou and Grigoriadou (2011) echo this picture. The same group notes that PBL now appears in many fields, including language study. Stoller (2006) prefers project-based instruction, or PBI, yet keeps most PBL ideas, calling it a long-term task with a process and a product that demands mixed skills, links language and content, and closes with group reflection. Regardless of the name, PBL is an effective way to teach pupils a range of subjects in various educational contexts. ESP includes topic selection, questioning, document research, data analysis, report writing, product evaluation, and presentation.

**Typical features of PBL:** Project-based learning (PBL) originates from constructivist and learner-centered ideas, providing students with a dynamic space to develop both academic skills and practical knowledge. Under PBL, learners are not just passive listeners; they step into the driver's seat, choosing topics, tackling problems, and charting their own goals. This freedom usually sparks deeper commitment, since students know their choices matter. Because the approach is based on action rather than memorization, learners retain lessons as they apply theories in contexts that are meaningful to them (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). What truly sets PBL apart is its steady focus on real-world challenges. Every project begins with an open question and requires clear language as teams gather facts, weigh options, and craft informed answers. Because the work feels relevant, motivation rises, and so do students' cognitive and speaking skills (Stoller, 2006). Collaboration is also crucial for the success of PBL. One child may excel at spreadsheets, while another may draw maps, but both must listen, negotiate, and do their part. This collaborative effort fosters the shared responsibility that students will require for class projects and their future careers (Alan & Stoller, 2005). The payoff is evident in tangible products—reports, videos, displays, and even songs or apps. Teachers can review these public artifacts to see how well each learner blends information, creativity, and critical thinking

(Stoller, 1997). By combining academic rigor with practical application, PBL provides a well-rounded education that extends far beyond test scores. Its blend of authenticity, student choice, and teamwork is slowly reshaping language teaching and many other fields.

**Components Influencing PBL Implementation:** Three interlinked factors significantly impact the effectiveness of project-based learning (PBL) in classrooms: the teacher's role, curriculum design, and the learning environment. To start with, effective PBL teachers step back from the podium and act more like guides than lecture-givers. They assist learners in picking topics, planning steps, analyzing data, and pausing for honest self-review, all while encouraging sensible independence (Beckett & Slater, 2005; Hattie, 2012). The same instructors must also build a room—or an online space—where curiosity, grit, and teamwork feel safe and natural (Larmer, Mergendoller, & Boss, 2015). Good curriculum design then provides those projects with an academic backbone and a clear purpose. When theory and practice are closely intertwined, students grasp ideas more deeply and sharpen their people skills simultaneously (Beckett & Slater, 2005). The broader environment, including the mood, layout, and rules, plays a significant role, as students learn more effectively in environments where they feel comfortable and have the freedom to adapt. In supportive, flexible spaces that address genuine community problems, motivation soars and resilience grows, enabling young people to tackle real-world puzzles (Haines, 1989).

**Types of Projects in PBL:** Project-based learning encompasses a diverse range of project types that vary in their organization, student engagement, and data collection methods. Beckett (2002) categorized the project models into organized, semi-structured, and unstructured models based on feedback from professionals, educators, and students (Stoller, 1997). Structured projects give teachers complete control over the project's design, content, methodology, resources, and evaluation. Unstructured projects, on the other hand, are typically student-directed, allowing students to determine how the project will be carried out and what its parameters will be. Semi-structured projects are an example of a collaborative model in which students and teachers work together to design and execute.

Alternative classifications centre on methodological methodologies. Legutke and Thomas (1991) classified projects into five categories based on the range of sources and methods used by students to achieve project goals: research, survey, encounter, text, and communication. Each sort reflects a distinct strategy for content engagement and data collection. Haines (1989) proposed another paradigm that is concerned with the features of the final product. The project is classified as an organizational, production, or performance project based on whether its outcome involves formal planning, the fabrication of a tangible product, or a live exhibition. These various varieties demonstrate how PBL can be tailored to diverse learning objectives and educational contexts, underscoring its importance in developing both academic and practical skills.

**Stages of Project-Based Learning:** Over the years, researchers and teachers have developed step-by-step guides to help language learners navigate project-based learning (PBL) in the classroom. Early works, such as Fried-Booth's three-part plan from 1985—planning, doing, and product-making—formed a useful starting point, but overlooked the importance of reflecting on what students had learned. Papandreou later added more depth in 1994 by splitting the process into six stages, which gave inquiry and self-evaluation a clearer place to exist; yet, the flow still felt mostly linear and left little room for quickly looping back to earlier tasks.

To fill those holes, Stoller and Myers (2020) developed a five-step guide: get ready, gather and sort information, show the final product, pause to reflect, and then either add a little polish or move on. Looping that set of stages together allows students to think critically as they work,

use English in real-world contexts, and exchange honest feedback with the teacher at each stop. The design also shifts the instructor's role toward that of a guide, allowing learners to take more control and speak up more often as the project progresses. Whether simple or detailed, every one of these roadmaps still clings to the PBL heartbeats of teamwork, ownership, real work, and blending language skills with fresh content. In context-rich classes like Basic Marketing, such blueprints help sharpen practical abilities, especially when students must speak English with confidence during a live presentation.

**Project-Based Learning's Advantages:** Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an experiential learning methodology that offers students a significant learning experience (Aldobekhi & Abahussain, 2024). Project-Based Learning (PJBL) in higher education has various advantages, beginning with active involvement and student-centred learning. PBL involves students in genuine, real-world projects that enable them to assume responsibility for their education (Woenardi et al., 2022). Project-based learning (PBL) enhances social, emotional, and cognitive skills by treating education as a real-world process, rather than just a list of facts to memorize. A growing body of research indicates that PBL enables learners to connect ideas, resulting in improved grades, better test performance, and increased confidence in applying their knowledge in new situations (Chang & Lee, 2010; Ravitz, 2010). Tough, open-ended problems push them to question assumptions and weigh evidence, while built-in pauses for honest self-review sharpen their metacognitive awareness (Reeve & Svihla, 2016; Lin & Ma, 2011). Globally, PBL enhances the development of communication skills, including enquiry, identifying core ideas, making oral presentations, and engaging in conversations by challenging arguments with data (Owens & Hite, 2022).

Give students authentic ownership through planned, purposeful steps, and passion replaces passivity; motivation soars, attention deepens, and the classroom feels alive rather than scripted (Carrabba & Farmer, 2018). Working in carefully mixed teams, young people hold each other accountable, learning to juggle deadlines, bounce back from setbacks, and share victories instead of guarding credit (Bell, 2010). Meanwhile, teachers shift from lecturing at the front to guiding at the side, asking probing questions, coaching habits, and, as a result, lifting the whole learning atmosphere (Ravitz, 2010). By honoring diverse strengths—PBL allows the artist to sketch, the analyst to model, and the quiet listener to observe—it maps a path toward genuine differentiation, fairness, and belonging. In the end, graduates leave school not just smarter, but ready for jobs and communities that demand bold conversation, careful judgment, and teamwork every single day.

**Composition of Oral Presentations:** An oral presentation typically consists of three basic parts: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The intro's job is to grab the audience's attention, introduce the speaker and the topic, and summarize the main points. It sets the tone of the discussion, tells watchers what to expect, and does all that in a way that feels brief but informative. The speaker spends most of the time in the body, sharing facts, personal stories, quick anecdotes, and using slides or props to keep the audience engaged and reinforce the key ideas. Towards the end, the conclusion aids listeners in connecting the various threads, signals the near completion of the talk, and reiterates the main themes. To wrap things up clearly and maintain high energy, a good conclusion often includes a question, a challenge to act, or an invitation to think more deeply.

**Observation in the Classroom:** Classroom observation remains one of the most effective qualitative methods for studying the everyday rhythms of teaching and learning in real-time. By sitting quietly among students and teachers, a researcher can observe how desks are arranged, how praise is distributed, or when students fall silent with confusion, gathering rich

details that questionnaires often overlook. When that lens is focused on project-based learning, or PBL, observations show whether, as promised, students choose topics, set goals, spark ideas, stumble, and finally stitch the pieces together. The aim, in short, is to capture a detailed, chronological record of who does what in the classroom, pausing on pivotal exchanges, subtle shifts in motivation, and moments when theory intersects with messy reality.

**Criteria for Classroom Observation in PBL:** Since PBL is an experiential and learner-centered approach, it can be effectively assessed using clear observation criteria. First, observers focus on active participation in group discussions and project work as a measure of student engagement, which is a sign of knowledge building (Thomas, 2000). Second, the evaluation of teacher facilitation, instead of direct instruction, hinges on the instructor's involvement in inquiry, learning, and autonomy (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). Third, communication and collaboration are studied to learn how students solve problems in the classroom and in the real world, negotiate roles, and co-create meaning (Barrows, 1996). Fourth, De Jong et al. (2009) assess learning activities based on how well students use what they have learned in the classroom. To promote self-awareness and deeper learning, PBL classrooms should integrate reflective thinking and formative evaluation (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). These criteria provide a comprehensive framework for observing and enhancing PBL practice, particularly when the goal is to develop language competency, foster learner autonomy, and acquire transferable skills.

### *Social Constructivist Theory*

Social constructivism was established by educational philosopher Lev Vygotsky in 1968. Social constructivism holds that social interaction, language, and culture all influence cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, knowledge is socially produced through cooperation with instructors, peers, and the culture. Students can learn new ideas and make sense of their experiences with the use of language. According to this theory, learning occurs best in a supportive environment where peers or adults assist pupils with tasks they are unable to complete. Active, group learning is emphasized by social constructivism as a means of fostering cognitive and individual growth.

### *Aims and Objectives of the Study*

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of project-based learning (PBL) in enhancing students' oral presentation skills in a foundational English marketing course. The study has two main goals: (1) to compare how well students perform in oral presentations in a project-based learning (PBL) setting versus a traditional lecture format, and (2) to understand what students think about project-based learning by looking at the opinions of participants in a Basic Marketing English course at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade, especially about how PBL has helped improve their oral presentation skills.

### *Research Questions*

To achieve the study's objectives, the survey aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What is the effectiveness of project-based learning for students in a basic marketing English course, as measured by the quality of their oral presentations, compared to a control group undergoing traditional learning?
2. What are the students' perceptions of the use of project-based learning in a basic marketing English experimental class?

## Methods

### *Pedagogical Setting*

At the research site, students follow a set curriculum that requires them to study all subjects for three 135-minute sessions each week, including general English and English for Specific Purposes. The two-credit, ten-week course on fundamental marketing, which is currently in operation, enrolls students. The training develops critical skills, including communication and problem-solving, while emphasizing both the academic and practical aspects of marketing. The researcher's particular class, where students participated in project-based learning exercises meant to improve their oral presentation abilities, served as the research environment. The lively and captivating nature of the lesson created the perfect environment for assessing how well PBL enhanced students' ability to express their opinions orally with boldness and effectiveness.

### *Participants*

The target population for this study consisted of third-year English-major students at HUIT who were enrolled in the Basic Marketing course that semester. All students must complete general and specialized knowledge, and they are in the sixth semester of the university training program.

### *Sample size and sample method*

Taherdoost (2017) emphasized that determining an appropriate sample size is essential for generating significant inferences about a broader population. This study included 81 student volunteers, all of whom were registered in the researcher's classes. The control group consisted of 41 students, while the comparative group comprised 40 students.

A convenience sampling method was utilized, in accordance with Creswell's (2018) recommendations for exploratory research conducted under resource limitations. Participants were selected based on their accessibility, which enabled efficient data collection in the classroom setting. This approach yielded concrete advantages, including time and cost efficiency, as well as logistical feasibility in an educational context (Thomas & David, 2017). Additionally, selecting students from a single school helped maintain consistency, which supported the study's goal of evaluating the effectiveness of educational interventions in a stable learning environment.

### *The study's design*

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to gather comprehensive data from several sources, thereby increasing the validity of the findings. Moreover, classroom observation collected real-time data, yielding valuable insights into participant interactions and behaviors inside their authentic learning environment. The research employed T-tests, student surveys, student interviews, and classroom observations, all of which contributed to a thorough understanding of the study problem. A group case study was deemed appropriate as it offered a more thorough perspective on the research issue by facilitating an in-depth comparison and analysis of the outcomes from two distinct student cohorts.

### *Data collection & analysis*

#### *Pretest and Post-test*

Pre- and post-assessments were utilized to evaluate the effect of project-based learning (PBL) on students' oral presentation abilities. The pretest administered at the course's outset aimed to provide a benchmark for the students' presentation skills, confidence, and comprehension of fundamental marketing concepts. This preliminary assessment provided a definitive overview

of each student's baseline in presenting skills and fundamental marketing knowledge. The course concluded with the administration of the post-test, which evaluated the students' oral presenting competencies after the PBL intervention. The post-test, structured to replicate the pre-test, facilitated a direct comparison of students' competencies before and after engaging in PBL activities. This comparative analysis was essential for assessing if the PBL technique led to substantial enhancements in the students' oral presentation abilities. The study evaluated the extent to which PBL enhanced students' oral presenting skills in marketing presentations by examining the results of both assessments.

### *Questionnaires*

After a project-based learning activity, students in a Basic Marketing English class completed a survey to assess their perception of the program's effectiveness. The survey had three parts. The first part collected information about the students, including their educational background and prior learning experiences. The second part examined what students thought about project-based learning, including its strengths and weaknesses, as well as their overall impressions. The aim was to understand how they thought and felt throughout the learning activity. The last part included an open-ended question to gauge students' interest in incorporating project-based learning into their future classes.

All 41 students in the test group received the online survey, which was written in Vietnamese to ensure everyone understood it. We handed it out right after the project-based learning activity to get opinions while they were still fresh. The survey consisted of 23 questions, each with a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). Questions 1–16 primarily focused on the positive aspects of project-based learning, including enhanced involvement, skill development, teamwork, and learning. Questions 17–23 pertained to concerns, such as obtaining sufficient supplies, inadequate assistance from the teacher, excessive workload, and insufficient time. The survey was based on past studies on how students feel and perform in project-based learning, from Fatmawati (2018), Puangpunsi (2021), and Rusiana, Nuraeningsih, and Hajimia (2023). We modified the survey to align with the objectives of our study and the needs of our students.

Overall, this survey allowed us to quickly assess what students thought about project-based learning in the Basic Marketing English class, highlighting what was effective and where we could make improvements.

### *Semi-structured interviews*

Ten students from the experimental class were interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences with Project-Based Learning (PBL) in the Basic Marketing English course. These volunteers were selected from across the three performance levels—good, fair, and average—based on their answers to a questionnaire. This method was used to get different views on the PBL. Each interview was approximately 10 minutes long and conducted in Vietnamese to ensure clarity and facilitate participants' ability to express their thoughts and experiences more clearly. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission, then transcribed into English, and examined for themes. The interview consisted of three open-ended questions designed to gather information about the students' attitudes toward PBL, their experiences with incorporating marketing ideas into assignments, and any challenges they had encountered.

The following were the interview questions:

*1. How do you feel about this Basic Marketing class using the PBL method?*



*2. How has using marketing principles in a practical project enhanced your ability to give oral presentations?*

*3. What was the biggest challenge you faced during the PBL process, particularly in preparing your oral presentation?*

The qualitative data were analyzed using NVivo software, which enabled thematic grouping and systematic coding in accordance with the study's research objectives. The triangulation of responses with quantitative data from the questionnaire enabled greater validity and depth in understanding the students' perspectives. To ensure privacy and clarity, student respondents were assigned pseudonyms ranging from SV1 to SV10. This detailed method enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the perceived advantages, disadvantages, and practical applications of PBL in enhancing students' speaking skills within an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) context.

### *Classroom observation*

The ideas presented in the previous chapter guided the design of the classroom observation component of this study. The study examined project-based learning (PBL) in a basic marketing English class, focusing on aspects such as student assessment, perceptions of learning, its relevance to the real world, collaboration and communication among students, and student engagement.

Because PBL places a strong emphasis on students working together, getting them involved was a key goal. The observations paid close attention to how students talked in groups, solved problems, and worked on projects. In PBL settings that worked well, students provided feedback frequently, took the lead, and appeared enthusiastic. The study aligns with Thomas's (2000) notion that encouraging students to engage in peer discussions is crucial for PBL to be successful.

Working together and communicating effectively were also important to observe. In PBL, students create knowledge by talking and working things out together. The observation data showed how students shared ideas, built upon what others said, and worked together to solve problems as a group. These teamwork actions back up Barrows' (1996) point that being involved in a real way helps groups solve problems and think critically.

Applying what they learned was the third thing they looked at. PBL aims to apply classroom knowledge to real-world scenarios. The study examined how students applied marketing concepts in real-world situations to determine if they could apply what they learned in the classroom in other settings. De Jong et al. (2014) suggest that when students encounter real-world problems, they can acquire valuable skills that will benefit them in future employment. Lastly, the observations incorporated critical thinking and assessment, essential components for long-term learning in PBL. Students scrutinized their work, incorporated feedback from classmates and teachers, and gradually improved their projects. Thinking about what they're doing helps students learn by examining their thinking and applying it to their studies (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

These observation rules provided the study with a comprehensive view of how PBL was implemented in the classroom. In English for Specific Purposes (ESP), PBL made students more engaged, encouraged them to work collaboratively, prompted them to reflect on their learning, and helped them solve real-world problems, thereby enhancing their skills for both academic and professional contexts.

### *Weekly Overview of PBL Activities*

During the project-based learning activity, students did linked assignments that mimicked a true marketing project. The first week involved prep work.

- In Week 2, students improved a made-up product by finding its key traits, selling points, and intended customers. This is important for marketing.
- In Week 3, the class explored various pricing strategies and developed a plan tailored to market conditions and competition.
- In Week 4, students revised their pricing strategies and devised methods to reach their target customers through various channels.
- In Week 5, students developed plans for distributing their product, considering where clients could access it and how it could be delivered.
- Week 6: The students created posters and social media posts to accompany their marketing plans.
- In Week 7, the students worked to improve by rehearsing practice deliveries and receiving feedback.
- Weeks 8-9: Students gave final presentations of their marketing plans, sharing their theoretical ideas in hypothetical situations that could occur.

This process, which involves repeating tasks and practicing, helped students deepen their knowledge of marketing and enhance their abilities to solve problems, collaborate, and communicate effectively. These things are crucial in school and at work.

### *Data Analysis Procedure*

Following data collection, the study moved to data analysis to reach conclusions. Data analysis is crucial for transforming raw data into meaningful insights. Poor analysis can compromise a study's validity, resulting in inaccurate results and credibility issues. We calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficients to verify the reliability of the survey, which confirmed that the questionnaire accurately measured students' thoughts. SPSS 21 was used for descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and paired samples t-tests.

PBL data were collected before and after the intervention to assess changes, addressing the first research question. The same subjects participated in both tests, and a paired-samples t-test was used to assess any differences in scores. The second research topic needed data preparation, fixing missing values, and checking answer quality to validate the datasets.

Descriptive statistics assessed students' experiences with PBL based on quantitative questionnaire data. Measures such as mean and standard deviation helped identify student response patterns.

Theme analysis examined qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations, identifying trends, categorizing responses, and comparing student groups based on performance levels (high, medium, or low). NVivo coded replies for theme creation and analysis. Narrative summaries and quotes added context to the results.

The study employed data triangulation, combining interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations to analyze the impact of PBL on student speaking and attitudes. The findings gained credibility from the combined view of each data source.

### *Validity and Reliability*

The value of a research tool is judged by its reliability and validity. Reliability refers to a measurement tool consistently yielding the same results when used repeatedly (Creswell, 2012). Validity means the tool measures what it should, demonstrating that it is suitable for the study's aims.

This work assessed the coherence of the questions using Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency. A Cronbach's alpha over 0.6 shows reliability (Siregar, 2014). Here, the value exceeded 0.7, indicating excellent internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire in measuring student views on PBL (Table 1). The qualitative part of the work focuses on making sure that different coders agree when analyzing themes. Numerous coders scrutinized the interview data, resulting in the development of a set of clear standards and rules. The work decreased subjective opinion and increased the reliability of the results by monitoring and comparing coding patterns in NVivo.

The face and content validity were carefully checked. Face validity was checked as the tool was being developed to ensure each question measured the intended concept. A respected professor and expert in educational measurement independently verified the content validity of the questionnaire. These experts evaluated the comprehensiveness, alignment with the theory, clarity of language, logical sequence, and utility for teaching purposes. Their advice made the tool more exact and complete.

Following the expert review, students from the study group tested the new tool. This step gave feedback on how clear and easy to understand the questions were, which helped shape the final version. Additionally, more experts were consulted for their input to enhance construct and content validity. Their comments ensured the tool aligned with the study's aims and that the words used were clear. To ensure the grading was fair, a second grader—another faculty member—helped grade the student talks before and after the tests. This double-grading method reduced the likelihood of grader bias and made the grading process fairer and more reliable. The study employed robust methods to ensure that the research tool was reliable, valid, and fair. These steps strengthened the study's results.

**Table 1.**

Reliability of the questionnaires

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Engagement and Interest	.703	4
Skill Development	.708	4
Collaboration and Teamwork	.770	4
Learning Effectiveness	.724	4
Difficulties in implementing PBL	.720	7

## Results of the study

*RQ1. What is the effectiveness of project-based learning for students in a basic marketing English course, as measured by the quality of their oral presentations, compared to a control group undergoing traditional learning?*

**Table 2.**

Independent Samples T-test: Pre-test Control vs. Experimental

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Control	40	7.09	0.39	-0.92	73.32	.360
Experimental	41	7.18	0.53			

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare pre-test scores between the control and experimental groups. The results showed no significant difference in pre-test scores between the control group ( $M = 7.09$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ ) and the experimental group ( $M = 7.18$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ );  $t(73.32) = -0.92$ ,  $p = .360$ . This indicates that both groups were equivalent in their initial proficiency levels before the intervention.

**Table 3.**

Paired Samples T-test: Pre-test vs. Post-test within Each Group

Class	N	Pre-testM (SD)	Post-testM (SD)	Mean Difference	t	df	p
Control class	40	7.09 (0.39)	7.30 (0.44)	0.21	-5.37	39	<.001
Experimental	41	7.18 (0.53)	7.92 (0.45)	0.73	-18.56	40	<.001

For the control class ( $n = 40$ ), the mean score slightly increased from the pre-test ( $M = 7.09$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ ) to the post-test ( $M = 7.30$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ). The paired samples t-test indicated that this difference was statistically significant,  $t(39) = -5.37$ ,  $p < .001$ . However, the mean difference of 0.21 suggests only a modest improvement in performance. In contrast, the experimental class ( $n = 41$ ) showed a more substantial increase. The mean score rose from the pre-test ( $M = 7.18$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ ) to the post-test ( $M = 7.92$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ). The paired samples t-test revealed a highly significant difference,  $t(40) = -18.56$ ,  $p < .001$ , with a mean difference of 0.73. This indicates a remarkable improvement in students' performance.

**Table 4.**

Independent Samples T-test: Post-test Control vs. Experimental

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Control	40	7.30	0.44	-6.27	79	<.001
Experimental	41	7.92	0.45			

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare post-test scores between the control and experimental groups. The results showed that the experimental group ( $M = 7.92$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ) scored significantly higher than the control group ( $M = 7.30$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ );  $t(79) = -6.27$ ,  $p < .001$ .

These findings suggest that the instructional approach employed in the experimental group was considerably more effective in enhancing students' performance compared to the traditional method used in the control group.

In conclusion, the data support that project-based learning improves oral presentation skills. The experimental group did better than the control group after project-based learning. This evidence supports the idea that interactive teaching methods can better help students acquire skills relevant to real-world situations.

*RQ2. What are the students' perceptions of the use of project-based learning in a basic marketing English experimental class?*

**Table 5.**

Students' perceptions of Engagement and Interest

<b>Engagement and Interest</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
<b>PBL1.</b> PBL made the Basic Marketing course more engaging and interesting.	41	4.44	.502
<b>PBL2.</b> The practical application of marketing ideas through PBL piqued my interest in the subject.	41	4.34	.530
<b>PBL3.</b> PBL inspired me to participate in class activities.	41	4.24	.699
<b>PBL4.</b> The participatory element of PBL allowed me to remain focused throughout the course.	41	4.51	.506

Table 3 shows that students in the Basic Marketing English experimental class thought project-based learning was excellent for getting them involved and interested in the course. The results show that students generally felt that PBL made the course more captivating (PBL1, M=4.44), got them interested through practice (PBL2, M=4.34), made them want to join in during class (PBL3, M=4.24), and really helped them pay attention because it was so interactive (PBL4, M=4.51). The average scores for the four parts were between 4.24 and 4.51, with small differences (0.502 to 0.699). These results suggest that PBL made learning fun and engaging, which may have motivated students to become more driven and eager to improve their presentation skills. The numbers, along with what we learned about involvement and interest, prove that PBL is beneficial for oral presentation skills. The high interest and involvement suggest that students were more engaged in learning, which may have motivated them to improve their presentation skills through the PBL approach.

**Table 6.**

Students' perceptions of Skill Development

<b>Skill Development</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
<b>PBL5.</b> PBL helped me improve my critical thinking skills and tackle marketing-related issues.	41	4.37	.623
<b>PBL6.</b> I improved my research and analytical abilities through PBL assignments.	41	4.39	.628
<b>PBL7.</b> PBL helped me improve my cooperation and collaboration abilities.	41	4.56	.502
<b>PBL8.</b> PBL helped me strengthen my communication and oral presenting abilities	41	4.66	.480

Table 4 shows that students in the Basic Marketing English experimental class generally viewed project-based learning as helpful for skill building. The high average scores for all four skill-related statements (4.37 to 4.66) and the low standard deviations (0.480 to 0.628) indicate that most students agreed that project-based learning significantly enhanced their critical thinking and problem-solving skills (PBL 5,  $M=4.37$ ), improved their research and analysis skills (PBL 6,  $M=4.39$ ), helped them work better in teams (PBL 7,  $M=4.56$ ), and greatly boosted their communication and oral presentation skills. The data suggest that students considered PBL a helpful approach to learning key skills for their academic and career development, primarily enhancing their oral presentation abilities. These results are relevant to the study, as they indicate that students perceived PBL as a method that significantly improved their oral presentation skills (PBL8,  $M = 4.66$ ). These results, along with the positive views of engagement and interest presented in Table 7, demonstrate that PBL enhanced the learning experience and provided students with important skills, particularly in communication and oral presentation.

**Table 7.**

Students' perceptions of Learning Effectiveness

Learning Effectiveness	n	M	S.D.
<b>PBL9.</b> PBL helped me comprehend marketing topics more effectively than traditional courses.	41	4.34	.480
<b>PBL10.</b> The PBL method led to a better knowledge of the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion).	41	4.49	.506
<b>PBL11.</b> Applying theoretical information to real-world marketing tasks improved my learning experience.	41	4.27	.633
<b>PBL12.</b> After engaging in PBL activities, I felt more confidence in my ability to use marketing methods.	41	4.59	.499

Table 7 shows that students in the Basic Marketing English trial class thought that project-based learning was a beneficial way to learn. The students' average response was 4.34, with a standard deviation of 0.48. This number indicates that most respondents agreed that PBL was the most effective way to learn marketing concepts. The average score of 4.49 ( $SD = 0.506$ ) suggests that participants perceived PBL as significantly enhancing their understanding of the 4Ps (product, price, place, and promotion). Additionally, students reported that applying what they learned from books to actual marketing work improved their learning experience (PBL11), which had an average score of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 0.633. The numbers suggest that the hands-on part of PBL helped them learn. After participating in PBL activities, students reported feeling more confident when using marketing methods. This statement had the highest average score of 4.59 and the biggest standard deviation of 0.499 (PBL12). All these numbers suggest that students viewed PBL as a helpful teaching method because it helped them understand, remember, and feel sure about using marketing ideas. Students believed that Project-Based Learning (PBL) enhanced their studying, preparing them for and facilitating public talks. A better understanding of marketing ideas will likely lead to more effective and engaging talks.



**Table 8.**

Students' perceptions of Collaboration &amp; Teamwork

<b>Collaboration &amp; Teamwork</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
<b>PBL13.</b> Working in groups during PBL exercises was a valuable learning experience.	41	4.44	.673
<b>PBL14.</b> I increased my responsibility by working on this project.	41	4.49	.637
<b>PBL15.</b> This learning model prioritized joint correction between students.	41	4.15	.792
<b>PBL16.</b> Working in groups fostered an attitude of mutual acceptance and respect between students in the learning process.	41	4.07	.685

According to Table 6, the majority of students in the experimental Basic Marketing English class enjoyed the collaborative nature of project-based learning. Group work facilitated their learning (PBL 13, mean = 4.44), and the project work provided them with a sense of increased personal accountability (PBL 14, mean = 4.49). Additionally, the majority of them concurred that PBL helped students accept and value one another (PBL 16, mean = 4.07) and promoted teamwork in problem-solving (PBL 15, mean = 4.15). On these final two items, however, there was less consensus and a wider range of responses. Overall, the findings demonstrated that PBL allowed students to collaborate in a beneficial learning environment.

Collaborating as a team is frequently a crucial component of organizing and giving public presentations in a PBL context. Students' public speaking abilities are enhanced when they collaborate on projects, as it allows them to share ideas, practice speaking in front of their peers, and receive feedback. PBL probably aided students in developing these abilities by encouraging teamwork and accountability.

**Table 9.**

Students' perceptions of difficulties in PBL implementing

<b>Difficulties in PBL implementing</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
<b>PBL17.</b> The PBL exercises weren't well-organized and easy to follow.	41	1.78	.571
<b>PBL18.</b> I did not have adequate time and resources to complete my PBL projects successfully.	41	2.34	.825
<b>PBL19.</b> I lacked sufficient business knowledge.	41	2.29	.642
<b>PBL20.</b> The teacher didn't offer adequate assistance and comments during the PBL activities.	41	1.83	.381
<b>PBL21.</b> I found it challenging to work together productively because I lacked of social skills	41	2.22	.475
<b>PBL22.</b> I found it difficult to organize the information in the presentation.	41	2.05	.631
<b>PBL23.</b> The lack of research skills made it difficult to complete the project successfully.	41	2.27	.501

Table 9 illustrates the challenges faced by students during the implementation of project-based learning (PBL). Although the majority of students did not perceive the PBL assignments as inadequately organized (PBL17, M = 1.78), a more intricate issue arose with time and resource availability, resulting in a neutral response to PBL18 (M = 2.34). This research indicates that, whereas certain students encountered resource and time limitations, others did not, leading to a disparate experience. The deficiency in business acumen (PBL19, M = 2.29) suggests that the

two-credit marketing course did not provide sufficient foundational knowledge for the assignment. The relatively low average score of 1.83 for instructor feedback and support in PBL20 indicates a widespread perception of inadequate supervision during PBL activities, which is essential for the successful completion of PBL assignments. The structure of presentation content (PBL22,  $M = 2.05$ ) was noted; nevertheless, students did not uniformly identify these issues, and their deficient social skills hindered effective collaboration with group members (PBL21,  $M = 2.22$ ). Ultimately, many respondents recognized a deficiency in research abilities (PBL 23;  $M = 2.27$ ) as a challenge, emphasizing the necessity for enhanced preparation in research techniques.

Identifying the challenges that students perceive might enhance their comprehension of how project-based learning (PBL) affects their oral presentation abilities. Had the students possessed sufficient time, access to knowledge resources, research competencies, and robust group interaction, they may have found it easier to practice and enhance their oral presentation skills. The majority of positive responses in this section indicated that the difficulties were not significant.

### *Results from Interviews*

Students utilized project-based learning (PBL) in their first marketing course, as indicated by interview data. Student responses fell into a few main areas.

**How Students Feel about Project-Based Learning (PBL):** The majority of interviewed participants expressed a positive perception of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach, describing it as more engaging, enjoyable, and practically relevant compared to traditional lecture-based instruction. Several respondents emphasized that PBL enhanced classroom engagement and sustained their interest throughout the course. For example:

S1: *"I liked the PBL method a lot. It kept the class more interesting than just listening to lessons. I got bored sometimes in regular classes, but I was interested and involved in the project."*

S3: *"The PBL method interested me a lot. I liked that it was more hands-on. Instead of just memorizing concepts, it made learning seem more useful in real life."*

A recurring theme in the responses was the interactive and collaborative nature of the learning process. As one student noted:

S5: *"The Basic Marketing class became more active and interactive because of it. Working together to solve a problem was just as important as learning on your own."*

Students also recognized that PBL fostered the development of essential soft skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and responsibility:

S8: *"PBL was different from traditional classes. It required more teamwork and problem-solving, which I think are important skills to develop."*

S7: *"I felt more responsible for my learning and the success of the project."*

While most students responded enthusiastically, some initially expressed reservations due to the unfamiliar structure and perceived workload. However, these concerns generally shifted to positive perceptions as the project progressed:

S4: *"At first, I wasn't sure about PBL because it looked like a lot of work. But I ended up having fun with it. It was a more active way to learn than just listening to classes and taking notes."*

Overall, participants viewed PBL as an effective and stimulating pedagogical approach that promoted engagement, learner autonomy, and practical skill development.

### *Impact of PBL on Presentation Skills*

Students consistently reported that PBL contributed to the development of their oral presentation skills. Preparing and delivering real-world project presentations required a deeper conceptual understanding and clearer articulation of ideas:

S1: *“Using marketing ideas in a real project made me want to explain them. I felt like I really understood the ideas because I had to use them when we presented our project.”*

S2: *“Having to present our project made it more real for me... It helped me be more clear and convincing.”*

Improvements in presentation structure, clarity, and confidence were recurring themes:

S4: *“We had to explain our marketing strategies and justify our decisions. This process really helped me organize my thoughts and speak more confidently.”*

S7: *“I learned how to organize a show, make good use of visual aids, and answer questions with confidence.”*

The integration of teamwork and real-world applications also supported more effective communication:

S8: *“It also taught me how to make challenging business ideas easy to understand.”*

S9: *“The project helped me present marketing strategies like the 4Ps with confidence.”*

S10: *“Using real-world marketing examples helped me present ideas more clearly and confidently.”*

Collectively, these reflections suggest that PBL not only enhanced content mastery but also strengthened students' ability to present persuasively, fluently, and with greater self-assurance.

### *Challenges Encountered During the PBL Process*

Despite the reported benefits, students identified several challenges during the PBL process, particularly when preparing oral presentations. One of the most frequently mentioned issues was coordinating group work:

S1: *“The hardest part was getting my group members to work together at first.”*

S10: *“There were moments when group dynamics made it harder to coordinate and prepare the oral presentation effectively.”*

Time management was another recurring difficulty:

S2: *“The most challenging part was combining all the information we gathered into a concise and engaging presentation within the time limit.”*

S9: *“Balancing the preparation with other coursework was difficult. These variables sometimes affected how much time I could dedicate to refining my oral presentation.”*

S6: *“This was especially true when I was preparing the visual aids and the spoken parts of the presentation.”*

Some participants reported language-related barriers and public speaking anxiety:

S4: *“The most challenging aspect of the presentation was overcoming my nervousness about speaking in front of the class.”*

Other challenges included limited research experience and adapting ideas during the project:

S5: *“I lacked research experience, which made it somewhat challenging to present all the information concisely.”*

S7: *“Changing our first marketing idea was the hardest thing we had to deal with.”*

The interview data indicates that students reacted favorably to the inclusion of PBL in the Basic Marketing subject. The strategy promoted active participation, cultivated a sense of accountability, and significantly enhanced oral presentation abilities. Students encountered prevalent obstacles related to group dynamics, time constraints, and performance anxiety. These observations suggest that although PBL is an effective method for enhancing oral presentation skills in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts, additional scaffolding in terms of group management and linguistic support may be necessary for optimal results.

### *Results from Observation*

Weekly notes showed project-based learning (PBL) improved students' presentation skills. Group marketing work blended language skills with learning about the subject. Early on, students worked on communication and understanding the topic simultaneously. Later exercises focused on vocab, making arguments, and convincing others. In the final weeks, they prepped to give excellent presentations that sounded natural, flowed well, and stayed organized. PBL helped students study together and hold each other responsible.

Classroom behaviour indicated that students had a more positive attitude toward PBL. They came to compromises after some early arguments. With some support from the teacher, students offered each other advice to improve, despite initially having limited business knowledge. As time passed, students picked up on marketing ideas and effectively shared them. Some groups struggled but caught up via hard work and team help.

Observation checklists matched what students said, namely that they felt more involved. They also learned more, gained confidence, and improved their presentation abilities. Surveys and interviews confirmed the strengths of the presentation structure, the speaker's knowledge of the material, their delivery, and their ability to keep the audience engaged. Together, this info says PBL improved how students presented in English in Basic Marketing.

### *Triangulation Results*

This study employed surveys, interviews, and classroom observations to gauge students' opinions on PBL in a Basic Marketing English course. Information from all sources agreed that PBL was helpful in getting students involved, developing skills, understanding the topic, and communicating effectively. Students demonstrated strong involvement, with average scores ranging from 4.24 to 4.51. Students viewed PBL as engaging and beneficial, transforming passive learning into active work. Interviews revealed that students felt more invested in the course, demonstrating how PBL's real-world focus and hands-on approach motivated them. PBL made a significant difference in presentation abilities, with the top average score (4.66) indicating improved communication. Students reported increased confidence, speaking freely, and articulating their thoughts clearly, thanks to repeated practice. Giving feedback to one another and practicing in groups helped improve public speaking in a relaxed setting. Those involved scored PBL as helpful for understanding marketing topics (average scores: 4.27-4.59). Using theory in real-world projects made learning clearer and more effective. Observations revealed that students utilized marketing knowledge collaboratively in group tasks.

PBL built more teamwork (average scores: 4.07-4.49). However, there were some early conflicts among group members and instances of unequal participation. With the teacher's help, students built up collaboration skills over time. These results highlight the importance of scaffolding in maintaining a cohesive group dynamic.

Students identified challenges such as time constraints, initial lack of knowledge, and underperformance by some group members. However, low average scores on challenging matters (1.78-2.34) indicate that these were manageable. Many saw these problems as opportunities to grow, which in turn boosted their strength and responsibility.

## Discussion

Based on the findings of this study, project-based learning (PBL) has a considerable impact on developing oral presentation skills among third-year English majors. The answer to the first study question showed that members of the experimental group were significantly more proficient at presenting than the control group, as evidenced by their higher average scores. In addition to these findings, a thematic analysis of student interviews, which addressed the second study question, provided insight into their perceptions. Learners reported increased engagement, demonstrating confidence in presenting and a willingness to collaborate, in line with previous studies highlighting the benefits of PBL.

Student interest in Project-Based Learning (PBL) was high, with average scores ranging from 4.24 to 4.51. This evidence supports the notion of Thomas (2000) and Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006) that connecting work to the real world fosters motivation. PBL's interactive character seemed to hold student interest by focusing on their needs.

**Language Skills Development:** Language abilities also improved significantly, particularly through oral presentations in English class, as noted by Ngo (2014), Aldobekhi and Abahussain (2024), and Remache Carrillo et al. (2019). These studies found that PBL facilitated speaking and enhanced communication. Le and Ho (2021) note that these abilities prepare students for a job.

**Collaboration and Teamwork:** Participants reported that group activities helped them enhance their communication, negotiating, and collaboration abilities. This conclusion aligns with the findings of Bell (2010) and Kokotsaki et al. (2016), who discovered that PBL enhances soft skill development through peer involvement, similar to workplace cooperation.

**Students demonstrated** improved critical thinking skills by completing project assignments requiring analysis, decision-making, and reflection. These findings are consistent with those of Blumenfeld et al. (1991) and Grant (2002), who also found that PBL promotes cognitive engagement and learner independence.

**Challenges & Difficulties:** Despite the benefits, students faced problems such as irregular group participation, time constraints, and occasional lack of guidance. Marx et al. (1997) express similar concerns, emphasizing that students require rigorous scaffolding and teacher support for the successful implementation of PBL.

Overall, the findings support the idea that PBL enhances language acquisition, life skill development, and learner autonomy—all of which are important aspects of 21st-century education. Future study should focus on how to properly scaffold PBL to enable different learners and promote long-term engagement.



## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that project-based learning (PBL) is effective in enhancing the English oral presentation skills of third-year English majors. When answering the first research question, students who used PBL performed better in their presentations, earning higher average scores than those in the control group, which suggests that PBL can improve speaking skills. A thematic study of student interviews for the second research question revealed that students felt more engaged, confident in presenting, and collaborative, aligning with other work on the helpful effects of PBL. Some problems arose, such as insufficient time, unequal work distribution, and inadequate language skills, indicating that teachers need to provide additional support. To sum up, using PBL to teach language can enhance speaking ability and foster student independence, so teachers need to guide students as they apply it.

## Directions for Further Research

To make the study more relevant to a wider range of people, further research should be conducted over longer periods and in different settings, such as during multiple classes simultaneously, to verify the results and compare them with those of other participant groups. Furthermore, further research can clarify how diverse forms of PBL affect individuals at various levels. The influence of PBL on the acquisition of various linguistic components, including vocabulary, grammar, culture, and content, as well as listening, writing, and reading skills, is a significant subject for investigation.

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## Book Review: AI-Powered Education: Innovative Teaching Strategies to Elevate Student Learning

Magruder, K. J., Cavallo, A. M., & Clark, A. M. (Eds). (2025). *AI-Powered Education: Innovative Teaching Strategies to Elevate Student Learning*. Mavs Open Press Open Educational Resources. 50. [https://mavmatrix.uta.edu/oer\\_mavsopenpress/50](https://mavmatrix.uta.edu/oer_mavsopenpress/50)

Reviewed by Ashley Rodriguez, Texas Tech University, U.S.

In the era of science and technology, every area, including education, has been dominated by technology. Technology comes with both pros and cons. However, if technology is used effectively, we can mitigate its drawbacks and reap numerous benefits from it. We find both supporting and opposing groups of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Nonetheless, the most important thing is the thin line between the ethical use and unethical use of AI tools in everyday life. *AI-Powered Education: Innovative Teaching Strategies to Elevate Student Learning* has been published at the right time. Most educators are often forced to face a state of confusion. As a solution, this book teaches instructors how AI Generative tools, such as ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot, help them maximize learning outcomes in the classroom and beyond. The book has been collated and edited by three professors representing different departments at the University of Texas at Arlington. Karen J. Magruder enjoys incorporating fact-based practices into her teaching online. Similarly, Ann M.L. Cavallo teaches some branches of science. She teaches various subjects, including psychology, biology, physics, and earth science. Andrew M. Clark leads the Department of Communication. He has already carved a niche in mass media. Overall, this book basically is intended for teachers who aspire to improve students' learning and ChatGPT literacy through ethical use in higher education.

Realizing the potential drawbacks of Generative AI tools in academics, the book emphasizes the verification of information for accuracy and suitability. The authors assure that users do not need to be technology experts to use AI successfully to achieve course objectives and increase teachers' familiarity with technology. The authors encourage teachers and students to embrace the innovative aspects of technology to enhance learning outcomes through creativity and collaboration. They have shared very simple activities of using AI, especially ChatGPT, that can be adapted to suit the needs of individual classrooms, echoing Madden et al.'s (2025) assertion that AI-driven systems that cater to diverse learning needs" (p. 3) because AI has the potential to offer "considerable assistance in providing varied learning sources that were tailored to diverse learning needs and different types of learners" at different educational levels (Nguyen, 2023, p. 34).

While most contributors acknowledge that AI tools present challenges, they advocate for the ethical and informed integration of these tools rather than outright rejection. Tenen (2024), for example, argues that in today's digital world, we must "learn to become part software engineers and part..." (p. 2), suggesting a blend of human adaptability and technical awareness is essential. Sherma (2024) similarly envisions a positive collaboration between machine-generated support and human intelligence, particularly in educational settings. Rather than focusing on heavy theoretical frameworks, the book leans toward practical guidance, focusing on how AI can be responsibly applied across various academic disciplines.

The book consists of 13 practical activities that demonstrate how teachers can integrate AI into various disciplinary contexts. It begins with a short history of AI, its opportunities, and its limitations, followed by an introduction to Generative AI for students in general. While one chapter illustrates how to conduct rubric-based assessments, another chapter offers some strategies for publishing academic papers on LinkedIn. *For example, teachers can first prepare assignment directions and grading criteria. After that, they can ask ChatGPT to create a rubric that they can modify.* It saves teachers' time. Business communication is addressed through guidance on drafting proposals and delivering presentations. Immersive learning experiences are explored through simulations and policy advocacy role-play. A media-focused activity involves staging a press conference, while another demonstrates how to enhance feedback and ensure constructive alignment in course design. *For example, ChatGPT can be used to simulate a breaking news press conference, where students role-play as journalists asking real-time questions to an AI acting as a public information officer during a fictional emergency. This activity helps students practice critical questioning, gather evolving information, and write timely news stories based on AI-generated responses.* Readers also learn to compare terms through experimental design, build inquiry-based curricula, and engage students in literary analysis and critical thinking using AI-generated clues and feedback.

A brief biography of the author follows each chapter. Every author is a Ph.D. Every author has shared noteworthy ideas. However, some ideas are worthier and more commendable. Jess Kahlow's notion of rubric generation to grade students' assignments more transparently and objectively is not only time-saving but also worth doing. She reveals, "Making good rubrics with specific and detailed criteria for each rating can be difficult and time-consuming. Enter—ChatGPT" (p. 20). For example, ChatGPT can create an essay rubric instantly that can be readjusted later.

Similarly, Christy Spivey's focus on AI-enhanced discussion in online classes exemplifies best practices in digital pedagogy, including the ethical use of GenAI and the development of digital literacy. Meanwhile, Karen Bravo's introductory activity on GenAI literacy for nursing students bridges technical knowledge with critical ethical reflection—an important emphasis throughout the volume. Her "assignment discusses the inherent ethical and other issues in using artificial intelligence and what the student must know to miss any pitfalls" (p. 15). She alerts her students to important ethical uses.

These opening chapters (chapters 1 and 2) create the theoretical and practical foundation for the book. Magruder frames AI historically and philosophically, offering a balanced view of its strengths and boundaries in education. Bravo narrows this focus specifically to Generative AI, helping students and teachers understand its mechanics and potential classroom applications. Together, these chapters aim to equip readers with necessary baseline knowledge before they explore applied strategies.

Chapters 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 center on leveraging AI tools to support writing, communication, evaluation, and higher-order thinking. For example, Philip and Carr focus on real-world writing genres, such as LinkedIn articles and business proposals, helping students develop marketable skills. Clark adds a journalism-inspired activity that links AI to public communication tasks. Kahlow, Kellam, and Kallie demonstrate how AI can streamline assessment by creating rubrics, offering targeted feedback, and facilitating linguistic comparisons. Chapter 13 introduces a literary and philosophical dimension, utilizing AI not only for surface-level assignments but also for engaging students in more in-depth literary analysis and critical reasoning. This theme reflects how AI can serve both student output and instructor evaluation.

Chapters 7, 8 and 12 push AI beyond simple writing or grading assistance, focusing on its ability to create dynamic, participatory learning environments. Roye's immersive case studies and simulations encourage students to learn through complex scenarios modeled by AI. Magruder's policy advocacy role-play adds civic engagement and social learning components, while Cavallo emphasizes inquiry-based curriculum design, where students construct knowledge through structured questioning and exploration.

**Fig. 1**

A rubric generated by ChatGPT to evaluate a high school essay

**High School Essay Rubric (Total: 20 points)**

Criteria	4 – Excellent	3 – Proficient	2 – Developing	1 – Needs Improvement
<b>1. Thesis &amp; Purpose</b>	Clear, strong thesis; purpose is focused and fully developed	Clear thesis and purpose; mostly focused throughout	Thesis present but weak; focus may shift	No clear thesis; lacks focus or clear purpose
<b>2. Organization &amp; Structure</b>	Logical structure with clear introduction, body, and conclusion; smooth transitions	Good structure; some transitions may be weak	Some organizational issues; ideas may be disjointed	Poor structure; lacks clear intro/body/conclusion; hard to follow
<b>3. Evidence &amp; Support</b>	Strong, relevant evidence or examples; supports all points convincingly	Adequate evidence; supports most points well	Limited or unclear support; some points not well developed	Little or no evidence; lacks support for claims
<b>4. Style &amp; Word Choice</b>	Language is clear, engaging, and appropriate for audience and purpose	Language is mostly clear; some variety in word choice	Language is basic; limited variety or clarity	Word choice is confusing, inappropriate, or dull
<b>5. Grammar &amp; Mechanics</b>	Virtually error-free; polished and professional	Few minor errors; does not distract	Several errors; may affect readability	Frequent errors that interfere with meaning



This theme emphasizes active learning, student agency, and real-world problem-solving, positioning AI as a facilitator for richer pedagogical experiences rather than just an administrative tool.

A key strength of the text is its balance between enthusiasm and caution. The opening chapter carefully outlines both the potential benefits and the limitations of AI in education, from its ability to personalize learning and streamline administrative tasks to concerns over misinformation, academic integrity, and the digital divide. *For example, the writers clearly note that AI tends to generate false information and racist language. They acknowledge such dangers from the outset.* This balanced framing encourages readers to adopt a nuanced, ethical approach to AI use, rather than a techno-utopian mindset.

The book's layout, which features instructor directions, student-facing materials, cross-disciplinary applications, and AI disclosures, enhances its practical utility. Educators can easily adapt and implement the activities without extensive reworking. Moreover, the emphasis on transparency—both in AI use and pedagogical intent—models responsible scholarship and teaching. Indeed, the book makes users' jobs easier. The language of the book is precise and easy to understand. This language skill must be admired.

However, one potential limitation is the book's focus on the University of Texas at Arlington context. While the strategies are adaptable, some readers outside of this institutional culture may need to modify assignments more extensively to align with different policies, technologies, or student populations. Additionally, while the book addresses AI ethics, a deeper engagement with emerging global frameworks and cross-cultural perspectives would further enrich the discourse.

Overall, *AI-Powered Education* is a forward-thinking, open-access resource that provides educators with tested, innovative, and ethically grounded tools for navigating the evolving landscape of AI in education. It is effective not only for its actionable content but also for its commitment to digital equity and scholarly transparency. Some writers have openly acknowledged that certain chapters were "written with assistance from AI (ChatGPT), which supported the ideation process for the activity" (p. 160). The most important thing is that the book does not attempt to coerce anyone into adopting AI. The book is aimed at those who feel that students cannot be deprived of using AI to motivate themselves for excellence. It is highly recommended for faculty, instructional designers, and teacher educators aiming to enhance student learning through responsible AI integration.

**Note:** The book review has been written with the partial use of free version of ChatGPT (3.5).

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