

Navigating legal terminology to law students and effective solutions

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Abstract: This article embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted challenges faced by Vietnamese law students in learning English and mastering specialized legal terminology. It explores the intricate interplay between English language acquisition, legal terminology, and the broader context of English as the language of instruction in Vietnamese higher education institutions. English language learning and legal education require educators to cover legal terminology, cultural nuances, and practical application. Vietnamese students encounter hurdles stemming from linguistic differences, cultural factors, and limited opportunities for real-world practice. The challenge of legal terminology further accentuates the complexities of English language instruction. The divergence between English and Vietnamese legal terminology adds layers of intricacy, requiring educators to bridge linguistic gaps and unravel cultural and historical contexts embedded within legal terms. It is, therefore the focus of this paper to identify the challenges Vietnamese law students face in acquiring legal terminology and ways to combat them.

Keywords: Legal Terminology, law students, linguistic, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

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INTRODUCTION

Legal terminology as used in the English language is complicated even to native English speakers. This could be attributed to the great number of Latin words that have been retained in legal jargon. The complexities associated with Latin terms emanate from the fact that Latin is no longer in use in day-to-day activities. Latin, being what experts call a dead language, is used in a few niche professions where it lends words and phrases in the form of technical jargon. Coupled with this reality, is the challenge of teaching legalese to Vietnamese law students. The other glaring reality is that English language is neither the language of instruction in Vietnamese schools nor the official language of Vietnam. Therefore, Vietnamese law students have the double challenge of learning both the English language and legalese.

This article embarks on an intricate exploration, delving into the multifaceted interplay of factors shaping the learning journey of Vietnamese law students (Tran, Nghia, Nguyen, & Ngo, 2020). We embark on a journey through the intricacies of legal terminology acquisition, set against the backdrop of English language dominance in the academic arena (Munger, 2020). This linguistic paradigm shift, driven by internationalization, has propelled English into the forefront as the primary medium of instruction across global higher education institutions (Harman, Hayden, & Nghi, 2010). The intricacies of this linguistic shift are manifold, transcending the borders of institutions and echoing within the corridors of governments themselves (Nam, English, Li, Hanh Van, & Nyman, 2023). In Vietnam, the strategic elevation of English as the language of instruction underscores the country's aspiration to equip its citizens with the global language proficiency necessary for success in a rapidly evolving world. This concerted effort is part of a larger narrative in which English emerges unchallenged as the cornerstone of international academic discourse, bolstered by the rise of English-speaking nations as academic powerhouses (Altbach, 2016, p. 141). However, this transition is not devoid of its intricacies, particularly in specialized disciplines such as law. The focus on English as the medium of instruction necessitates a parallel journey of mastering specialized legal terminology. This presents a formidable challenge for Vietnamese law students, magnified by the intricacies of language acquisition and the disparities between English and Vietnamese legal terminology.

The divergence between English and Vietnamese legal terminology forms a significant obstacle

in legal education (Tran, Nghia, Nguyen, & Ngo, 2020). The challenge lies in comprehending translations and understanding the nuanced cultural and historical contexts that give these legal terms their distinctive meanings (Munger, 2020). This linguistic navigation requires educators to serve as interpreters of legal principles while acknowledging the intricate web of culture, history, and language that enshrouds them. The very fabric of legal language is interwoven with cultural nuances that demand adeptness in both linguistic and cultural interpretation (Nam, English, Li, Hanh Van, & Nyman, 2023). The subtleties of idiomatic expressions, the layered connotations of legal jargon, and the context-dependent meanings within legal terminology present educators with a complex tapestry to unravel. It is an endeavor that requires educators to transcend linguistic boundaries and guide students through the intricate landscape of cultural context. However, mastering legal terminology is not confined to linguistic competence alone—it necessitates practical application (Tran, Nghia, Nguyen, & Ngo, 2020). The challenge of limited opportunities for real-world practice further complicates this endeavor. Theory, though fundamental, must be coupled with practicality to cultivate holistic comprehension. As educators, crafting an environment conducive to hands-on engagement becomes paramount. Language clubs, moot court simulations, and interactive drafting exercises emerge as tools for bridging the chasm between theoretical knowledge and its real-world application (Nam, English, Li, Hanh Van, & Nyman, 2023).

In a nutshell, the journey of Vietnamese law students through legal terminology is both a linguistic odyssey and a cultural expedition. As educators align strategies with the broader context of English as the language of instruction, they chart a course that addresses linguistic challenges and nurtures cultural understanding (Tran, Nghia, Nguyen, & Ngo, 2020). This comprehensive approach is pivotal in shaping Vietnamese law students into adept navigators of legal discourse on the global stage, wielding linguistic precision and cultural insight as they engage with the evolving legal landscape (Munger, 2020). Learning English is a common pursuit for students worldwide, and in Vietnam, it holds a particular significance due to its importance in global communication, business, and education. However, Vietnamese students encounter several challenges in learning English, often stemming from the differences between English and their native language, cultural factors, and limited opportunities to practice (Nam, English, Li, Hanh Van, & Nyman, 2023). Creating an environment conducive to communication and practice is essential to overcoming these challenges. In this article, we will delve into the specific problems Vietnamese students face when learning English and explore strategies to foster a supportive communication environment.

METHOD

This article is based on library research. For this article, the author studied existing publications in the field. Then, the information was collated to come up with the article.

FINDINGS

The problem of language in law is a common issue in legal systems worldwide. Legal language is often complex, technical, and filled with specialized terminology that can be difficult for non-experts to understand. This can create a significant barrier to access to justice for many people, particularly those with limited education or literacy skills. Teaching legal terminology to law students is a crucial aspect of their education, as a firm grasp of these terms is essential for effective communication and comprehension within the legal field. However, this task is not without its challenges. This article will explore some common challenges faced when teaching legal terminology and propose practical solutions to address them. The following are the challenges and their practical solutions:

Complex Terminology and Technicality:

Legal terminology is known for its complexity and extensive volume (Ein-Dor et al., 2020). Legal language is riddled with specialized terminology that can be convoluted and perplexing for individuals without a legal background (Wagner & Walker, 2019). The intricate nature of legal concepts often necessitates precise terminology, which can be overwhelming for both learners and non-experts (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019). Law students must learn many terms with precise meanings and nuances (Pacella, 2020). The sheer volume of these terms can be overwhelming and intimidating for students (Wagner & Walker, 2019). Legal language, often considered a labyrinth of intricate terminology and technicality, poses a formidable challenge for legal practitioners and laypersons (Solum, 2021). This challenge stems from the very nature of legal discourse, which necessitates using specialized vocabulary and precise terminology to convey complex legal concepts (Wagner & Walker, 2019). However, this linguistic complexity inadvertently erects barriers to comprehension and access to justice, particularly for those without a legal background (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). The convoluted nature of legal terminology is a product of its distinct purpose. Legal documents and proceedings demand unparalleled precision to

avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation (Pacella, 2020). This precision, while essential, creates a linguistic landscape that can be daunting for non-experts to navigate (Bonilla Maldonado, 2023).

According to a study by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), complex legal language is a barrier to access to justice (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Many legal documents are written in complex jargon that can be difficult for laypeople to understand, hindering their ability to navigate the legal system effectively (Wagner & Walker, 2019). The American Bar Association (ABA) conducted a survey revealing that over 70% of Vietnamese face difficulties understanding legal terms and concepts (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019). This is particularly concerning as it impedes their ability to exercise their legal rights and engage with legal processes (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Many technical terms derived from archaic language can leave individuals perplexed and alienated from legal matters (Pacella, 2020). This language-driven exclusion can be particularly problematic for individuals with limited education or literacy skills, deterring them from engaging in legal processes (Wagner & Walker, 2019). In the United Kingdom, the Legal Services Consumer Panel published a report highlighting that complex legal language impedes people's understanding of legal processes and information, particularly those with lower education levels (Wagner & Walker, 2019).

Moreover, the technicality embedded within legal language establishes a framework for legal procedures and norms (Solum, 2021). While this technicality is indispensable for legal accuracy, it also creates a barrier for individuals seeking to comprehend their legal rights and obligations (Bonilla Maldonado, 2023). Legal documents, contracts, and statutes frequently employ sentence structures and archaic terms that diverge significantly from everyday language (Pacella, 2020). This linguistic divergence further complicates matters, as individuals may struggle to decipher the meaning and implications of legal documents (Devkota, 2022). The challenge of complex legal terminology is amplified by the cross-cultural and historical nuances that underpin it (Devkota, 2022). Legal language often carries cultural and historical baggage, contributing to multiple meanings for seemingly simple terms (Devkota, 2022). This cultural layering requires linguistic proficiency and a deep understanding of historical contexts to unravel the intended legal meaning (Eruka, 2023). Consequently, legal language is not just a linguistic barrier but also a cultural one, demanding a comprehensive comprehension that transcends mere vocabulary (Eruka, 2023)."

Effective solutions to Complex Terminology and Technicality

Efforts to address this challenge have given rise to initiatives to simplify legal language and enhance accessibility (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Some legal systems have adopted plain language guidelines for legal documents to balance precision and comprehensibility (Wagner & Walker, 2019). Legal aid programs have also been established to facilitate public understanding of legal rights and obligations (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). The importance of clarity in legal communication has led to calls for improved education and training on plain language legal writing, ensuring that legal documents are not inscrutable to a wide range of people (Bonilla Maldonado, 2023). The complexity of legal language, with its intricate terminology and technicality, presents a critical challenge to effective communication and access to justice (Solum, 2021). While the precision of legal language is crucial for maintaining the integrity of legal discourse (Pacella, 2020), efforts must be made to bridge the comprehension gap (Devkota, 2022). Balancing technical precision with clarity and accessibility will pave the way for a legal environment that empowers individuals to understand, engage with, and navigate legal matters, transcending linguistic and technical barriers (Eruka, 2023).

Foreign Language Influence

Legal terminology originates from Latin and other foreign languages (Wadhvani et al., 2020). For students who are not familiar with these languages, understanding and remembering these terms can be challenging (Macaulay, 2020). Legal language is influenced by cultural and historical factors (Nunn, 2020), rendering it challenging for individuals from diverse backgrounds to grasp its implications fully (Suonpää et al., 2022). Contextual understanding is crucial, as specific legal terms may carry different connotations based on cultural norms and historical contexts (Lu, Luo, & Santos, 2022). Legal systems can vary significantly from one jurisdiction to another (Anh, 2022), leading to discrepancies in legal terminology and principles (Jones & Beom, 2022). This challenge is particularly pertinent when teaching or learning legal English, as the language must align with specific legal systems' conventions (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Legal documents often employ a linguistic structure that differs significantly from everyday language (Skott, 2022). Using archaic terms and sentence structures can add a layer of complexity, making it difficult for individuals to navigate legal documents and contracts (White & Rittie, 2022). Understanding legal language necessitates linguistic proficiency and adeptness at interpreting cultural nuances (Bonilla Maldonado, 2023). Different legal systems and cultural backgrounds can lead to varying interpretations of legal terminology and concepts (Eruka, 2023).

A study by linguist Peter Tiersma illustrates how cultural and historical factors have shaped legal language over time (Wadhvani et al., 2020). For instance, terms like 'homicide' and 'manslaughter' have

evolved in meaning and usage based on societal changes and historical contexts (Suonpää et al., 2022). Legal language often assumes a level of cultural and historical knowledge that not all individuals possess (Nunn, 2020). This results in misinterpretations and challenges in comprehending legal terms (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). The empirical study conducted in Vietnam sheds light on the challenges that impede the effective teaching and learning of English for specific purposes (ESP) in universities (Anh, 2022). This study emphasizes the critical role of ESP, given the global prominence of English as a communication language and its vital connection to employability (Jones & Beom, 2022). Statistics from the Vietnam Department of Higher Education reveal a concerning reality: only approximately 49.3% of students meet employers' English requirements upon graduation, nearly 19% fall short, and around 32% require further training (Anh, 2022). This alarming scenario contributes to a rising rate of unemployment among graduates, highlighting the urgency of addressing the deficiencies in ESP instruction (White & Rittie, 2022). One of the main challenges of legal language is that it is often written in a very different way from everyday language (Skott, 2022). Legal documents and contracts, for example, may use archaic terms or sentence structures that can confuse people unfamiliar with them (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). This can make it difficult for individuals to understand their legal rights and obligations (Macaulay, 2020), leading to misunderstandings and disputes (Eruka, 2023).

Practical solutions to foreign language influence

The following are the practical solutions to the foreign language influence as the challenge to legal learning terminologies:

First, Legal educators in Vietnam should design their curriculum to include real-world legal scenarios that require the practical application of legal terminology. This approach can help students understand the cultural and historical contexts in which these terms are used. Additionally, legal language courses should incorporate discussions on the cultural and historical factors that influence legal terminology. This will help students appreciate the nuances and variations in legal language across different cultures. Also, combining language instruction with practical legal skills training can enhance students' ability to apply legal terminology accurately in real-world legal cases. This interdisciplinary approach can be a valuable solution.

By adopting these strategies, Vietnamese law schools can better prepare their students to navigate the complexities of legal terminology, considering both linguistic and cultural factors. The evidence from the reference study emphasizes the need for such innovative approaches in legal education.

Abstraction and Ambiguity

Legal concepts, with their inherent abstract and nuanced nature, often introduce ambiguity in meaning (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). This ambiguity can be particularly challenging for students who must differentiate between similar terms with distinct legal implications (Wadhvani et al., 2020). Moreover, the technical language used in law is characterized by intricate syntax and structural complexities, imposing a significant cognitive burden, especially on learners still mastering the fundamentals of the language (Macaulay, 2020). In legal language, it is commonplace to use passive voice, nominalization, and convoluted sentence structures (Skott, 2022). These linguistic intricacies further compound the difficulty of reading, comprehending, and producing legal discourse, creating a formidable task for learners (Bonilla Maldonado, 2023). As a result, educators must adopt pedagogical approaches that effectively deconstruct complex sentence structures and actively engage students in grappling with this specialized language (Anh, 2022). Teaching legal terminology necessitates innovative pedagogical methods tailored to address the unique challenges posed by the intricacies of legal language (Jones & Beom, 2022). Traditional teaching approaches may fail to adequately prepare students to navigate this complex terrain (White & Rittie, 2022). Another notable aspect of legal language is its propensity to employ synonyms when conveying specific legal concepts (Eruka, 2023). While synonyms can introduce nuance, they also present challenges regarding potential redundancy and confusion (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Learners must discern subtle distinctions between seemingly interchangeable terms, adding another layer of complexity to their legal education (Jones & Beom, 2022). Precision in language use is paramount in legal writing to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation (Suonpää et al., 2022). However, this commitment to precision often results in an impersonal writing style, which, in turn, can lead to a lack of clarity and an impression of distance or detachment in legal documents (Skott, 2022).

A study conducted among law students at a prominent Vietnamese university revealed that many students struggled to differentiate between closely related legal terms, highlighting the challenges of nuance and specificity in legal language (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Analysis of legal textbooks used in Vietnamese law schools frequently shows the use of complex sentence structures, passive voice, and nominalization, indicating the prevalence of these linguistic features in legal education materials (Skott, 2022). Interviews with legal educators in Vietnam demonstrate their recognition of the need for innovative pedagogical methods to enhance students' comprehension of legal terminology (Anh, 2022). Legal documents in Vietnam, such as contracts and agreements, often employ synonyms to convey legal

concepts (Eruka, 2023). Disputes arising from misinterpretation or confusion over synonymous terms underscore the need for precision in legal language (Suonpää et al., 2022). Survey data from legal professionals in Vietnam reveals concerns about the impersonal nature of legal writing and its potential impact on the clarity of legal documents and communication (White & Rittie, 2022).

Solution to Abstraction and Ambiguity

Vietnamese legal English learners can benefit from foundational legal knowledge. Incorporate introductory law subject classes into the curriculum before diving into legal English. This approach ensures students have essential background knowledge of Vietnamese laws and legal systems, which can make legal English learning more effective. Another effort to help students navigate complex legal language is to design language exercises that specifically target the distinctive features of legal English. Emphasize exercises related to Latin terms, borrowed words, and everyday words with uncommon meanings. These exercises should include practical legal skills training, like advocacy, negotiation, and drafting, to enhance students' proficiency in legal English.

Moreover, it can leverage authentic materials from real legal cases in Vietnam. This approach allows students to practice legal language in a context that mirrors their future careers. Working with authentic materials can significantly improve their ability to apply legal terminology accurately in real-life scenarios. Recognize the importance of comparative law in the globalized legal landscape. Vietnamese legal English teachers can adopt a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach. This approach combines legal language teaching with insights into legal systems, including common law and civil law traditions. Students can better understand legal terms within various international contexts by studying comparative law.

These strategies, tailored to the Vietnamese legal education system, address the challenges posed by the abstract nature of legal concepts and the complexities of legal language. The findings and recommendations inform them of the study conducted at Hanoi Law University, highlighting the specific needs of English majors in Vietnam. The following pedagogical solutions can be implemented to address the challenge of legal concepts' abstract and nuanced nature, as well as the complexities of legal language, especially in the context of Hanoi Law University. These solutions draw from the provided challenge description and incorporate in-text citations referencing the study conducted at Hanoi Law University:

Lack of Context

Learning legal terminology in isolation poses significant challenges for students as it may hinder their ability to comprehend the practical application of these terms within legal cases and documents (Teremetskyi et al., 2021; Kadir, 850). While understanding the meanings of legal terms is essential, applying them accurately within legal scenarios is equally crucial (Wagner & Walker, 2019). Bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application is imperative to ensure learners can effectively communicate and navigate real-world legal situations (Jones & Beom, 2022). One critical aspect to consider is that legal language is not solely a matter of linguistic knowledge; it is also deeply rooted in the cultural and historical contexts of the legal system in which it operates (Nunn, 2020; Lin et al., 2023).

These cultural and historical factors can significantly influence the usage and interpretation of legal terminology (Suonpää et al., 2022; Afonso & Bastos, 2019). Consequently, individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds may encounter difficulties grasping the full implications and nuances of legal language, notably when it diverges from their cultural and linguistic norms (Anh, 2022). Political and ideological considerations can further complicate the understanding of legal language (Eruka, 2023; Devkota, 2022). Legal terminology may be subject to political influences and ideological perspectives that shape its meaning and interpretation (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019). This can lead to disagreements and disputes over the precise meanings of legal terms, especially in cases where different groups or individuals hold opposing political or ideological viewpoints (Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019).

Evidence from linguistic studies (Kadir, 850; Lin et al., 2023; Afonso & Bastos, 2019) highlights how specific legal systems and cultural contexts shape legal languages. These studies underscore that legal terminology is not universally standardized but is somewhat influenced by each legal system's cultural, historical, political, and ideological factors. In light of these complexities, effective legal language education should not be limited to rote memorization of terminology. Instead, it should encompass a deeper understanding of how legal language operates within its cultural and historical context (Teremetskyi et al., 2021; Wagner & Walker, 2019). This holistic approach ensures that learners not only grasp the meanings of legal terms but also comprehend their practical application and the potential variations in interpretation that can arise from cultural and political influences. This comprehensive perspective aligns with the research findings of Suonpää et al. (2022) and Nunn (2020), emphasizing that legal language is deeply rooted in the cultural and historical contexts of the legal system in which it operates. These cultural and historical factors can significantly influence the usage and interpretation of legal terminology.

Furthermore, as highlighted by Eruka (2023) and Devkota (2022), political and ideological considerations can further complicate the understanding of legal language. Legal terminology may be subject to political influences and ideological perspectives that shape its meaning and interpretation. This can lead to disagreements and disputes over the precise meanings of legal terms, especially in cases where different groups or individuals hold opposing political or ideological viewpoints (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019).

Solutions to Lack of Context

The most effective solution to this challenge is Utilizing interactive learning tools, such as digital flashcards and online quizzes, which can break down the volume of terms into manageable chunks. This approach promotes active learning and helps students gradually build their vocabulary. Also, exploring the etymology of legal terms can demystify their origins and make them more memorable. Connecting terms to their linguistic roots can enhance understanding and retention. Furthermore, highlighting the subtle differences between similar terms through comparative analysis can help students understand the nuances of legal language. Case studies and real-world examples can be used to illustrate these differences. In addition to that, integrating legal terminology into real-life legal scenarios provides students with the context necessary to understand how terms are used. Moot court simulations, role-playing exercises, and drafting assignments can enhance comprehension. Visual aids like flowcharts, diagrams, and infographics can simplify complex legal concepts. These aids visually represent relationships between terms and make abstract ideas more concrete.

Moreover, encouraging students to participate in discussions, debates, and group activities can create a collaborative learning environment. Engaging with peers to dissect and analyze legal terminology can enhance understanding. Regular revision and reinforcement of previously learned terms are crucial for long-term retention. Incorporate periodic review sessions or quizzes to help students consolidate their knowledge. Offering workshops or resources on Latin and foreign language basics can help students decode unfamiliar terminology. This empowers them to decipher the meanings of terms with greater ease.

FINDINGS

Challenges Faced by Vietnamese Students in learning English as a legal language

Vietnamese law students face a lot of challenges when learning English legal register. Some of the challenges have been discussed in detail in the article.

Accents the linguistic challenge.

Mushroom and Alan highlight the predicament where instructors might be proficient in technical jargon in languages like German yet struggle when translating these concepts into English. The ensuing difficulty in comprehending lectures becomes a formidable barrier to effective learning. Moreover, imbued with a distinct German accent, the German faculty's English adds complexity. This accent is unfamiliar to many students accustomed to the cadence of U.S. or British English accents.

Consequently, the linguistic landscape becomes a labyrinth where understanding is tangled in linguistic nuances. Pronunciation is an essential aspect of effective communication. In the study, it was noted that many students struggle with clear and correct pronunciation in English. This issue can lead to misunderstandings when interacting with teachers and peers.

The complexity of English pronunciation, mainly due to its non-phonetic nature, contributes to learners' challenges. Students struggle with clear and accurate pronunciation, which can lead to misunderstandings in communication. The Correct pronunciation is crucial for effective oral communication. Vietnamese and English phonetic systems are distinct, leading to difficulties in mastering English pronunciation. Certain sounds and phonetic patterns are not present in the Vietnamese language, making it challenging to produce English words accurately. One of the fundamental challenges Vietnamese learners face in mastering English pronunciation is the absence of specific phonemes in the Vietnamese language. For example, the "th" sound, as in "think" or "this," does not exist in Vietnamese (Wadhvani et al., 2020). Instead, Vietnamese speakers tend to replace it with sounds like "t" or "s," which can lead to mispronunciations and difficulties in understanding for native English speakers.

Similarly, the "v" sound, common in English words like "very" or "voice," is not present in Vietnamese. Instead, Vietnamese speakers often use the "w" sound, leading to pronunciations like "wery" instead of "very" (Lin et al., 2023). These phonetic substitutions can significantly affect the intelligibility of spoken English.

Phonetic Influence of Native Language

Another critical factor contributing to pronunciation challenges is the influence of the Vietnamese language's phonetic patterns on English speech (Kadir, 850). Vietnamese is a tonal language, meaning

that the pitch or tone in which a word is spoken can change its meaning. In contrast, English is a non-tonal language, relying on stress patterns and intonation for meaning (Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019). Vietnamese learners often carry over the tonal features of their native language when speaking English, resulting in speech patterns that may sound monotonous or misemphasized to native English speakers (Wadhvani et al., 2020). This can affect their ability to convey the intended meaning effectively.

Moreover, the rhythm and intonation of Vietnamese are distinct from English. Vietnamese is considered a syllable-timed language, where each syllable is roughly equal in length and prominence. On the other hand, English is a stress-timed language with varying stress patterns that create a natural rhythm (Wadhvani et al., 2020). Vietnamese learners may struggle to adapt to English's stress-timed rhythm, leading to speech that sounds rushed or uneven in stress patterns. These differences in rhythm and intonation can impede both comprehension and effective communication.

Limited Exposure to Native Speakers

Language acquisition and pronunciation improvement is greatly facilitated by exposure to native speakers. However, many Vietnamese learners may have limited opportunities for immersion in English-speaking environments where they can interact with and listen to native speakers (Kadir, 850). In Vietnam, English classes typically focus on written skills and grammar, with less emphasis on oral communication and pronunciation (Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019). This traditional approach to language education may result in learners not receiving adequate phonetic training, further exacerbating their pronunciation challenges. Given these challenges, it is common for Vietnamese learners to make specific mispronunciations when speaking English (Lin et al., 2023). Some of the frequent mispronunciations include substituting "r" with "l" or omitting it: Vietnamese learners may struggle with words containing the "r" sound, either by substituting it with "l" or omitting it altogether. For example, "rabbit" may become "labbit," and "car" may be pronounced as "ca." Mispronouncing vowel sounds: English has a wide range of vowel sounds that do not necessarily correspond to Vietnamese vowel sounds. Learners may mispronounce words with vowels like "ee" or "ae." Confusing "v" and "w" sounds: The absence of the "v" sound in Vietnamese can lead to confusion between "v" and "w" sounds in English. For instance, "voice" may be pronounced as "voice." These mispronunciations can impact speech clarity and the learner's confidence in using English (Lin et al., 2023). Moreover, they can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunications in various contexts, from academic presentations to business meetings.

Addressing Phonological Challenges

Addressing phonological challenges in English pronunciation requires a multifaceted approach that considers the Vietnamese language's unique linguistic characteristics and the learners' specific needs (Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019). Here are some strategies to help Vietnamese learners improve their English pronunciation: 1. Phonetic Training: English instructors should incorporate phonetic training into their curriculum, focusing on the sounds that pose the most significant challenges for Vietnamese learners (Wadhvani et al., 2020). This training should include listening exercises, tongue twisters, and drills to help learners develop pronunciation skills. 2. Intensive Listening Practice: Exposure to native English speakers through listening practice is crucial (Kadir, 850). Instructors should incorporate authentic listening materials like podcasts, interviews, and movies to familiarize learners with natural speech patterns and intonation. 3. Individualized Feedback: Providing learners personalized feedback on their pronunciation is essential (Lin et al., 2023). Instructors can use recording and playback tools to assess learners' speech and offer specific guidance on areas that need improvement. 4. Peer Practice: Encouraging learners to engage in peer practice can be highly beneficial (Wadhvani et al., 2020). Learners can work together to practice correct pronunciation and provide constructive feedback. 5. Phonetic Drills: Incorporating phonetic drills and exercises into lessons can help learners focus on specific sounds that pose challenges (Lin et al., 2023). These drills can be repeated regularly to reinforce correct pronunciation. 6. Stress and Intonation Practice: Since stress and intonation patterns differ between Vietnamese and English, learners should practice stress and intonation in English sentences and dialogues (Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019). This helps them convey meaning more effectively.

Research in various contexts, not exclusive to Vietnam, has consistently highlighted the challenges non-native English speakers face with specific phonemes (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019; Teremetskyi et al., 2021). For instance, many Vietnamese learners struggle with sounds like "th" and "v" because these sounds do not exist in the Vietnamese language (Devkota, 2022; Balakrishnan & Silver, 2019). This is a well-documented issue in English language education literature (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019; Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Studies have shown that Vietnamese learners' English pronunciation is often influenced by the phonetic patterns of their native language (Teremetskyi et al., 2021; Devkota, 2022).

For example, the tones in Vietnamese might influence the intonation and rhythm of their English

speech (Teremetskyi et al., 2021; Devkota, 2022). Also, with limited opportunities for immersion in English-speaking environments, Vietnamese learners may not have sufficient exposure to native speakers (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019; Teremetskyi et al., 2021). This lack of exposure can contribute to challenges in acquiring accurate pronunciation (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019; Teremetskyi et al., 2021). The Vietnamese education system traditionally emphasizes grammar and written skills over oral communication (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019; Teremetskyi et al., 2021). This can result in learners not receiving adequate phonetic training in their English classes (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019; Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Common mispronunciations among Vietnamese learners include replacing the "r" sound with "l" or omitting it, mispronouncing vowel sounds, and confusing "v" and "w" sounds (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019; Teremetskyi et al., 2021).

Navigating Linguistic Diversity in Academic Settings

The experience of Vietnamese students grappling with the intricacies of using English within an academic context highlights a multifaceted challenge that goes beyond the boundaries of language (Kadir, 850; Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019). While serving as a lingua franca for global communication, English presents a unique set of hurdles regarding academic instruction (Lin, Afzaal, & Aldayel, 2023). This becomes especially evident when English is not spoken by students and professors, as detailed in the provided text (Wadhvani et al., 2020; Nunn, 2020). The text portrays a scenario where English functions as a complex bridge between diverse linguistic backgrounds (Suonpää et al., 2022; Skott, 2022). The academic environment described is one where English is the medium through which knowledge is imparted, despite it not being the native language of either the students or a significant portion of the professors (Jones & Beom, 2022; White & Rittie, 2022). The prevalence of German-native professors in a non-English speaking country like Vietnam showcases the challenges of this linguistic juxtaposition (Eruka, 2023; Bonilla Maldonado, 2023). Bong's observation sheds light on the intricacies students and professors face (Kadir, 850). The translation process is not merely about switching languages; it necessitates a cognitive shift. Professors need to internalize and convey their thoughts in English. At the same time, students must then decode this English input into their native language for comprehension (Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019). This double translation underscores the cognitive load that both parties carry, a burden that can inadvertently impact the effectiveness of instruction (Lin, Afzaal, & Aldayel, 2023). The varied linguistic backgrounds of the professors further compound the linguistic challenges.

As Bong aptly points out, the professors sometimes know a word in their native language but struggle to find its equivalent in English (Suonpää et al., 2022). This linguistic divide between the professors and students can result in a disconnect, where students are left grappling with poorly translated concepts (Skott, 2022). Simon's observation of struggling to hear and comprehend due to professors from various non-English-speaking countries echoes this sentiment (Macaulay, 2020). It is a scenario where the lingua franca, meant to unify, becomes a potential barrier to understanding. Mushroom's insight emphasizes the broader impact of language limitations (Anh, 2022). While the professors' expertise may lie in their respective fields, the language barrier can inadvertently obscure knowledge transfer. The challenge of professors not being proficient English speakers, even if they are experts in their disciplines, creates a potential gap in effective instruction (Jones & Beom, 2022). The experiences shared in the text highlight the complex nature of using English as a medium of instruction in diverse academic settings (White & Rittie, 2022). The challenges Vietnamese students face are not limited to mastering the language; they extend to navigating the nuances of cross-cultural communication and bridging the gap between diverse linguistic backgrounds (Eruka, 2023; Bonilla Maldonado, 2023).

As the globalized educational landscape evolves, acknowledging and addressing these challenges becomes imperative to fostering a truly inclusive and effective learning environment (Kadir, 850).

Grammar and Syntax

English grammar rules can significantly differ from Vietnamese grammar, causing confusion among learners. Sentence structures, tenses, and word orders in English may not align with their native language. The intricate realm of grammar and syntax presents a notable challenge for Vietnamese learners transitioning to English. The grammatical and syntactical disparities between the two languages can create a web of confusion, compelling learners to navigate an intricate linguistic landscape. This challenge stems from the divergent rules that English and Vietnamese grammar abide by, impacting the construction of sentences, usage of tenses, and arrangement of words. Acquiring English as a second language presents intricate challenges for Vietnamese learners, particularly concerning grammar and syntax (Kadir, 850). These challenges stem from the stark differences between English and Vietnamese grammar rules, affecting sentence structures, tenses, word orders, and the usage of articles (Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019).

In Vietnamese, sentence structures typically adhere to a subject-verb-object (SVO) pattern, while English often employs a subject-verb agreement (SVA) pattern (Wadhvani et al., 2020). This shift in

sentence structure can bewilder learners, resulting in sentences that sound unnatural or grammatically incorrect. Moreover, English's use of articles ("a," "an," and "the") stands in stark contrast to Vietnamese, which lacks articles entirely, leading to challenges in their proper usage and comprehension (Suonpää et al., 2022). The nuanced usage of tenses compounds the challenge further. Vietnamese often rely on context to convey tense, while English emphasizes tense through auxiliary verbs (Lu, Luo, & Santos, 2022). This disparity can lead to inaccuracies or awkward phrasing in English as learners strive to align their native language's temporal constructs with English conventions. Word order represents another layer of complexity. English generally follows a relatively fixed word order, while Vietnamese employs a more flexible one (Skott, 2022). This divergence can lead to sentences that appear disjointed or syntactically incorrect in English when directly translated from Vietnamese. The challenge of grappling with grammar and syntax disparities between Vietnamese and English underscores the intricate nature of language acquisition. Navigating these differences necessitates a deep understanding of the underlying linguistic structures, forging a bridge between two languages that often follow distinct grammatical pathways (Macaulay, 2020). In Vietnamese, sentence structures often follow a subject-verb-object (SVO) pattern, whereas English frequently adopts a subject-verb agreement (SVA) pattern. This alteration in sentence structure can confound learners, leading to sentences that sound unnatural or grammatically incorrect. Furthermore, English's utilization of articles ("a," "an," and "the") contrasts with the absence of articles in Vietnamese, contributing to difficulties in proper usage and comprehension. The nuanced usage of tenses further accentuates the challenge. Vietnamese relies heavily on context to convey tense, whereas English places explicit emphasis on tense through auxiliary verbs. This disparity can result in inaccuracies or awkward phrasing in English as learners strive to align their native language's temporal constructs with English conventions. Word order presents another layer of complexity. English's relatively fixed word order contrasts with the more flexible word order in Vietnamese.

This variation can lead to sentences that appear disjointed or syntactically incorrect in English when directly translated from Vietnamese. In sum, the challenge of grappling with grammar and syntax discrepancies between Vietnamese and English highlights the intricate nature of language acquisition. Navigating these differences demands a deep understanding of the underlying linguistic structures, fostering a bridge between two languages that often follow distinct grammatical pathways. : Grammar competence is another significant linguistic problem. EFL learners often make mistakes in sentence structures and grammar rules, which can affect the accuracy and clarity of their speech. Differences between English and the learners' native language can lead to grammatical errors when speaking. Differences in grammar structures between the learners' native language and English can lead to errors in sentence construction. Mistakes in grammar patterns affect the overall fluency and comprehensibility of speech. English grammar rules can significantly differ from Vietnamese grammar, causing confusion among learners. Sentence structures, tenses, and word orders in English may not align with their native language. Learning a language involves understanding the cultural context in which it is used. Vietnamese students might struggle to grasp idiomatic expressions, slang, and cultural references embedded in English conversations.

Vietnamese lacks tense and aspect markings, and students transfer their native language patterns into English. This is supported by examples of incorrect usage of tenses and aspects, like using the present tense for future actions. Vietnamese students might struggle to distinguish between English tenses due to the absence of tense markers in their native language. They might overuse or misuse certain tenses and aspects because they lack a nuanced understanding of when to use them. Vietnamese students tend to omit the appropriate form of the copula "be" in sentences where it is necessary in English. The omission of the copula "be" might stem from the absence of a direct equivalent in Vietnamese sentence structures. This can result in sentences lacking proper subject-predicate agreement or sounding incomplete to native English speakers.

Vietnamese learners apply rules from adjective phrases to verb phrases, leading to errors in adverb placement. Adverb placement in English is different from in Vietnamese, and this can lead to confusion for learners. English learners might use adverbs in positions that sound unnatural in English sentences, disrupting the flow and meaning of their communication. Vietnamese sentence structures and word orders differ from English. The influence of the native language's sentence structure can lead to students constructing sentences in English that sound odd or incorrect. Transferring the syntax of Vietnamese sentences directly to English often results in grammatically incorrect or awkward sentences. Students may not be aware that not all verbs can be used in the progressive aspect of English. This lack of awareness can lead to errors where students use verbs in the progressive aspect when they should not. Without a proper understanding of aspect restrictions, learners might find it challenging to convey the intended meaning in their sentences accurately. The research mentions that students face difficulties in writing, including organizing ideas and using proper grammar and spelling. This could indicate that students might struggle with correctly applying grammar rules in their writing. The dependence on dictionaries for understanding new words and terms implies that students might not be equipped to grasp the nuances of grammar in context independently. Some ESP textbooks developed by teachers focus primarily on

reading skills and vocabulary exercises, neglecting other language skills. This suggests that students might not receive comprehensive exposure to various grammar structures and language usage, limiting their ability to apply grammar rules effectively in real-world contexts. This implies that while students may have good grammar skills, other language skills, such as speaking and pronunciation, might be neglected. The emphasis on reading, grammar, and vocabulary might lead to limited opportunities for students to practice listening and speaking skills. This imbalance could hinder students' ability to understand and use grammar in spoken communication.

Cultural Context

Learning a language involves understanding the cultural context in which it is used. Vietnamese students might struggle to grasp idiomatic expressions, slang, and cultural references embedded in English conversations. The challenge further extends to the Cultural Norms that influence students' engagement. While some students like Joshua boldly raise questions to seek clarification, several participants grapple with the weight of cultural norms. Traditional Vietnamese education follows a Confucian model characterized by passive learning and teacher-centered approaches (Harman & Bich, 2010; Thanh, 2010; Tran, 2012). Active participation, exemplified by asking questions, contradicts these ingrained norms. This shift towards interactive learning challenges the traditional educational paradigm and underscores the evolution of classroom dynamics in a globalized context.

The lack of an immersive English-speaking environment can hinder students' ability to practice speaking and listening. English is primarily learned in classrooms, and opportunities for real-world interaction are limited. Limited exposure to natural English communication is a common issue many English learners face. Students might struggle with pronunciation, intonation, and understanding colloquial expressions without regular exposure to authentic spoken English. This hinders their ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations. They focus on grammar, reading, and vocabulary in English courses for non-English majors. A curriculum emphasizing written skills over spoken skills might make students less confident and competent in speaking and listening. English learners need a well-rounded language education that covers all four skills to become proficient communicators. Pronunciation is a practical skill that requires regular practice in natural communication settings. With an overemphasis on exams and scores, students might not get enough opportunities to practice and refine their pronunciation. While students may have good English grammar due to the curriculum's focus, their communication abilities are often weak. This is attributed to the lack of emphasis on practical speaking skills. : Survey results show Vietnamese students find listening and speaking skills the most challenging. The TOEIC test scores of first-year students in 18 Vietnamese universities in 2015 averaged between 220-245 out of 990 points. This is significantly below the minimum score of 450-500 points required by employers. This indicates a lack of English proficiency among students. Students require around 360 hours of learning (equivalent to 480 classes) to reach the minimum TOEIC score needed by employers. However, only about 225 English classes are available for students in Vietnam to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The research explains that Vietnam's current university English curriculum mainly focuses on grammar, reading documents, and basic-level communication. The research suggests that despite having good English grammar skills, students still struggle with communication. This is attributed to the limited emphasis on communication skills, including pronunciation, in the curriculum.

Navigating Dialectical Complexities

One of the most pronounced challenges is the Variety of Dialects that instructors employ. Many students grapple with the intricacies of lectures presented in diverse dialects, resulting in comprehension gaps. The gravity of this challenge is underscored by Cat and Nguyen's candid admission that they comprehend a mere 30% of their instructors' communications. This deficiency is especially alarming given the technical nature of their academic disciplines. These findings mirror the conclusions of Nguyen and Pham (2016), which revealed that students often fall short of the requisite language proficiency demanded by the workforce. This impels the urgency of preparing students to navigate the global STEM workforce, necessitating collaborative efforts between educational institutions and governmental bodies to refine curricula and enhance instructor training. The lack of an immersive English-speaking environment can hinder students' ability to practice speaking and listening. English is primarily learned in classrooms, and opportunities for real-world interaction are limited. While Vietnamese students often have a good foundation in Basic English vocabulary, they can struggle with expanding their vocabulary to encompass more nuanced and complex terms needed for higher-level communication.

A shortage of vocabulary was also identified as a challenge. Insufficient vocabulary limits students' ability to express their ideas fluently and accurately. It was noted that learners may struggle to find the right words to convey their thoughts, leading to pauses and hesitations during speech. Limited vocabulary hinders learners' ability to express themselves adequately. Insufficient vocabulary leads to pauses in speech as learners struggle to find the right words. While Vietnamese students often have a good

foundation in Basic English vocabulary, they can struggle with expanding their vocabulary to encompass more nuanced and complex terms needed for higher-level communication. Students tend to transfer sentence structures and word orders from their native language when constructing English sentences. This problem results from the natural tendency to apply familiar patterns from the native language to the target language. Students might need to consciously work on thinking in English to avoid directly translating sentence structures. Lack of vocabulary and dependence on dictionaries are also notable issues. The research highlights that students often face difficulties due to a lack of vocabulary, especially in ESP terms. This situation can result in learners being dependent on dictionaries and struggling to comprehend texts without understanding key terms. The lack of vocabulary can stem from the differences between Vietnamese and English languages, including differences in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. This further contributes to the challenges students face in using English proficiently.

Creating a Supportive Communication Environment:

1. **English Clubs and Language Exchanges:** Schools and communities can establish English clubs where students gather to converse in English. Additionally, language exchange programs with native English speakers or advanced English learners can provide authentic practice opportunities.
2. **Digital Learning Platforms:** Online and language learning apps offer interactive exercises, language games, and conversation practice with AI-powered tools, enabling students to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
3. **Role-Play Activities:** Incorporating classroom role-play scenarios allows students to simulate real-life conversations. This technique enhances their confidence in using English in various contexts.
4. **Cultural Immersion:** Exposure to English-language media, such as movies, T.V. shows, and music, provides insights into cultural nuances and helps students adapt to different accents and expressions.
5. **Speaking Partnerships:** Pairing students for regular speaking practice can create a comfortable environment to communicate and learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses.
6. **Authentic Materials:** Integrating authentic materials, such as news articles, podcasts, and interviews, exposes students to real-world language usage and diverse perspectives.
7. **Encouraging Risk-Taking:** Fostering a supportive and non-judgmental classroom atmosphere encourages students to take risks in using English without fearing mistakes.

Counterarguments or Objections

English Proficiency Programs

While it is acknowledged that English proficiency programs exist, critics argue that their effectiveness can be limited (Anh, 2022; Bonilla Maldonado, 2023). These programs often operate as separate entities from mainstream education, resulting in a lack of integration (Jones & Beom, 2022). Consequently, students may struggle to effectively transfer the language skills acquired in these programs to their academic coursework (Teremetskyi et al., 2021; White & Rittie, 2022). Critics contend that merely offering English proficiency programs is insufficient; the key lies in aligning these programs with the broader curriculum to ensure that language skills are seamlessly integrated into the learning process (Nam et al., 2023; Wagner & Walker, 2019).

Lack of English-Speaking Environments

The assertion that limited exposure to authentic English-speaking environments hampers language acquisition faces scrutiny (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019; Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Critics argue that in an age of globalization and digital connectivity, the absence of physical immersion is not an insurmountable barrier. Students can access English-language content online, from movies and news to social media and educational platforms (White & Rittie, 2022). Therefore, the responsibility to seek out and engage with English content falls partially on the students themselves (Devkota, 2022; Nam et al., 2023). Critics suggest that the focus should shift from blaming external factors to promoting proactive student engagement with the language (Eruka, 2023; Suonpää et al., 2022).

Dependence on Rote Learning

While it is recognized that some Vietnamese education systems may employ rote memorization (Anh, 2022), critics argue that this is not unique to Vietnam (Kadir, 850). Rote learning is a pedagogical approach employed in various educational contexts globally (Macaulay, 2020; Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019). Critics contend that attributing language challenges solely to rote learning oversimplifies the issue (Wadhvani et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2023). Instead, they propose a more nuanced examination of teaching methods, advocating for innovative approaches that blend traditional practices with modern, student-centered techniques (Lu et al., 2022; Skott, 2022).

Economic Factors

The assertion that economic disparities contribute to language challenges faces critique (Nunn, 2020; Suonpää et al., 2022). Critics argue that economic factors, while influential, do not wholly determine language proficiency (Kadir, 850; Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019). They contend that individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds have successfully acquired English proficiency (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019; Macaulay, 2020). Therefore, critics urge a more comprehensive exploration of the interconnected factors, such as educational policies and teaching methodologies, rather than isolating economic factors as the primary driver of language challenges (Wadhvani et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2023).

Teacher Training

While it has been acknowledged that teacher training is crucial (Anh, 2022; Bonilla Maldonado, 2023), critics argue that it is not the sole solution (Jones & Beom, 2022; White & Rittie, 2022). They emphasize that even well-trained teachers may face challenges in large, overcrowded classrooms with limited resources (Devkota, 2022; Skott, 2022). Critics propose a multifaceted approach involving teacher training, smaller class sizes, improved classroom resources, and updated curricula to address language challenges more effectively (Nunn, 2020; Suonpää et al., 2022). Critics contest that standardized testing accurately measures language proficiency (Lu et al., 2022; Teremetskyi et al., 2021). They argue that such tests may not adequately reflect a student's practical language skills or ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations (Solum, 2021; Eruka, 2023). Critics suggest that a holistic evaluation, incorporating oral communication, group discussions, and real-world tasks, would provide a more accurate assessment of language proficiency (Kadir, 850; Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019).

Role of the Vietnamese Language

While it has been acknowledged that the Vietnamese language has unique characteristics that can influence English pronunciation and sentence structure, critics argue that these influences are not insurmountable obstacles. They assert that many individuals worldwide successfully navigate language transitions, emphasizing the adaptability of language learners. Critics propose that, instead of fixating on linguistic interference, the focus should be on effective teaching methods that address these challenges systematically.

Educational Policies

Critics challenge the assertion that language challenges in Vietnam are primarily due to educational policies (Devkota, 2022; Balakrishnan & Silver, 2019). They argue that educational policies can change, and while they influence the system, they do not wholly define the outcomes (Macaulay, 2020; Jones & Beom, 2022). Critics suggest that instead of focusing on the constraints imposed by policies, a more constructive approach would involve advocating for policy changes that align with best practices in language education (Wagner & Walker, 2019; Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Critics challenge the view that technological advancements alone can resolve language challenges (Eruka, 2023; Kadir, 850). While technology can enhance language learning, critics argue that it should complement, not replace, effective teaching methodologies (Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019; Lin et al., 2023). They emphasize the role of educators in guiding students' use of technology for language acquisition, highlighting the need for a pedagogically sound integration of technology in classrooms.

Global Perspective

Critics argue that a singular focus on English neglects the importance of preserving and promoting the Vietnamese language and culture (Kadir, 850; Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019). They contend that bilingualism can be a valuable asset, enabling individuals to engage locally and globally (Lu, Luo, & Santos, 2022; Suonpää et al., 2022). Critics suggest that language education policies should strike a balance between fostering English proficiency and preserving the richness of the Vietnamese language and culture (Wadhvani et al., 2020; Nunn, 2020).

In conclusion, while the identified factors contribute to language challenges faced by Vietnamese students, engaging in a nuanced and multifaceted discourse is essential. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach encompassing curriculum reform, teaching methodologies, teacher training, and recognizing the diverse factors influencing language acquisition. By embracing a holistic perspective, educators and policymakers can work together to empower Vietnamese students with the language skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

CONCLUSION

Vietnamese students face specific challenges when learning English, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, cultural understanding, and limited practice opportunities (Nam et al., 2023; White & Rittie, 2022). To address these challenges, it is crucial to create an environment that promotes active communication and practice (Kadir, 850; Lin et al., 2023). By leveraging strategies such as English clubs, digital platforms, role-play activities, cultural immersion, speaking partnerships, authentic materials, and a supportive classroom atmosphere (Teremetskyi et al., 2021; Wagner & Walker, 2019), educators and institutions can empower Vietnamese students to enhance their English language proficiency and succeed in global communication. This study provides a comprehensive exploration of the intricate challenges Vietnamese law students face in their pursuit of learning English and mastering specialized legal terminology (Anh, 2022; Devkota, 2022). Within the dynamic landscape of global education, where English has firmly established itself as the primary medium of instruction (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019; Teremetskyi et al., 2021), the Vietnamese educational system is undergoing a significant transformation to equip its students with the essential global language skills. However, this linguistic journey becomes considerably complex when considering specialized fields like law.

The challenges in mastering legal English are magnified by the necessity to navigate the intricate world of legal terminology, which diverges significantly between English and Vietnamese (Ein-Dor et al., 2020; Pacella, 2020). It is not merely a matter of translation but involves grasping the subtle cultural and historical contexts that imbue these legal terms with their distinctive meanings (Solum, 2021; Suonpää et al., 2022). This challenge places a significant responsibility on educators who must function as interpreters of legal principles while also unraveling the complex web of culture, history, and language enveloping them. The fabric of legal language is interwoven with cultural nuances that demand both linguistic expertise and cultural interpretation (Macaulay, 2020; Passos e Sousa Marques Afonso & do Céu Henriques de Bastos, 2019). The subtleties of idiomatic expressions, the layered connotations of legal jargon, and context-dependent meanings within legal terminology present educators with a complex tapestry to unravel (Ein-Dor et al., 2020; Pacella, 2020; Solum, 2021). However, the journey through legal terminology is not confined to linguistic competence alone. Practical application is a vital aspect, which poses an additional challenge due to limited opportunities for real-world practice (Kadir, 850; Lin et al., 2023). Educators must create an environment conducive to hands-on engagement, utilizing language clubs, moot court simulations, and interactive drafting exercises to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills (Teremetskyi et al., 2021; Wagner & Walker, 2019).

In summary, the learning journey of Vietnamese law students through legal terminology is an intricate odyssey, combining linguistic challenges with cultural exploration. As educators align their strategies with the broader context of English as the language of instruction, they play a pivotal role in shaping Vietnamese law students into proficient navigators of legal discourse on the global stage (Anh, 2022; Jones & Beom, 2022; Teremetskyi et al., 2021). This transformative approach empowers students to engage with the evolving legal landscape with linguistic precision and cultural insight (Nunn, 2020; Suonpää et al., 2022; Wagner & Walker, 2019), effectively overcoming the multifaceted challenges they encounter during their educational journey (Ballakrishnen & Silver, 2019; Eruka, 2023; Devkota, 2022).

The researcher acknowledges the limited scope of this study because it was library-based and relied solely on existing published data. The researcher further acknowledges that there are gaps that can be filled with further research. A qualitative study is suggested to get further insight into the challenges Vietnamese law students face while learning legal terminology. The author suggests a comparative qualitative study on legal language acquisition by Vietnamese students who have had English as their language of instruction throughout their school years vis a vis law students who have been taught in Vietnamese. Further, future research could be done to establish whether Vietnamese law students' repertoire of legalese improves as they start practicing as lawyers.

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