AnAnalysis of Factors Affecting English Learning of Students in the School ofEconomics at University of Transport and CommunicationsHo Chi Minh Campus

Abstract

The article focuses on analyzing the factors influencing the English learning of Economics students at the University of Transport and Communications Ho Chi Minh Campus. This study aims to identify which factors may affect the effectiveness of English learning among students, in order to improve teaching and learning quality. Factors considered include the learning environment, teaching methods, learning resources, students' individual characteristics such as motivation, initial English proficiency, and cultural and social factors that may influence the learning process.By analyzing and evaluating these factors, the research can provide recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of English learning among students and improve the learning environment in the university. This may positively contribute to the development of students' English proficiency, thereby increasing their learning opportunities and future career success.

Keywords: analysis, factors, English learning, students, school of Economics.

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, international business is becoming increasingly important, playing a pivotal role in the development of our country's economy. Enterprises are increasingly focusing on the language proficiency, especially English, of their staff. For both small and large enterprises, foreign language certification is gradually becoming a mandatory requirement and is seen as a passport for candidates during job interviews. This is an objective and inevitable trend because in the global economy, English has become the most common foreign language, heavily influencing contracts and transactions worldwide. Moreover, recruiters often rely on credentials (including language certifications) to screen job applicants before conducting interviews. Therefore,

obtaining suitable language certifications is a significant advantage, especially for newly graduated students who are often perceived to have limited practical experience. Besides, English majors have studied for quite a long time, but their foreign language communication skills are still quite limited. Many students complain that they have tried to learn English a lot but have not seen any improvement. There are increasingly more language centers opening up to meet the demand for learning among students, but the level of English improvement among students is still not satisfactory. The first-time pass rate in the English proficiency exam at schools is not high. After completing the project, we have summarized the current situation of English learning and communication abilities. From there, we identified the causes and shortcomings as well as the difficulties in learning and communicating in English. We propose some solutions to improve and enhance students' English proficiency, helping them better prepare for English proficiency assessments at the university.The study was conducted with the participation of 474 students from the Department of Economicsat university of Transport and Communication HCM campus. The chosen research method is survey-based investigation, statistical analysis.The survey consists of 20 questions: 17 multiple-choice questions, 1 ranking question, and 2 open-ended questions for respondents to fill in themselves. The multiple-choice format involves selecting one correct answer, while some questions allow for the selection of multiple options.

2. Theoritical background:

Krashen's theory of language acquisition was proposed in the 1970s. In this theory, Krashen concluded that humans have an innate ability to learn language and there is no significant difference between how we learn our native language and how we learn foreign languages.Below are the 5 theories proposed by Krashen regarding language learning:

- **The Input Hypothesis:** According to this theory, language learning occurs when learners receive target language input at a level they understand, known as "comprehensible input." Learners naturally acquire language structures

through listening and reading, without the need to actively study grammar rules.

- **The Affective Filter Hypothesis:** This theory suggests that the emotions, confidence, and interest of learners affect language learning. When learners are under stress, anxiety, or lack confidence, their "affective filter" increases, reducing their ability to absorb language input.

- **The Monitor Hypothesis:** In this theory, learners use language knowledge to edit and adjust their language use. This can occur in situations where language is not applied practically, such as writing texts or participating in educational activities.

- **The Natural Order Hypothesis:** This theory posits that learners acquire language structures in a natural and unchangeable sequence. Some language structures are learned first, followed by more complex ones

- **The Monitor Hypothesis:** This theory proposes that language knowledge is only used to edit and adjust the learner's language use. It cannot be applied to learning or using language naturally.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis suggests that the 4 language skills - Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing - are divided into two types: Input and Output. Input involves receiving language information through listening to sounds and reading/writing characters/visuals. Output, on the other hand, requires effective input accumulation. To achieve effective input, Krashen suggests that the input content should possess the following characteristics:

- **Comprehensible**: The basic and essential characteristic of effective input is that learners understand the content. If learners cannot understand the content, speech is merely noise, and written language is meaningless characters.

- **Compelling**: Effective input captures learners' attention to the conveyed meaning. Ideal content captivates learners' attention to the extent that they

completely focus on understanding the message, almost forgetting that they are listening/reading a foreign language

- **Massive Input**: This characteristic is crucial because natural accumulation needs to occur over a sufficient period to be effective. Input content must be abundant and repeated extensively to deeply embed in the subconscious

Krashen also notes that successful language accumulation occurs when learners are exposed to slightly more challenging content than their current level. This content, often labeled as "i+1," allows learners to understand about 80% of the content, with the remaining 20% inferred through context. Continuous exposure to "i+1" input helps learners gradually increase their comprehension ability. As learners reach 95% comprehension, they can further increase the difficulty level of the input, repeating the process iteratively.

Based on an extensive review of literature on the achievements in language learning strategy research worldwide (Gu, 2002; Wharton, 2000; Aslan, 2009; Liu, 2010), the authors confidently conclude that the number of studies in this field is showing a positive trend, aiming to help language learners develop their linguistic capabilities. Additionally, in Vietnam,in recent years, research on the use of language learning strategies among both non-major and English major students has attracted the attention of many educational researchers such as Tran (2006), Quach (2010), Nguyen and Trinh (2011). However, the quantity is still limited. Among the myriad factors influencing the choice of learning strategies such as motivation, gender, cultural background, attitude and beliefs, age, the impact of gender on learning strategies is particularly complex. This complexity arises because both genders, male and female, have different experiences in learning environments and produce different outcomes even when undertaking the same learning tasks (Gu, 2002).

3. Results

The research model hypothesizes the factors influencing the level of English improvement among students. Assuming that the level of English improvement (LCEI) is

a function of the perception of important English skills, self-study frequency, self-study duration, and the level of English application in communication.

H1: The perception of important English skills has a positive impact on the level of English improvement.

H2: The frequency of self-study positively influences the level of English improvement.

H3: The duration of self-study positively impacts the level of English improvement.

H4: The level of English application in communication has a positive effect on the level of English improvement

`Dependent variable: MDCTH - Level of English improvement after courses Independent variables: N1 - Perception of important English skills N2 - Ability to self-study and apply English N3 - Level of English practice.

The survey yielded a total of 474 responses, with 445 valid responses, accounting for a rate of 93.8%, and 29 invalid responses were excluded. After data processing and analysis, the research team identified the factors influencing the level of English improvement among students.

3.1 Time for learning English

Out of the total 445 surveyed students, 8 students have studied English for 3-4 years, accounting for 1.8%. 43 students have studied English for 5-7 years, representing 9.7%. 244 students have studied for 7-10 years, making up 54.8%, and 150 students have studied for over 10 years, comprising 33.7%. Therefore, the majority of students have studied English for 7 years or more.

Chart 1: Time for learning English

khoang thoi gian hoc TA
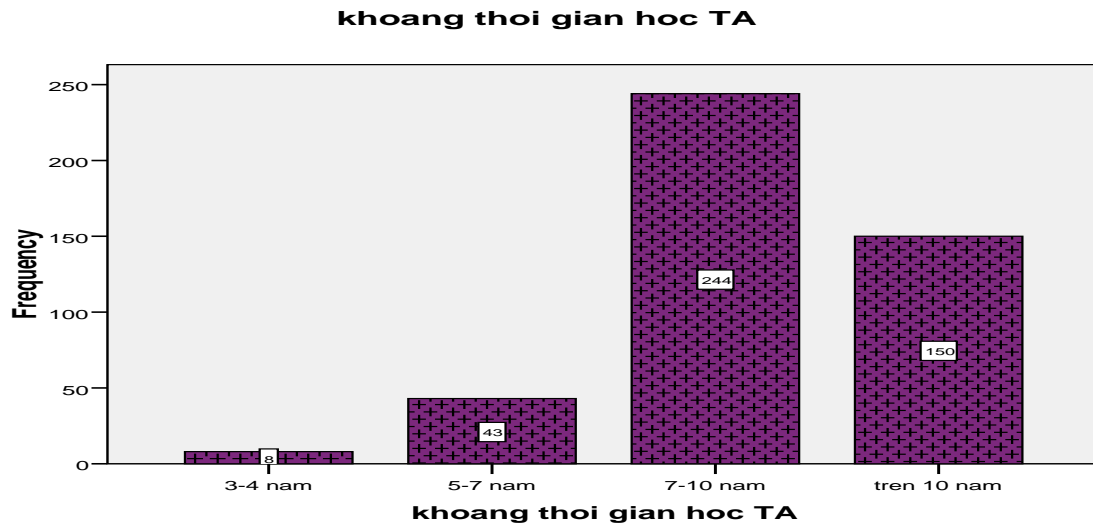
3.2 Assessing the effectiveness of learning English

Meanwhile, out of the total of 445 students who provided responses, 14 students felt that their English proficiency improvement was very effective, accounting for 3.1%. 110 students found it effective, representing 24.7%. However, as many as 264 students perceived it as less effective, constituting 59.3%, and 53 students felt it was ineffective, accounting for 11.9%. The remaining 4 students did not provide information.

Chart 2: The effectiveness of learning English

cai thien trinh do TA cua ban than

cai thien trinh do TA cua ban than
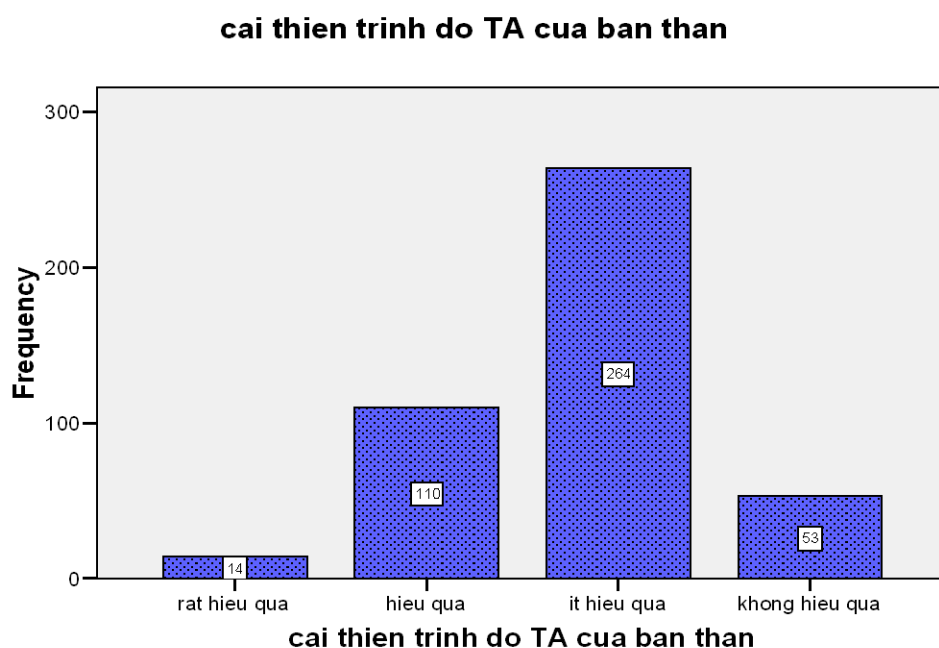
3.3 Multiple regression

Proceeding with multiple regression analysis, we obtain the following results:

Table 1: Regression Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.140	.186		11.516	.000					
	nhan dinh ki nang quan trong trong TA	-.144	.082	-.084	-1.767	.078	-.078	-.084	-.081	.941	1.063
	kha nang tu hoc va van dung TA	.159	.053	.150	3.003	.003	.213	.142	.138	.858	1.165
	muc do ren luyen TA	.233	.072	.161	3.215	.001	.197	.152	.148	.852	1.174

a. Dependent Variable: muc do cai thien TA

In the variable assessing the importance of English language skills, Sig = 0.078 > 0.01, indicating no statistical significance. Therefore, we exclude the variable assessing the importance of English language skills from the model.

The second multiple regression analysis yields the following results:

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.252(a)	.064	**.059**	.65818

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.988	.159		12.402	.000					
	kha nang tu hoc va van dung TA	.177	.052	.166	3.395	.001	.213	.160	.157	.891	1.123
	muc do ren luyen TA	.206	.071	.142	2.903	.004	.197	.137	.134	.891	1.123

a. Dependent Variable: muc do cai thien TA

The Adjusted R-Square value of 0.059 in the Model Summary table of the final regression output indicates that the regression model constructed fits the dataset at a level of 5.9%. This level of significance is too low. Therefore, we can conclude that the constructed regression model is not suitable, or in other words, the independent variables of self-learning and application of English, as well as the level of English practice, have very little impact on the improvement of English proficiency.

4. Discussion

In terms of time devoted to learning, the majority of students spend seven years or more studying English. Based on the assessment of the survey conducted among 445 students, it is evident that the duration of English language study varies among the respondents. Among them, 8 students, constituting 1.8% of the total, have pursued English studies for 3-4 years. Furthermore, 43 students, accounting for 9.7%, have dedicated 5-7 years to learning English. A significant portion of the surveyed students, totaling 244 individuals or 54.8%, have engaged in English language education for a period ranging from 7 to 10 years. Additionally, 150 students, making up 33.7% of the sample, have studied English for over 10 years. Consequently, the data reveals that the

majority of students have undertaken English language learning for a duration of 7 years or more.The results indicate that freshman non-majoring English students at UTC2, Vietnam, employ language learning strategies at a moderate level. This finding aligns with the research by Ehrman and Oxford (1989), which suggests that university students, second language learners, and high school students utilize strategies at a limited level; in other words, the subjects do not actively employ the best and most comprehensive strategies. Additionally, this result is consistent with recent studies (Lee and Oxford, 2008)

Based on the assessment of responses from 445 students, it is apparent that opinions regarding the effectiveness of English proficiency improvement vary among the participants. Among the respondents, 14 students, comprising 3.1% of the total, perceived their English proficiency improvement as highly effective. Additionally, 110 students, representing 24.7%, found the improvement to be effective. However, a significant proportion of students, totaling 264 individuals or 59.3%, regarded the improvement as less effective. Furthermore, 53 students, accounting for 11.9%, considered the improvement to be ineffective. Notably, information was not provided by 4 students. This assessment underscores the diverse perspectives on the effectiveness of English proficiency enhancement among the surveyed students.

The Adjusted R-Square value of 0.059, as observed in the Model Summary table of the final regression output, signifies that the constructed regression model exhibits a fitting level of approximately 5.9% to the dataset. This relatively low level of significance suggests that the model's ability to explain the variance in the data is minimal. Consequently, it is evident that the constructed regression model is not suitable for predicting the improvement of English proficiency based on the independent variables of self-learning, application of English, and level of English practice. The findings indicate that these variables have very little impact on enhancing English proficiency among the surveyed individuals. Therefore, further exploration and refinement of the model are necessary to identify more influential factors contributing to English

proficiency improvement. Furthermore, because cognitive strategies require language learners to analyze, explain, transmit, and receive messages, utilize available learning resources, and practice language skills (Vrettou, 2011), individuals at the elementary level may lack confidence in using strategies, resulting in the lowest use of cognitive strategies. This could be explained by first-year students being unfamiliar with the new learning environment, lacking language proficiency, and not being properly guided in the use of strategies, leading to a lack of confidence in language usage and application of strategies in their learning process.

5. Conclusions

Improving students' Englishspeaking skills is by no means a simple task. The challenge lies in finding the time to overhaul outdated language learning habits that may no longer be suitable in current circumstances. Furthermore, achieving proficiency in speaking requires a significant amount of practice time and close collaboration between teachers and learners. More importantly, it's the learner's own method of learning English that plays a crucial role. Therefore, students should pay attention to some following advices:

- Listening skills development involves both passive and active listening techniques. In passive listening, often referred to as a "Language Bath," individuals immerse themselves in the sounds of the language without necessarily understanding the content. This method helps familiarize learners with the rhythm and intonation of the language. Additionally, passive listening with dynamic visuals enhances comprehension by associating auditory input with visual cues. On the other hand, active listening requires deliberate engagement with the material. This includes listening to Special English news broadcasts and participating in English listening exercises to improve comprehension and vocabulary. Furthermore, learners benefit from revisiting previously heard materials during the passive listening phase to reinforce learning. Engaging with audio materials on English forums and singing along

to English songs are also effective ways to actively practice listening skills while enjoying the process

- When learning to speak, one should not rush. Some fortunate individuals live in a linguistic environment, allowing them to start speaking immediately when learning a new language. However, for most people, a certain language foundation (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, sentence structure) should be established at least six months before engaging in real speaking practice. For those who lack the opportunity to live or work in an English-speaking environment, the following steps can be taken to practice speaking: maximize practice hours in class or at language centers and overcome shyness and fear of making mistakes.

- Once you have acquired vocabulary, the next crucial step is reading to expand your vocabulary. Since you will find that you need to learn almost every word, it is important to read anything that interests you—anything that makes you want to read. It is not beneficial to read what you do not understand or find interesting. The key is to read what you enjoy and read as frequently as possible. Pay attention to skimming and scanning skills and identifying the main ideas of passages. After understanding the content, look for new vocabulary and unfamiliar structures, translate their meanings, and take notes.

- Once you are confident with basic vocabulary and grammar, you can practice writing skills. Writing in English is not much different from writing in Vietnamese; the only difference lies in the organization of sentences and words—the meaning remains the same. You do not need to feel overwhelmed when writing in English. Simply think about the main content, organize your thoughts, and write accordingly. Start with short paragraphs; practice writing a diary entry in English, recounting your daily activities, thoughts, and feelings. Grammar should be concise and straightforward to ensure accuracy.

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