

An evaluation of English non-majored freshmen's attitude towards EFL learning at Can Tho University of Technology

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Abstract

Globalization has brought not only opportunities but also challenges to English teaching and learning. In the context of the Mekong Delta, Vietnam, teaching English for non-majored students still faces lots of challenges due to several factors. The present study aims to shed light on factors affecting English non-majored freshmen's language attitude towards EFL learning at Can Tho University of Technology (CTUT). Questionnaires were delivered to 662 English non-majored freshmen, and interviews were conducted with 29 students and 6 English teachers. The results showed that both students and teachers emphasized the significance of EFL learning and teaching in a globalized world. Although the students have acknowledged the importance of the English language, they did not show high motivation in EFL learning. The results also showed that learning materials, lecturers, and peers were positive factors, whereas home learning environment, personality and habits, and interests negatively affected English non-majored freshmen's attitude. Additionally, the results also indicated students' preference and appreciation for lecturers' related-factors, whereas the teachers denoted that most of the students showed negative attitudes in their EFL learning. From these findings, several approaches were discussed in order to enhance students' English language attitude, resulting in improving students' outcomes in EFL learning at CTUT.

Keywords: English language attitude; teacher; English non-majored freshmen

1. Introduction

Can Tho University of Technology is one of the state higher education institutions in Can Tho City. CTUT has the mission to educate the moral and intellectual human resources who can do scientific research, apply and do technological transfer to serve the socio-economic development of Can Tho City, the Mekong Delta, and all over the country.

To achieve its missions, universities' training activities aim to provide high-quality human resources for industrialization, modernization, and international integration of Vietnam. Foreign language proficiency is considered an essential part of the training curriculum in this context. Therefore, students have to gain their foreign language proficiency at level B1 as independent users (Level B1 of CEFR's 6 Levels) as regulated by the Ministry of Education and Training.

At CTUT, English is chosen to be a compulsory subject in the first three semesters, and it plays a vital role besides other engineering subjects in the curriculum. Three general English subjects occupy from 33,33% to 40% in basic knowledge of all undergraduate majors. However, the statistical figures from the CTUT's Training Department have shown that less than 30% of students (from the first three courses: 2013, 2014, and 2015) could be granted the English language proficiency certificate for their university graduation. Therefore, some policies and methods have been applied for the past five years to find solutions to the problem. However, the students' results in English subjects have not been as good as expected.

From overall observation and contact with students, while teaching, we believe that they all recognize the importance of English in their higher education curriculum. They also clearly know that learning English well, of course, increases their chances of getting good jobs in state offices or multi-national companies in Viet Nam or for finding work abroad in the future. Nevertheless, their attitude towards learning this subject is quite different from their thoughts. While learning depends on whether the learners are motivated or not, it seems that several students' learning motivation is not strong enough to struggle with their problems. Others do not have a good educational background at high school. For these reasons, this research was conducted to evaluate the factors affecting the first-year students' attitude towards EFL learning at CTUT. Hopefully, the research results could help students obtain a more positive attitude in EFL learning to enhance their foreign language proficiency.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Attitude and language learning

2.1.1 Definition of language attitude

Conceptualized by many authors, language attitude is defined as follows: "The attitudes which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other's languages or to their own language. Expression of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning. In other words, language attitude closely associates with the learner's feelings towards language use and its status in the society that can nurture or hinder the learning process" (Ahmed, 2015; Addisu, 2020; Triandis, 1971).

2.1.2 Significance of language attitude

It is believed that students are more motivated if they have their desires and real purposes of learning the language in spite of any teaching methods applied to instruct them. However, there is also a contradictory belief that there is a variety of reasons that motivate students to learn the language (Addisu, 2020). Whatever is being said, most researchers and instructors considerably agreed that students' attitude towards language learning, especially positive attitude is significant to students' learning success. Additionally, students, teachers, and researchers should highly

acknowledge that high motivation and a positive attitude facilitate language learning. In contrast, a negative attitude influenced by internal and external factors could impede the learning process. Gardner & Lambert (1972) also advocated that students' master of a second language is affected by mental competence and language skills and the student's attitude and perception towards the target language. Gardner (1985) indicated that the influence of attitude on students' performance is quite essential since it promotes motivation resulting in better achievement.

Language attitude studies have examined people's reactions to language interactions and people's evaluations of others based on the language behavior they observe. Accordingly, schools also play an important role in shaping students' positive attitudes towards language learning. Thus, stimulants of students' positive language attitude could come from many resources, and in order to assist them in obtaining language proficiency and success, several factors should be taken into account.

2.2 Factors affecting attitude towards learning English as a foreign language

As both internal and external factors designate students' attitudes, it is significant to determine the factors that lead them to proficient levels as well as the factors that draw them back from achieving proficiency. Various researchers have developed taxonomies of factors impacting foreign language learners' attitudes, affecting their language proficiency (Addisu, 2020). In this study, after taking into account the students' personality, social background, and learning environment, the following factors are adopted to verify students' attitudes towards EFL learning.

2.2.1 Learners' awareness of the significance of English

Research has shown that if the learners possess instrumental motivation, which means they are aware of the importance and practicality of the second language, their chance to gain success in language acquisition is much higher. The concrete and practical purposes could be applying for a job, meeting the requirements for school or university graduation, requesting higher pay based on language ability, reading technical material, translation work, or achieving higher social status (Nasser & Majid, 2011). These authors also indicated that learners' passion for the language, such as readiness to learn and obtain the language, patience in solving the linguistic problems, tolerance of making mistakes, etc., is one of the essential factors for their language achievements. Accordingly, the greater they are conscious of their learning, the more proficient level they gain.

2.2.2 Educational context

Learning situation

Researchers have identified pertinent demotivators (factors that negatively affect learners' language attitudes). They have come to conclusions that learning situations consisting of inadequate school facilities, insufficient use of available facilities, uncomfortable and noisy learning environment, classroom size, demographic factors, climate and weather conditions, insufficient time allocation, and limited exposure to English are those demotivators, which hinder learners' language acquisition. A study conducted by Husniyah (2019) has revealed that more than half of the participants reported that inadequate school facilities and scarce use of available facilities are strong demotivators in EFL classes. Research has shown that learning English with the help of technology and media, including videos, songs, blogging, chatting, social media, etc., could enhance students' motivation (Yamauchi, 2009).

In addition to facility availability, the learning environment contributes a lot to motivate or demotivate students' learning. Young (1999) denoted that lack of light, the crowd, and the noise in the classroom could create difficulties in learning due to troublesome. Young (1999) also added that it would negatively affect the students' learning and motivation if the school has an intense and stuffy environment.

Learning materials

Course books and learning content have also been identified as prominent elements devoting to students' failure or success in EFL learning. Kikuchi & Sakai (2009) emphasized that if the learning content is considered boring by students, it will diminish their concentration, and they lose track of the lesson's main points. Hamada & Kito (2008) and Kakuchi & Sakai (2009) similarly found out that learning contents and materials are the most demotivating factor rated by the students. In another perspective, learning materials could be stimulants for students' learning as well. According to Peacock (1997), authentic materials rated by students could increase their motivation, although these materials seem less eye-catching than artificial materials. Learning materials would be tempting if they embed learners' interests and needs, which tap into learners' desires for information processing.

Teacher-related factors

Teacher-related factors have been proved to be one of the most fundamental principles in the language acquisition process. Wong (1991) stated that a teacher's personality, behavior, and teaching methods might negatively or positively impact students' learning process.

The first fundamental aspect related to teachers is their methods of instruction, including the way they offer the lessons, the language used in the classroom, their communication with students, and their feedback to students. Studies conducted have proclaimed that too fast, too slow, or too long speech in teaching could decrease their motivation due to the lack of clarity in information transformation (Husniyah, 2019). Another significant aspect relevant to the methods given is student-teacher communication. Researchers have argued that effective language learning, in which students could develop a positive attitude, must involve student-teacher interaction and communication (Addisu, 2020). Larsen & Long (1991) stated that teachers' attitude towards the learners strongly impacts learners' quality and quantity of learning and the attitudes or emulate learners' positive and negative attitudes. "Without communication between teachers and learners, there will be little chance of effective education" (Spolsky, 1989, p. 3). Finally, studies have confirmed that feedback is as vital as methods of instruction. For instance, teachers' negative feedback and unfair grading could make learners lose interest and confidence (Le & Dang, 2019). A teacher's feedback is necessary for students to fix what they have not perfectly performed and to add more input to their knowledge.

Secondly, teachers' personalities and behavior are also essential elements affecting learners' attitudes and language acquisition. "A boring teacher" defined as lack of sense of humor, lack of friendliness, or being too serious could demotivate learners since they do not bring a fresh and engaging atmosphere to the classroom, which is indispensable to learners' motivation (Husniyah, 2019).

Learners' family

The learners' family is categorized as a social or educational context. Several family factors influence learners' language attitude, such as family educational background, religion, culture, socio-economic status, place of birth, and knowledge of the target language (Addisu, 2020). Several studies have pointed out that learners adapt their parents' attitudes towards the target language. This could result in their achievements in language acquisition (Addisu, 2020). If parents or family members possess good language ability, that will be a great advantage to promote students' learning success. Studies have concluded that the more target language environment is created at home, the higher students' achievement in their language learning (Spolsky, 1989).

Learners' peers

Researchers have argued that peers even have a more substantial impact on learners' attitudes than their family members. This could be proved by the truth that students spend the same amount or even more time with their peers at school than the time they spend with their family members. Accordingly, peers could shape their views in many aspects of life. Studies have shown that learners may adopt parents' attitudes, but their peers strongly influence them since peers are at the same age to share common interests and tastes. If learners' peers develop positive attitudes towards the foreign language, this ultimately impacts students' language attitudes. Peers' attitudes and opinions play essential roles in learners' motivation (Burns & Darling, 2002).

2.2.3 Learners' personality

Studies about language attitude have revealed that while demotivation is mainly affected by extrinsic factors, intrinsic factors are more influenced. Thus, learners' personality plays a key role in their learning success.

One of the most significant characteristics that a successful learner should have is self-confidence. Clément (1980) defined linguistic self-confidence as a person's perception of their own competence and ability to accomplish tasks successfully. Scholars have specified self-confidence in the following terms: self-efficacy, self-esteem, risk-taking, and lack of anxiety. Learners have more chances to succeed in language learning about these traits as they are ready to receive input, expect good results, and take learning risks to gain more opportunities for communication and interaction (Skehan, 1989). In this way, they are more motivated and develop a positive attitude in their learning.

The second characteristic that might affect learners' success is anxiety. Research has proved the consistent nexus among personality, anxiety, learning situation, and language proficiency. Ehrman (1996) emphasized that negative feelings such as frustration, anger, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, and relevant affective factors incredibly influence the learning mode and how many languages the learners learn and achieve in a given time. If the learners appear to own anxious characteristics, they certainly have difficulties joining classroom activities, specifically listening and speaking. This hampers the learning progress and gradually diminishes learners' language motivation.

2.2.4 Learners' habits and interests

Studies have reported that people having positive habits and interests towards the language benefit a lot from their course of action since they develop suitable approaches to take control of their own learning (Shahrzad, 2016). These learners always set clear goals and do a lot of useful activities to enhance their language level. Additionally, these learners also approach all the channels that could promote their learning progress. They may change the languages in all the devices they are using into English. They may often use English to chat with their friends or connect with international friends. They may use English anytime and anywhere, and their positive attitude always leads them to language success.

Within the past five years at CTUT, the number of students gaining English language proficiency certificates for their university graduation is relatively low. We have observed and endeavored to figure out why the students have not had enough motivation in EFL learning and try to visualize the rationale behind the students' low English proficiency. After considering several aspects, we determined that both internal and external factors could affect the students' progress. Accordingly, we selected the components mentioned above as a frame for this study. In this sense, we aim to answer the following research questions:

1. Do students at Can Tho University of Technology (CTUT) have a positive or negative attitude towards English learning?
2. What are possible factors that positively influence their English language attitude?
3. What are possible factors that negatively influence their English language attitude?
4. What are the implications for further educational practice?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research methods

To answer the four research questions, experimental research with a combination of two approaches, quantitative and qualitative, was conducted. A questionnaire was delivered to 662 English non-majored first-year students at CTUT. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 29 out of 662 students and six lecturers teaching EFL for those learners. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the student participants.

3.2 Research design

Six hundred sixty-two freshmen of various engineering majors at CTUT completed a Slider-scaled survey on factors affecting their EFL learning. The factors included in the questionnaire were grouped into four main components 1) *the importance of English*, 2) *educational context*, 3) *personality*, and 4) *habits and interests*.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews were carried out on 29 EFL students and six lecturers at CTUT. 29 freshmen out of 662 students were randomly selected for an interview to gain more insights into the factors influencing their attitude towards EFL learning. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted on six lecturers teaching those students at CTUT to investigate those teachers' remarks and observations on their students' attitudes towards EFL learning.

Table 1

Student participants

Background information	Number
1. Gender	
Male	481
Female	181
2. Time to start learning English	
From elementary school	413
From secondary school	224
From high school	9
From university	16
3. Taking or not taking English courses	
Yes	193
No	469
4. Students' self-evaluation of their English level	
Weak	198
Average	395
Fair	65
Good	2
Excellent	2

3.3. Setting and participants

3.3.1 Setting

The setting of this study was at CTUT, a public university in Can Tho city. CTUT was responsible for training students at the undergraduate level. Currently, there are approximately 4000 students of 16 engineering majors taking part in courses at this university.

3.3.2 Participants

Teachers

Six lecturers interviewed were those who were teaching English for non-majored first-year students at CTUT. All the lecturers had been teaching EFL for more than fifteen years. Of all EFL lecturers, two obtained Ph.D. degrees, whereas the others held M.A degrees.

Students

Six hundred sixty-two first-year students at CTUT were involved in the Slider-scaled questionnaire in this study. The participants were from different backgrounds, at the age of eighteen to twenty. They were attending different engineering majors. Since the students were engineering majors, 70% of the participants were male learners.

Twenty-nine students interviewed were those expressing further information about their attitude towards their EFL learning apart from the information provided in the questionnaire. The focused groups of students were interviewed according to the four main components of the survey, including *the importance of English, educational context, personality, and habits and interests.*

3.4. Research instruments

Generally, the instruments used in the study are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Instruments used in the study

Instruments	Functions	Elicitation Format	Response Format	Qualitative or Quantitative
1. Questionnaire	- To investigate the students' attitude towards EFL learning - To determine the factors affecting students' positive or negative attitudes towards EFL learning	A Slider-scaled questionnaire with 37 items grouped into 4 main categories.	Written	Quantitative
2. Semi-structured interviews	- To gain an insightful understanding of the learners' attitude towards EFL learning	- Four open-ended questions for teachers - Five open-ended questions for students	Spoken	Qualitative

3.4.1 Questionnaire on students' attitude

Questionnaire design

The rating scaled questionnaire, adapted from Addisu (2020), Ohakamike-Obeka (2016), Shahrzad (2016), and Vo (2017), was used to examine students' attitudes towards EFL learning and factors affecting the learning process positively or negatively.

Firstly, the background information on the learners was explored through the initial part of the survey, including gender, major, the time when the learners began studying English, taking or not taking extra English courses, and self-assessment of their English level.

The primary content of the questionnaire was grouped into four main categories consisting of *the importance of English, educational context, personality and habits, and interests*. In the first part, the participants would show their views on the role of English through nine-question items. The second part was the educational context with 15 items, including facilities, materials, families, teachers, and peers. The survey on learners' personalities had two items, whereas the last part was eleven questions on their habits and interests.

Questionnaire piloting

The questionnaire was piloted on 40 randomly chosen English non-majored first-year students. There were no significant changes that should be made from the questionnaire. Regarding the content, some modifications were carried out on the *educational context* and *the habits and interests*. One item about the online learning system was eliminated from the "educational context" category, while one item about the online game was added to the "habits and interests"

category. Moreover, the format of the initial part of the questionnaire was adjusted to help the participants answer the questions more manageable.

3.4.2 Interviews on learners' attitude towards EFL learning

Interview design

The interview questions for teachers and students were designed to investigate learners' attitudes towards EFL learning. There were four questions in the interview for lecturers, focusing on teachers' remarks and observations on their students' attitudes towards EFL learning. The questions are as follows:

- 1) What do you think about students' attitudes towards learning English at CTUT?
- 2) What factors motivate students most in learning English?
- 3) What factors demotivate students most in learning English?
- 4) What are your suggestions and recommendations for improving students' attitudes towards learning English?

For students, five interview questions were designed to gain deeper insights into their attitude towards EFL learning. These questions were tailored in accordance with the four main categories of the questionnaire, and there is one additional question to determine students' common problems in learning English. Following are the questions:

- 1) Do you think English is important to your life, study and future career? Why or Why not?
- 2) What is your opinion about the English learning environment – at school and at home, the coursebook and learning materials and the instructors (teaching methods, personality and giving feedback), your family (their influence on your English learning), your friends and classmates (their influence on your English learning)?
- 3) What are some problems you face in learning English at school and at home?
- 4) How does your personality influence your English learning? Does it positively or negatively affect your English learning?
- 5) How do your habits and interests influence your English learning? Do they positively or negatively affect your English learning?

3.5. Data collection procedures

3.5.1. Questionnaires

The questionnaires were delivered to 662 students of various engineering majors to explore their attitudes towards EFL learning. Before the survey was carried out, the researchers met all the participants informally and explained to them the purpose and the importance of the questionnaires. The survey was implemented in Vietnamese to make sure all the question items could be clearly comprehended.

3.5.2. Semi-structured interviews on teachers

The interviews with six teacher participants were administered after the questionnaire to collect further data on EFL learning attitudes. Before the interviews were conducted, the researchers had

informal conversations with the interviewees and explained the purpose and the importance of the interviews. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to make sure the interviewees could clearly comprehend the questions and express their ideas. Each participant was interviewed for 30 to 40 minutes in a quiet room. The answers to four interview questions from the participants were recorded and then transcribed for data analysis.

3.5.3. Semi-structured interviews on students

The interviews with 29 student participants were conducted to gain insights into learners' attitudes towards EFL learning. The interviews were implemented when the researchers met the interviewees informally and explained the purpose and the importance of the interviews. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to assist the learners in communicating effectively and express their thoughts clearly. Each participant was interviewed for 10 to 15 minutes in a quiet classroom. The answers to five interview questions from the participants were recorded and then transcribed for data analysis.

4. Data analysis

We first conducted Cronbach's alpha reliability of the questionnaire, and then descriptive statistics tests were conducted to determine English non-majored freshmen's language attitudes. Next, Independent sample tests and One-way ANOVA tests were carried out. In these tests, we aimed to identify the factors affecting students' English language attitude and the differences in English language attitude within these factors between males and females, students with different times of starting learning English, students who are or are not currently registering in English courses besides the courses required by the university and students with different English levels. We decided to intertwine different types of statistical tests as we endeavored to seek the positive or negative factors emerging from the tests' findings. By categorizing the learners as smaller groups, we could figure out their attitude in compliance with their group's mean scores in the tests performed. Accordingly, students' sophisticated information would be disclosed. For instance, by performing the One-way Anova test, we could identify students' attitudes in terms of their English proficiency. Or by conducting an Independent sample T-test, we could determine males' and females' attitudes towards their EFL learning and what factors could affect gender positively or negatively.

Regarding the interviews, the data were first transcribed and then translated into English by the first author. All the research group members checked the English transcriptions for appropriate protocols. Afterward, the transcription was coded in a within-case manner first and after that across cases. The transcription was coded based on the factor categories presented in the questionnaires. These factors are the main theoretical framework for both quantitative and qualitative analyses in this study: 1) *the importance of the English language*; 2) *educational context*; 3) *students' personality*; and 4) *students' habits and interests*.

Additionally, in the interviews, the students were also asked about their problems in learning English, which they were not requested to answer in the questionnaires. The interview data were analyzed in the following steps. First, text segments of each within-case matrix were coded in accordance with the factors mentioned above and reviewed by all research group members. Second, the similarities and differences among the students' and teachers' cases were compared

and extracted for the representative cases. Eventually, the extracted representative cases were put in a table of the factors that were presented in the theoretical frameworks.

5. Results

5.1 Results from descriptive statistics

This study aimed to examine the English non-majored freshmen's attitude towards EFL learning, and we used a questionnaire and interviews with students and teachers to collect data. Firstly, we conducted the questionnaire's reliability analysis, and the Cronbach's Alpha was 0.841, which is good enough for the study to carry out (see Appendix 1). Secondly, in order to answer the first research question, descriptive analysis was conducted to investigate students' attitudes towards the factors presented. Table 3 displays the results from the descriptive analysis.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics of English non-majored freshmen's attitude towards English learning

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
The importance of English language		
1. English is an international language.	4.8459	.53087
2. Learning English helps widen your knowledge.	4.6269	.69887
3. English plays an important role in any educational program.	4.5468	.76025
4. Learning English is important because English is a very useful tool in modern society.	4.7190	.59972
5. Learning English is important because it gives me chances to meet and establish friendships with people from different cultures.	4.5287	.76709
6. Using English fluently helps me be respected by other people.	4.3897	2.22061
7. People with good English ability are easier in seeking good jobs with high salary.	4.7054	.69094
8. The important purpose of learning English is to get a high score in English Tests.	3.2644	1.34892
9. I learn English just to pass the exams.	1.9773	1.20680
Educational context		
1. School facilities		
Mean		
Std. Deviation		
10. I like learning English because the university classrooms were well-equipped with facilities for teaching and learning such as computers, LCD screens, overhead projectors, audio and audiovisual equipment.	3.9864	1.62473
11. I dislike learning English in crowded and noisy classes.	3.5015	1.37928
12. I dislike learning English because the university is not equipped with the English laboratory.	2.5106	1.37705
13. The university's library is full of useful English books for my course.	3.8275	2.10926
2. Textbook and learning materials		
Mean		
Std. Deviation		
14. The English textbook (Life A1-A2) is suitable with my Basic	4.3036	.83781

English courses.		
15. Supplementary materials are helpful and prepare students well for the TOEIC test.	4.2190	.88801
3. Family	Mean	Std. Deviation
16. My family members often talk with me in English.	1.9335	1.12399
17. My family members encourage me to study English well.	3.9607	1.17009
18. My family members believe that learning English is very important for my future.	4.5242	.87417
4. Teaching methods	Mean	Std. Deviation
19. I like the teaching methods of English lecturers at CTUT.	4.3218	.81816
20. The English lecturers have created a friendly and positive environment, and they always encourage me to use English.	4.4909	.73537
21. The lecturers have organized class activities and revision effectively.	4.3233	.82402
5. Peers	Mean	Std. Deviation
22. Learning English with my friends is better than learning it by myself.	4.4940	.78322
23. Learning English helps me to establish a good relationship with my friends.	4.1163	.99776
24. When I hear a student in my class speaking English fluently, I like to practice speaking with him or her.	4.0574	1.02157
Personality	Mean	Std. Deviation
25. I like learning English because I am always interested in discovering and learning new things.	3.8837	1.01579
26. I find a lot of difficulties in learning English because I am a timid and passive person.	3.4849	1.33120
Habits and Interests	Mean	Std. Deviation
27. I often switch the language in my devices to English.	3.1133	1.29148
28. I often discuss my favorite topics in English with international friends through social networks.	2.7251	1.29701
29. I often read newspapers, magazines and books in English	2.5846	1.26919
30. I often listen to English songs, news or talks	3.3051	1.73352
31. I often watch movies and reality TV programs in English.	3.2749	1.32357
32. I like learning English because I'm always more interested in the trends of other countries such as America, Japan, Korea.... than those in Vietnam.	3.5665	1.26908
33. Online games help me widen my English vocabulary.	3.8610	1.22210
34. I always admire people who can use English fluently.	4.4773	.82982
35. I like mixing some English words in conversations with my friends.	3.9486	1.15530
36. I would like to have chances to meet and talk with foreigners.	3.7810	1.12947
37. Learning English discourages me because it takes a lot of my time and efforts	3.0816	1.46858

5.1.1 Students' attitude towards the importance of the English language

From the descriptive statistics, generally, the results showed that English non-majored freshmen at CTUT reported that English is substantially significant in modern society. It is a useful tool for seeking good jobs with high salaries. This showed in the mean scores from item 1 to item 9. From items 1 to 7, the mean scores were all higher than 4.5, and only item 6 (4.3897) was smaller than 4.5, indicating that the freshmen strongly agreed with the statements. For item 8, the mean score was 3.2644. This suggested students' hesitation in answering this question as they might conceive the importance of both English learning and gaining high scores in examinations. For item 9, the mean score was relatively low (1.9773), which signified the students' disagreement with this statement, and this result expressed students' high appreciation for EFL learning, not for passing examinations.

Consistent with the findings from the questionnaire, all interviewed students conveyed their considerable awareness of the importance of English in a globalized world. 10 out of 29 students interviewed stated that they are going to take extra English courses, particularly communicative English, to serve their future jobs.

One student revealed:

"English is important because it is an international language. It is essential in this integrated world since we need English to work with international counterparts, and it should become our second native language. English also helps to find a good future job. I also want to get an English international certificate and study communicative English in the future."

5.1.2 Students' attitude towards the university facilities

The descriptive statistics showed the students' agreement for the university facilities, albeit low agreement. Item 10, 11, and 13 had the mean score 3.9864, 3.5015 and 3.8275, respectively. These mean scores were nearly 4, disclosing their slight acceptance of the current facilities. Furthermore, regarding item 12, the low mean score (2.5106) implied their disagreement of facing difficulty in learning English if an English laboratory is not constructed.

Similarly, the findings from the interviews also confirmed the students' low satisfaction with the university facilities. The students confided that the school facilities are good in general. Although the facilities are sometimes broken, employees from the equipment department are usually arranged to fix them in time. From the interviews, 25 out of 29 students confirmed that the school facilities are good enough and support both the students and the lecturers well in teaching and learning English. Nevertheless, four students informed that the sound system in the classroom is not satisfactory for learning listening, and the microphones are often broken. The teacher interviewees also reported the same problem with the facilities.

One student remarked:

"The equipment is not good enough, especially the sound system. The sound from the monitor is too soft and cannot help in listening to English recordings. The equipment is usually broken."

5.1.3 Students' attitude towards the learning materials

From the descriptive statistics, the learning materials were highly rated by the students. The mean score for item 14 was 4.3036 and 4.2190 for item 15. This outcome proved that students had

found the learning materials they are using valuable and appropriate to their English level even though 6 out of 29 student interviewees think that the supplementary material is beyond their level, especially the listening skill.

One student related:

"The supplementary material is too difficult for some weak students who do not have the basic knowledge."

5.1.4 Students' attitude towards the lecturers' teaching methods

Statistically, the lecturers' teaching methods were highly evaluated by the students with mean scores 4.3218, 4.4909, and 4.3233, respectively. This implied their agreement on the lecturers' pedagogies, the ways the teachers organize class activities, and friendly and considerate manners towards the students. The results from the interviews were in accordance with the students' responses to the questionnaires. All 29 students talked positively about their lecturers, and they all said that the teachers are always kind, supportive, and ready to offer instructions, assistance, and feedback when the students need them. 2 out of 29 students added that teachers should pay attention to students at different levels and different learning manners in the classroom in order to offer lessons effectively.

One student said:

"The instructors are supportive and have good teaching methods. I understand the lessons quite well and get more knowledge since I received English lessons at this university."

Another student remarked:

"The way the instructor gives feedback is very good and creative. The instructor has good teaching methods; however, the time for doing exercises in class is sometimes too long for good students and not enough for weaker students. This should be adjusted."

Interestingly, the results from the interviews with six teachers were inconsistent with students' disclosure. According to the lecturers, there are three groups of students in one class with different learning behaviors: 1) students who are interested in learning English and know their goals in life, 2) students who study in order to pass the examinations, 3) students who do not care at all for their study (they often play online games in class). Moreover, the teachers indicated that students in this course do not have a passion for studying English, and just 10% of students in their classes are truly keen on learning English. Most of the students do not invest their time in learning English and do not have plans for their own learning.

One teacher commented:

"The students are lazy, and they are not really interested in studying English. They even could not identify their goals in life. There are around 4 to 5 good students in a class who pay attention to the lessons".

Another teacher stated:

"They do not consider English as an important subject. Therefore, it is hard to ask them to work in groups, and they also do not have any learning plans. They just wait until examination time to study. Only 10% of students have plans for their study."

5.1.5 Family members' attitude towards students' EFL learning

The descriptive statistics showed the family support and encouragement for the students to learn English (the mean score was 3.9607 for item 17 and 4.5242 for item 18). However, the statistics indicated students' lack of home learning environment or their family members could not use English although they completely support these students to gain success in their English study (the mean score was 1.9335 for item 16). This could be confirmed through the interview data. All the interviewee students agreed that their parents or family members always support them to learn English, but most of the students' family members could not speak or have knowledge of English in order to offer guidance during their learning process.

2 out of 29 students contended:

"My parents support me to learn English, but they do not know English."

"I do not have an English home learning environment; none of my family members can speak English."

5.1.6 Students' attitude towards their peers in EFL learning

The descriptive statistics demonstrated the importance of friends to the students' EFL learning. The mean scores were all higher than 4, and the highest mean score was 4.4940 for item 22. These results certified that students love learning English with their peers, and peers seem to be their greatest motivation in practicing and speaking English. Consistently, 26 out of 29 students like studying English with their friends, and they are in need to work with their peers in pairs or in groups to enhance their English skills or review for examinations.

One student revealed:

"My friends and I often support one another in learning English and are looking for learning materials. Besides, we review old lessons together to prepare for examinations as well."

5.1.7 How students' personality affects their EFL learning

The descriptive statistics showed that English non-majored first-year students in this study are cowards, and more than 30% of the students do not seem to have the traits of discovering and learning new things. The mean scores for items 25 and 26 were 3.8837 and 3.4849. Concerning these means, we could conclude that the participants in this study are pretty timid and passive in learning English because they mainly rate "strongly agree" (30,1%), "agree" (23,7%), and in the middle (21,5%) for item 26 (see Appendix 2). Similarly, the results from the interview data validated the results from the questionnaires. 19 out of 29 students interviewed asserted that they are pretty lazy, passive, timid, and do not take active actions in their EFL learning.

One student stated:

"I am quite lazy and passive; then, it is hard for me to learn English well."

Additionally, all the lecturers in this study substantiated the students' lack of self-control, self-awareness, and positive attitude in learning English. All teachers said that only a small percent of students in their classes take EFL learning seriously.

5.1.8 How students' habits and interests affect their EFL learning

The results from descriptive statistics strongly affirmed English non-majored freshmen's indifference to EFL learning. Although they love having chances to communicate in English and admire people with good English language ability (mean score 4.4773 for item 34, 3.9486 for item 35, and 3.7810 for item 36), their habits do not prove their passion for EFL learning. The mean scores of all items relevant to the channels and means that could offer them more opportunities to boost their English ability were entirely smaller than 3 and 4 (see table 1) except for the online game channel (3.8610), denoting that a great number of participants in this study play online games and they acquire English vocabulary through playing games. However, the findings from the interviews with students disclosed contrasting perspectives for their habits and interests as only 29 out of 662 students were interviewed, and they were intentionally selected with different English levels: good, average, and weak students. Accordingly, these students have different views in approaching the English language following their English ability. The good ones generate appropriate habits and maintain their interests to enhance their English level. In contrast, the bad ones lack these practices or pursue these habits and claims from time to time.

Two good students maintained:

"I follow and watch Khanh Vy official channel every day to learn English. I also switch the language in my device to English."

"I watch movies in English with Vietnamese subtitles. I also make friends with foreigners in order to chat in English. The language in some of my devices is switched to English."

One poor student related:

"I am quite lazy in learning English, and whenever I want to practice English, other entertainments or friends distract me from my intended goals."

5.2 Results from independent sample T-test and One-way ANOVA tests

To answer research questions 2 and 3 to find out which factors positively and negatively influence students' attitudes towards EFL learning and the differences in attitude among different groups, an Independent sample T-test and One-way ANOVA Test were conducted. In the following sections, these results are presented.

5.2.1 Results from independent sample T-test

To identify the differences in attitude towards EFL learning between male and female participants, this test was done for relevant factors consisting of 1) *the importance of the English language*, 2) *personality*, and 3) *habits and interests*. When the tests were conducted for the first and second factors, no significant difference in attitude was found for male and female participants (see Appendix 3 and 4). Thus, we just further discuss the results from the third factor, *habits, and interests*.

Habits and interests

The results unveiled the similarity in habits and interests between male and female participants. All the mean scores were quite close for both groups except for the mean score of item 33 – "online games help me widen my English vocabulary" (mean score: 4.052 for males and 3.3536

for females) (Appendix 5). These findings indicated that male students play online games more than females do. They learn more English vocabulary thanks to these activities.

5.2.2 Results from One way Anova test

The One-way ANOVA test was conducted to test the differences in attitude towards EFL learning among different groups, including *group 1*, differences in English ability, *group 2*, differences in starting learning English, and *group 3*, students taking or not taking extra English courses. This test was also done for relevant factors consisting of 1) *the importance of the English language*, 2) *learning materials*, 3) *personality*, and 4) *habits and interests*. As the tests were done for the first and second factors, the results revealed no significant difference for all groups (see Appendix 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). It could be concluded that all groups, despite their categorized manners, confirmed the importance of the English language and the appropriateness and usefulness of learning materials. Consequently, only results from the two last factors are discussed.

Personality

The results from the One-way Anova test for *the first group*, differences in English ability, revealed the differences in personality among these students. For item 25, the mean score was highest for the excellent students, the good, the fair, and the average. The lowest mean score was for the weak students (see Appendix 12). This denoted that the more students love discovering and learning new things, the better in English they become. For item 26, the highest mean scores were for the weak (3.7677) and the average students (3.4785), quite low for the fair (2.7231) and lowest for the good students (1.5). These results implied that the students' personality might affect their EFL learning. The more passive and timid they are, the harder it is for them to learn English successfully. However, for the excellent students, the mean score was 3.5, even greater than the average. An explanation for this could be the lack of variances in the number of students. Accordingly, it is hard to make any generalizations for the group of excellent students.

The results from the One-way Anova test for *the second and last group* affirmed no significant difference to this factor. All significant levels from the One way Anova Welch test are greater than 0.05 (see Appendix 13 and 14).

Habits and interests

Regarding this factor, no significant difference was found for groups 2 and 3. Consequently, we just described the finding for the first group only.

The results from the One way Anova test for *the first group*, differences in English ability, showed that the mean scores were fluctuating for different groups, and the mean scores of the fair, the good and excellent students were usually higher than the mean scores of the average and weak students (see Appendix 15). These results indicated that the higher levels the students hold, the more they are interested in approaching the English language: chatting with foreign friends, listening to English songs and news, reading English materials, etc. For item 37, the mean scores were quite close for all groups and lower than 4. From this result, it is pretty hard to come to any conclusion. Accordingly, a Chi-square test was conducted to examine students' level of agreement and disagreement for this item. The Chi-Square test results pointed out that the weak and the average students seem to agree and strongly agree with this item more than other groups do. They also reported "neutral" more than the fair, the good, and the excellent students did (see

Appendix 16). This means that their habits and interests draw them back from gaining success in EFL learning.

5.3 Students' problems in EFL learning

In the interviews, questions about the problems students face in learning English were added. Among 29 students' answers, the most prominent issues that emerged were *difficulty in listening to English* (12 times), *difficulty in memorizing new words* (10 times), and *difficulty in understanding grammar* (5 times). Following are some interview excerpts:

"Listening is the most difficult skill to me."

"I lack the source of vocabulary, and it takes me more time to study and memorize vocabulary. I also find it hard to understand the word meaning in a different context."

"I find it hard to use English grammar correctly. I know the structures but how to use them is much harder."

These difficulties seem to be common problems that EFL students face, and both the students and teachers should make efforts in order to deal with the situations.

6. Discussion

From the results, several conclusions could be made.

First, in order to answer the first research question, the descriptive test was done to examine students' attitudes towards EFL learning. The results from descriptive tests and interviews showed that both students and teachers in this study consider English a useful and essential tool in this modern and globalized world. Despite this fact, the results from questionnaires and interviews simultaneously revealed students' lack of motivation and enthusiasm for EFL learning. The results confirmed that students lack self-learning activities that could sustain and enhance their English level. They seem to be indifferent to most activities relevant to the English language. This could be seen in descriptive statistics for related factors. The mean scores were mostly lower than 4. These findings could be confirmed through interviews with the teachers, in which they totally agreed that only 10% of students in their classes seriously take English subjects into consideration. An explanation for this could be students' lack of real purposes, and intrinsic motivation for EFL learning since Chi-an & Shan-mao (2014) and Shahzad (2016) have concluded that students are motivated to have their own desires real purposes of learning the language. Additionally, intrinsic motivation is influential in learning a language because it generates long-term goals and helps learners learn the language naturally and voluntarily (Topalov, 2011). The descriptive and One-way ANOVA test results indicated that the participants do not really own intrinsic motivation. Only the fair, good and excellent students did express this type of motivation, but they occupy about 10% of the population in this study. This is the reason why they are aware of the importance of the English language, yet their awareness cannot be performed in real actions. Consequently, it can be concluded that even if students have positive attitudes towards the English language, their language performances do not reveal a high level of positive attitudes towards EFL learning.

Second, to answer research question 2, together with descriptive statistic tests, an independent sample T-test and One-way ANOVA test were performed to probe into factors that positively

influence English non-majored freshmen's attitude towards EFL learning. From the results, it can be inferred that students have a positive attitude towards learning materials, teachers' related factors, and peers. The results were consistent in all statistical tests conducted and in the interviews with students. These three factors seem to be the inspiration for students to learn this Basic English course. Interestingly, this conclusion is consistent with other studies' results. Teachers were reported as facilitators of the learning process, excluding few cases that were recounted by traditional and old-fashioned teachers (Le & Dang, 2019, Melor & Nur, 2011). Concerning peers, the results are also congruent with other research, in which environmental support factors such as teachers, parents, and peers are often helpful assistance to the learners (Melor & Nur, 2011). With respect to learning materials, the results are in line with research by Addisu (2020) and Le & Dang (2019), in which students evaluated positively to their learning materials whereas, in research by Husniyah (2019), students reported negatively for the learning materials. In this study, it can be concluded that learning materials, teachers, and peers are three possible factors that could enhance students' motivation.

Third, to answer research question 3, the statistical tests mentioned above were administered to investigate factors that negatively affect students' attitudes towards EFL learning. From quantitative and qualitative findings, it is implied that the home learning environment, students' personality and habits, and interests were negative determinants to halt students' learning progress. The theme "My family members do not know English" emerged 16 times from the interview data. Identically, the mean score from the descriptive test for item 16, "my family members often talk with me in English," was very low (1.9335). This factor, frankly speaking, is not a negative factor, but it is just absent in students' home learning environment in this study. Nevertheless, this shortage contributes to students' demotivation in EFL learning. As we discussed in Chapter 2, one of the reasons the students reach higher levels of language proficiency is that they have a home environment (Spolsky, 1989). Concerning personality, the results from both the questionnaires and interviews disclosed students' passivity, shyness, and laziness. The mean scores from the descriptive test for two personality items were lower than 4, indicating that their personality might be an obstacle to EFL learning. In order to examine the impact of this factor closely, One way ANOVA test was performed, and as expected, the higher levels the students achieve, the higher mean scores they reported.

Nevertheless, students with higher levels occupy only 10% of the population, which means that most students in this research could not reach higher levels of language acquisition due to their personalities. This outcome is coincident with findings from Ahmad (2012) and Melor & Nur (2011). In these studies, students were reported not to be motivated in learning English because of their shyness, high level of anxiety, and lack of self-confidence. According to Ehrman (1996), these personal affective factors may influence the learning event as well as how many languages a learner can learn and achieve in a given time. Relevant to habits and interests, it seems that students in this research lack tendencies to approach English daily. The results from quantitative data were compatible with the findings from interview data with teachers, but not verily with interview facts with students. From descriptive statistic tests, the mean scores for this factor were mainly lower than four except for the item "I always admire people who can use English fluently." In addition, according to the teachers, students often showed negative attitudes in English lessons, and they study English merely passing examinations. Yet, in the interviews, most students revealed their activities related to the English language. An explanation for this inconsistency could be the limited number of students interviewed. Only 29 out of 662 students

were invited to join the interviews. Their answers were restricted within their context. Perhaps, other students who rated negatively might have different answers. Studies by Addisu (2020) and Mustafa, Muhammad, Atmowardoyo & Dollah (2015) had similar results, which pointed out that the students themselves are not motivated and do not have interests and tendency in acquiring the target language. According to Naiman et al. (1978), students' interests, habits and characteristics play significant roles in raising their proficiency. Success in learning a new language could not come obviously unless the learners displayed a certain personality and enthusiasm (Sahril & Sukardi, 2018).

Next, apart from positive and negative factors influencing students' attitudes towards EFL learning, learning facilities and learning environment at school were reported to be beneficial and unsatisfactory simultaneously. The results from quantitative and qualitative data showed that students agreed with the adequacy of school facilities and pleasant classroom climate, but they took issue with the facilities' frequent damage and low quality, and crowded and noisy environment. In the interviews, students mentioned the theme "the learning environment at university is good" 21 times, whereas the theme "the classroom is crowded and noisy" and the theme "the facilities are usually broken, and they are not good for studying listening" appeared 16 times and five times. However, the mean score for this factor was around 4, denoting that students are quite satisfied with the learning environment at school. The interviews also added that they would be happier if they sometimes had a chance to talk to native speakers in their English classes.

In addition, there was a prominent issue from the findings of the independent sample T-test. The result revealed a high level of playing online games of male students compared to their female counterparts. This seems both advantageous and harmful since the males could gain a certain amount of English vocabulary through these games while they might waste time playing and be incredibly distracted in class. Teachers' opinions could confirm this phenomenon in the interviews. All the lecturers interviewed accepted that about 10% to 20% of students, especially the male ones, were distracted by online games. Despite the usefulness of those games, it might be more effective if students devoted their time to actual EFL learning.

Finally, the results from interviews with students, which expressed their challenges in learning English, indicated common problems students face in learning a foreign language. Recommendations on practices to assist students in overcoming these problems are discussed in the following chapter, implications.

7. Conclusion & Implications

In short, the findings from this study have shown students' positive attitude towards the importance of EFL learning, although their awareness has not been observed in real performances. The results could be a golden key for learners, teachers, and school administrators at CTUT to enhance and intensify the current learning and teaching situations, which results in students' better performances and a high level of EFL proficiency.

The investigation on the factors affecting the students' attitude towards EFL learning at CTUT provided some implications essential to EFL learning at CTUT.

Firstly, the descriptive statistics showed the positive results of English non-majored freshmen's consciousness of the significance of EFL learning. This appreciation of English should be maintained and prospered at CTUT. It is vital for EFL lecturers at CTUT to promote their crucial roles in flourishing students' preference for EFL learning. Moreover, some students hesitate over the importance of EFL learning and gaining high scores in examinations. It is suggested for EFL instructors to support and provide their students with opportunities to set goals when learning EFL. Concerning this issue, Ronna (2010) recommended several steps for instructors, including building goal-setting into initial classroom lessons, helping students establish term goals, embedding goal-setting in ongoing lessons, encouraging successful study skills and study habits, promoting self-reflection and self-monitoring, and creating follow-up activities to check on students' progress.

Additionally, the questionnaire and interview data revealed students' low satisfaction with the facilities at CTUT since the sound system's frequent damage and low quality could interfere with the learning process. Likewise, the classroom environment was stated to be crowded and noisy. *Classroom management, working with mixed abilities, practicing language skills, and providing feedback to learners were considered noticeable challenges* in large classes (Jason, 2016). Therefore, the university is expected to upgrade the teaching facilities to better equip lecturers and students in the teaching and learning process. The school Management and the Department of Training should take their leading roles in organizing suitable Basic English classes with appropriate numbers of students that could enhance this educational process. It is suggested that there should be a maximum of 40 students in the class of Basic English.

Regarding the teaching and learning materials, the course book LIFE by John Hughes was highly evaluated on its usefulness and appropriateness. It is suggested for EFL lecturers and learners to fully explore and exploit the book resources to assist learners in their development of grammar, vocabulary, functions, pronunciation, and skills through relevant communicative tasks, which prepares learners to use English in the real world. However, the course supplementary material, which was designed to target preparing the learners well for the TOEIC test, seems demanding for students. It is proposed that the EFL lecturers of specific classes should tailor the activities and assignments in the supplementary material to meet the needs of their students.

EFL instructors are greatly respected for their kindness, devoted supports, and valuable feedback on students' performance. Nevertheless, due to students' differing academic backgrounds in the same class, it is advisable that more observations and interventions should be made during the course so as to deal with students' frequent obstacles. It is revealed from the interview that the freshmen encounter several difficulties while learning English, consisting of listening skills, memorizing new words, and understanding grammar. Hence, numerous teaching approaches have been made by CTUT EFL lecturers to enhance the language teaching and learning process. Firstly, to make listening skills accessible to the learners, there are varied techniques that EFL teachers could carry out to assist their students in overcoming their problems, including activating the learners' vocabulary, using different kinds of listening input, using visual aids to encourage students to guess and imagine actively, making students aware of different native-speaker accents, exposing students to precise pronunciation of native speakers, encouraging prediction, using the slow rate of speech, improving the learning environment of listening skill (Saraswaty, 2018). Additionally, it is vital for learners to regularly practice listening skills outside the classroom by applying the Audio-transcription method, accessing interactive video exercises

on <https://en.islcollective.com/>, utilizing English learning applications including *Listen English Daily Practice*, *English Listening*, and *Speaking*, *6 Minute English*, etc., and visiting useful Youtube channels such as *Cambridge University Press ELT*, *BBC Learning English*, etc. Secondly, expanding and improving freshmen's English vocabulary could be achieved by applying visuals in teaching and learning new words, creating word mind-maps, utilizing flashcards, playing vocabulary games: *Matching*, *Letter Scramble*, *Word search*, etc. on paper or on PowerPoint platform, exploring vocabulary learning applications such as *600 essential words ToEIC*, *Word of the day*, etc. Thirdly, to gain a more productive grammar lesson, it is advisable to instruct grammar with the inductive approach as students could discover rules through the real contexts rather than being told them. Besides, it is more creative for EFL teachers to apply some grammar techniques such as charts, objects, maps, simple drawing, dialogues or written texts, games when eliciting some relevant grammar points, or designing activities for practicing them (Kurniawati, 2008). Moreover, the technology era has exposed EFL instructors and learners to diverse resources of useful tools and applications for practicing grammar productively, including *The Grammarly Handbook*, *Road to Grammar*, *Practice English Grammar*, *7 Little Words*, *Grammar Wonderland*, etc.

With regard to the factors of family and peers, it is vital to boost the learning environment for students outside the classroom with friends or family members. It is essential that students from unfavorable circumstances be paid more attention and assisted in learning English. The EFL teachers should be supported in investigating students' educational and family backgrounds by the academic consultants as well as the Department of Student Management. A wide range of approaches should be taken consisting of giving prompt assistance and feedback on students' self-learning directly at school, via emails or social networking sites like Zalo, Facebook; organizing interactive activities for students individually or in groups using social media platforms like interactive videos, Quizlet, Quizzes; encouraging students to engage in CTUT English club, in addition to relevant clubs or occasions held in Can Tho city to boost their English skills.

Concerning the learners' personality, students' timidity and passiveness are two principal barriers that could restrict their opportunities to progress in learning English. A number of measures should be considered, including teachers' pedagogical strategies, extra-curricular activities of the University Youth Union, and students' own efforts. According to Holly (2017), cowardly students could be fostered through building a relationship and a supportive learning environment, providing non-verbal options in teaching, avoiding pressures, applying collaborative learning, making learners feel needed, and involving students in class discussions or role-plays. Additionally, the school Youth Union is recommended offering students opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities that promote students' activeness and courage. Normah et al. (2018) stated that some activities consisting of the debate club, choir, sports team, physical activities and exercise, career and technical student organizations, entrepreneurship clubs, and societies could contribute confidence in engineering students.

Regarding students' habits and interests, it is vital to get EFL first-year students familiar with profitable activities which should be habit-forming. Firstly, by equipping lower-level first-year students with primary elements in English skills that they might lack, the EFL teachers could develop their students' positive habits of approaching the language. Moreover, it is shown in the data that EFL learners desire to have a beneficial learning environment with foreign teachers. It is suggested that the school Office of International Relations should have strategies in promoting

Volunteering Program to welcome qualified and enthusiastic volunteers to support the English teaching and learning process at CTUT as we did in the past. Furthermore, to foster learners to practice English frequently, it is vital to require them to complete assignments individually, in pairs, or in groups for extra marks, enhancing their English skills. Such task-based assignments could be carried out in class or as homework.

Last but not least, the statistics revealed that English vocabulary could be gained when learners play computer games appropriately. Nevertheless, more male learners might be distracted from study and waste more time on the computer or mobile games. It is recommended that some effective measures and punishment should be implemented on the issue. Firstly, there should be collaboration among the students' families, the academic consultants, and the EFL teachers in managing this distracting habit and providing support on students' self-learning as much as possible. Moreover, to restrict learners' access to mobile games during lessons, EFL lecturers suggest playing mobile games in class as a criterion to evaluate the learning process. The instructors should observe and control the learners through inventing more activities for practicing English skills or even capture learners' phones as a punishment if necessary.

8. Limitations

The first limitation is that participants' self-reporting was one of the study's main instruments. This type of response might result in bias, and the quality of the responses might be affected as well. According to Kaminska, Olena & Foulsham (2013), the biggest disadvantage of this method is the social desirability behaviors or attitudes of over-reporting or under-reporting. For instance, in this study, the English non-majored freshmen reported their appreciation for their teachers, whereas the lecturers said that the students' attitude towards EFL learning is negative, and they have to put lots of effort to arouse students' attention in class. The power distance between the teachers and the students, one of the significant values in Vietnamese culture (Hofstede, 2001), might be the reason for the dissimilarity of students' and teachers' opinions. Therefore, we also interviewed the students to probe into further information that the student participants could not fully express in the questionnaires.

Second, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the tight schedule of students' courses, the study was hastily conducted, and fewer students were interviewed than expected. In further research, it is suggested that more weak students should be asked so that details about positive and negative factors could be grasped.

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