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English as a Foreign Language Teachers' Perceptions of Their Self-Efficacy in Using Instructional Strategies

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Abstract: This investigation examined English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy in using instructional strategies in the context of the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. The research was designed as a descriptive research collecting quantitative and qualitative data from a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Forty-six Vietnamese EFL teachers were invited to partake in the study. The results indicated that participants were in general confident in using instructional strategies in their English classes. Specifically, the participants were highly confident in their abilities to use multimedia (M=4.41), assessment techniques (M=4.35), and classroom English (M=4.35). The study also indicated that participants were not confident in evaluating the level of task difficulty (M=3.37), dealing with unmotivated students (M=3.57), and meeting students' particular needs for support (M=3.62). Pedagogical implications and recommendations were addressed to help manifold stakeholders at the end of this paper.

Keywords: EFL teachers, instructional strategies, teachers' self-efficacy, the Mekong Delta of Vietnam.

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Introduction

How to teach English effectively is a challenging yet rewarding career endeavor, especially in EFL contexts. In many EFL contexts, though EFL students spend seven up to ten years attending English classes in public schools, they do not perform a sought-after level of language proficiency. Such an unexpected outcome of English learning suggests that EFL teachers need to consider adjusting their instructional strategies to realize English learning objectives. An effective EFL teacher should be capable of diagnosing basic intricacies and addressing what teaching practices could be improved to increase students' learning through their communication with learners during the lessons (Richmond et al., 2020). Many teachers find it challenging to choose appropriate instructional strategies to improve students' learning outcomes. Such a perceived challenge results in EFL teachers' engaging in professional development (PD) activities to promote not only their professional but pedagogical knowledge (Guskey & Huberman, 1995) and moral goals (Alfaki, 2014). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) stated that teachers' self-efficacy had been acknowledged as one of the backbones of PD because it encourages teachers to enhance their teaching practices and possibly affect students' learning outcomes positively. Teachers' self-efficacy is positively correlated with teachers' openness to new approaches to teaching and their willingness to update their instructional strategies. Substantial research has betokened that teachers' self-efficacy inspires both teachers and students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Rushton et al., 2007; Webb & Ashton, 1986); however, few studies have been carried out in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam to find out EFL teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy in using instructional strategies in their classes. To address this notable gap, this research was conducted.

Teachers' Self-Efficacy

The term "self-efficacy" has emerged since the 1990s, and it is still developing (Putra et al., 2020). According to Denzine et al. (2005), teachers' self-efficacy refers to their beliefs in the ability to help improve students' learning outcomes. Conversely, students' learning progress also significantly impacts teacher self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Wolters & Daugherty, 2007). In that light, teachers who are more confident in their use of instructional strategies are more likely to implement methods of instruction effectively, persist in difficult teaching

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situations, and be successful in maintaining student engagement (Wyatt, 2015). In contrast, teachers with lower levels of self-efficacy encounter more challenges with student misbehaviors, being pessimistic, gaining more stress at work, and failing to experience job satisfaction (Bandura, 1997).

Instructional Strategies

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) defined *instructional strategies* as the instructors' techniques that help enhance independent thinking, increase teachers' creativity, and provide teachers with suitable strategic methods to assess their learners. Standing on another perspective, Hirumi (2013) conceptualized that instructional strategies are comprehensive sets of tasks purposefully designed to enhance learning and help learners achieve learning objectives. Educators are expected to properly present materials, maximize students' potential, and encourage their learning (Lejonberg & Christophersen, 2015). According to George et al. (2018), instructional strategies are the activities teachers choose cognitive psychology and constructivist approaches to employ in their classroom environments. In other words, instructional strategies indicate the ways and approaches followed by the teachers to achieve the fundamental aims of instruction.

Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Instructional Strategies

The relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their teaching strategies has been investigated profoundly (Chacón, 2005; Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Huangfu, 2012; Yilmaz, 2011). Mainly, Huangfu (2012) found that college EFL teachers working in the Chinese context were highly confident in their use of instructional strategies. The teachers obtained high confidence levels in using instructional strategies to motivate their learners. They perceived themselves to have a positive impact on their learners' motivation with the use of strategies for generating students' initial motivation and maintaining students' motivation.

Additionally, teachers' self-efficacy in their use of instructional strategies affects how they manage classrooms, engage students, and use rewards or punishments in classroom settings (Djigić et al., 2014; Navidnia, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Larsen and Ketelaar (1989) remarked that high extraversion and neuroticism predispose positive or negative experiences. These experiences affect signals of reward and punishment, respectively, in classroom settings. Besides, Djigić et al. (2014) believed in a close connection between teachers' self-efficacy in using instructional strategies and their conscientiousness, openness, and agreeableness. For instance, teachers with high conscientiousness tend to be more aware of the orders of educational activities. As a result, they prepare the lesson more carefully than others (Djigić et al., 2014). Consequently, they often successfully help their learners be involved in the learning activities and adequately manage the learners' behaviors in the classroom. Meanwhile, open-minded teachers are more likely to use diverse teaching and learning approaches to satisfy the curiosity about the impact of those different techniques on their learners' learning outcomes (Poulou, 2007). On the other hand, there is another kind of teacher who always wants to develop interpersonal relations between themselves and their learners since these relations enable them to increase students' engagement as well as better the learning and teaching atmosphere (Roorda et al., 2011; Senler & Sungur-Vural, 2013). In general, teachers' personality profiles also affect their self-efficacy in using instructional strategies.

In this study, teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy in using instructional strategies are measured in light of the level of their confidence in their abilities to (1) enhance students' moral and values, (2) identify students' interests, (3) deal with unmotivated students, (4) evaluate the level of task difficulty, (5) adjust teaching styles, (6) redirect students' misbehaviors, (7) increase students' vocabulary retention, (8) identify and deal with students' personal problems, (9) be creative, (10) involve students in learning, (11) use a variety of assessment techniques, (12) deliver content knowledge effectively, (13) use multimedia effectively, (14) present new materials, (15) simplify tasks, (16) use classroom English effectively, (17) solicit good questions from students, (18) rephrase students' ideas, (19) check students' understanding, (20) prepare good lesson plans, (21) review lessons systematically, (22) give students appropriate feedback, and (23) meet students' particular needs for support.

Related Studies

Gibson and Dembo (1984) used the Teacher Efficacy Scale, including thirty items, to point out two different dimensions of a teacher's self-efficacy. First, teachers' self-efficacy was affected by some external factors, namely home environment and family background. Second, teachers with more positive beliefs in their teaching abilities differ from those who do not believe in their skills—explained by the idea that teachers with high self-efficacy run their classes better than those with problems with their self-beliefs.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) reported findings from a longitudinal study with three different studies involving pre-service teachers. Suppose the significant effects of the pre-service teacher's self-efficacy were taken seriously. In that case, it could enhance their teaching because of the sense of being prepared and supported in their early years in the profession. Furthermore, the researchers stated the potency of teachers' self-efficacy that could hugely impact teachers' motivation and persistence. Finally, the authors also indicated that teachers could reflect on their self-efficacy throughout their evaluation of their student's progress.

Eslami and Fatahi (2008) examined the efficacy of non-native speaking Iranian EFL teachers. The study revealed that the higher level of self-efficacy in using instructional strategies the teachers obtained, the higher willingness they had to teach their students by communicative approaches. Besides, the teachers had a great desire to develop their language proficiency to enhance their self-efficacy.

Yilmaz (2011) examined the efficacy beliefs of Turkish EFL teachers by using a survey to collect data from 54 teachers. The study found a positive correlation between the teachers' perceived efficacy and their self-reported English proficiency. Furthermore, they also perceived their efficacy to be better than their self-efficacy for classroom management and student engagement.

A strong interaction between teachers' self-efficacy in choice of their instructional strategies and their teaching performance has been observed. The more teachers are confident in their instructional strategies, the better they teach (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Yilmaz, 2011). Regarding the importance of EFL teachers' self-efficacy in choosing instructional strategies for better quality of English teaching and learning, this current study, conducted in the Vietnamese context, addressed the following research question:

What are EFL teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy in their use of instructional strategies?

Methodology

Research Design

The current study was designed as descriptive research using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Murray and Hughes (2008) stated that qualitative analysis is commonly followed when researchers investigate human beliefs, perceptions, or attitudes towards a particular issue. Unlike qualitative design, a quantitative design is appropriate with numbers that involve observing the phenomena and measure (Murray & Hughes, 2008). Therefore, a mixed-methods study with qualitative and quantitative approaches are to enrich its results.

Participants

Forty-six high school EFL teachers in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam were invited as the participants of this current study. Basic information related to participants is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 Participants for the Questionnaire

Variables		Number
Age	22-29	17
	30-39	14
	40-50	15
Gender	Male	10
	Female	36
Qualification	EFL teaching certificate	29
	EFL teaching degree	17

In terms of participants' demographic information, four variables, namely age, gender, qualification, and workplace are taken into consideration. There are 17 teachers at the age of 20s, 14 others at the age of 30s, and 15 teachers, at the age of 40s; there are 10 male and 36 female teachers. Among 46 participants, 29 teachers obtained EFL teaching certificates and 17 others earned Bachelor degrees in teaching EFL.

Based on the result of the self-efficacy questionnaire, nine out of forty-six participants were purposefully invited to take part in the interview. The backgrounds of the interviewees are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2 Participants for the Interviews

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Age	20s	30s	20s	30s	30s	20s	40s	20s	30s
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Qualification	Teaching degree	Teaching certificate	Teaching certificate	Teaching degree	Teaching degree	Teaching certificate	Teaching degree	Teaching degree	Teaching degree
Self-efficacy degree	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High	High

Due to the purposeful recruitment of participants for interviews, interviewees were divided into three groups, including three teachers with low self-efficacy in their instructional strategies (A, B, and C), three at medium level (D, E, and F), and three others with high level of self-efficacy (G, H, and I).

Instruments

In this study, a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data. The questionnaire was administered to seek the participants' perceptions of their self-efficacy in their use of instructional strategies. Interviews were administered to gain insightful participants' perspectives on their choice of instructional strategies.

The questionnaire, adapted from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), was administered as one of the main research instruments. The five-point Likert scale was used to document participants' responses with five levels including *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neutral*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*. There are 23 items in the questionnaire representing skills EFL teachers need in order to be effective in their use of the 23 instructional strategies presented in the section *Self-efficacy and Instructional Strategies* of this paper.

To increase the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot study of the questionnaire before its actual administration was carried out. In this study, the questionnaire was piloted among 30 EFL teachers as pilot respondents who were not the participants of the study. Pilot respondents' comments and suggestions for revising the questionnaire were welcome to increase the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

The Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyze the data from the pilot study of the questionnaire. The Scale test result showed that the questionnaire was reliable enough ($\alpha=.78$) to be used for collecting the data of the study.

After data were collected from the questionnaire, nine of forty-six participants who were divided into three groups took part in the interviews. For confidential purposes, the names of interviewees were reported under pseudonyms. The interviews were done both face-to-face or via telephone; interviews were conducted in Vietnamese language to maximize participants' comprehension of questions and expressions of their ideas. During the interviews, the participants were asked to share their perceptions of their self-efficacy in their use of instructional strategies, what skills they were most and least confident in, and why they perceived themselves in such a way. Before the interviews, the researchers explained the purposes of the interview. All responses were recorded, note-taken, transcribed and validated by the participants.

Data Analysis

The researchers used Google Form to deliver the official survey to the participants. The participants were briefly informed of the purpose of the study. They were then asked to rate on the scale after being instructed by the researchers. All data were subjected to the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0). A Scale test was run to check the reliability of the questionnaire. The result of the Scale test showed that the questionnaire is reliable enough to be used for data collection ($\alpha=.89$). Besides, the normal distribution of participants' responses to the survey was identified ($M=3.96$; $Median=3.99$; $Skewness=-.13$).

All interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, the participants' mother tongue, to prevent ambiguity of expressions and allow them to express their ideas comfortably. Before interviewing, the researchers asked the interviewees' permission to record and take notes the interviews. The recordings and notes were used for reviewing only. Interview data were analyzed following steps in thematic analysis. The researchers analyzed the data by reading carefully the transcripts of the interviews in order to help them be familiar with the data. During the data reviewing process, any unclear information arising would be clarified via emails with the participants. Then, all excerpts of similar ideas related to the interviewees' perceptions of their use of different instructional strategies in their teaching were differently colored. All members of the research team were required to code the interview data independently and then compared the results of their data coding and analysis. In cases where differences in data coding occurred, the research team cross-checked, discussed and agreed on the results. Direct quotes which were used to demonstrate the results of the study were translated from Vietnamese into English. The translation was cross-checked by two different English teachers who are proficient in both English and Vietnamese.

Results

To address EFL teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy in their use of instructional strategies, a Descriptive Statistics Test was conducted to find out the average level of participants' perceptions of their self-efficacy in their use of instructional strategies. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Participants' Perceptions of Their Self-Efficacy in Their Use of Instructional Strategies

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD
1. Enhancing students' moral and values	3.00	5.00	4.15	.67
2. Identifying students' interests	2.00	5.00	3.78	.59
3. Dealing with unmotivated students	1.00	5.00	3.57	.83
4. Evaluating the level of task difficulty	2.00	5.00	3.37	.88
5. Adjusting teaching styles	2.00	5.00	4.26	.68
6. Redirecting students' misbehaviors	2.00	5.00	3.83	.64
7. Increasing students' vocabulary retention	3.00	5.00	3.83	.53
8. Identifying and dealing with students' problems	2.00	5.00	3.91	.55
9. Being creative	2.00	5.00	4.02	.75
10. Involving students in learning	2.00	5.00	3.83	.53
11. Using a variety of assessment techniques	3.00	5.00	4.35	.53
12. Delivering content knowledge effectively	2.00	5.00	3.93	.68
13. Using multimedia effectively	2.00	5.00	4.41	.65
14. Presenting new materials	2.00	5.00	3.83	.83
15. Simplifying tasks from the textbook	2.00	5.00	3.87	.83
16. Using classroom English effectively	3.00	5.00	4.35	.60
17. Soliciting good questions	1.00	5.00	3.82	.75
18. Rephrasing students' ideas	3.00	5.00	4.24	.57
19. Checking students' understanding of the lesson	3.00	5.00	4.24	.67
20. Preparing good lessons	2.00	5.00	4.15	.84
21. Reviewing lessons systematically	2.00	5.00	3.87	.62
22. Giving students appropriate feedback	2.00	5.00	3.91	.76
23. Meeting students' particular needs for support	2.00	5.00	3.62	.71
Overall perception	2.40	4.70	3.96	.38

As observed in Table 3, the mean score of the EFL teachers' self-efficacy in their choosing instructional strategies was high ($M=3.96$). Participants were highly confident in their choice of instructional strategies. According to the results, the participants are expected to effectively use their instructional strategies and perform well in their teaching practices.

Three skills that participants were highly confident in include using multimedia effectively ($M=4.41$), using a variety of assessment techniques ($M=4.35$), and using classroom English effectively ($M=4.35$). However, the EFL teachers felt less confident in three things, including evaluating the level of task difficulty ($M=3.37$), dealing with unmotivated students ($M=3.57$), and meeting students' particular needs for support ($M=3.62$).

Using multimedia effectively: In Vietnam, the rapid development of information technology or multimedia has been clearly observed. This decade has witnessed a rapid change in technological development in many aspects of life. Notably, Vietnamese students are exposed to technological devices at an early age; they mostly interact with others online. In the interviews, Teachers I and F explained why EFL teachers used multimedia effectively as follows:

"... My students are very intelligent and familiar with communication devices, such as mobile phones, smart phones, tablets, ... They would be very active if the in-class activities required them to use these devices. Therefore, I have to learn about the use of these devices in order to improve my teaching performance, and I strongly believe that my colleagues should do it too."

(Teacher I; 30s; Female; Teaching degree; High level of Self-efficacy)

"... Recently, our students are very good at using technology. People say, "two sides of a coin". Technology brings many benefits, but it also brings negative effects. There are a lot of bad things that the students are not mature enough to evaluate whether they are right or wrong. Therefore, as a teacher, I have to learn how to use communication devices and multimedia."

(Teacher F; 20s; Male; Teaching certificate; Medium level of Self-efficacy)

The above excerpts show that the teachers were highly aware of the advantages and disadvantages of multimedia and the rapid development of technology in general. Besides, they had a great desire to develop their knowledge of multimedia to help their students learn and prevent the negative impact of multimedia on their students.

Using a variety of assessment techniques: Similar to the need for using multimedia in the classroom effectively, the query on how to use assessment techniques effectively is also necessary to discuss. Circulars related to English education have been promulgated by the Vietnamese government. EFL teachers are requested to use formative assessment to evaluate individual students' progress instead of summative assessment only. As a result, EFL teachers in Vietnam are expected to learn and apply the new assessment technique in their English classes. The change might intentionally affect EFL

teachers' self-efficacy in some ways. Teachers G and D, sharing their reasons for their high degree of self-efficacy in using assessment techniques, said:

"... As we all know that assessment is a very important component in teaching and learning. Therefore, EFL teachers need to learn a lot about how to assess students' learning process accurately and effectively. So do I. I participated in several professional development events training on using different assessment techniques, including summative or formative, offline or online assessment. As a result, I believe that I can assess my students' learning process really well."

(Teacher G; 40s; Female; Teaching degree; Medium level of Self-efficacy)

"... It is undoubtable that assessment is one of the most vital aspects in teaching and learning. We – EFL teachers – must understand its importance and improve our abilities to assess the students' learning. It is not easy to learn everything about assessment, but we are able to understand some basic techniques or terms, such as formative or summative assessment."

(Teacher D; 30s; Female; Teaching degree; Medium level of Self-efficacy)

Assessment is a tool to gain insights into how teaching and learning is implemented and to indicate to which extent learning objectives and outcomes are achieved. To fulfil such a goal, it is nearly impossible to use a single tool to assess and meet the needs of all students. Therefore, it requires EFL teachers to incorporate a variety of techniques to improve students' learning progress and performance. The above excerpts indicated a high level of teachers' awareness of the importance of updating oneself with assessment techniques.

Using classroom language effectively: Educational initiatives in Vietnam, such as the National Foreign Languages Project, have increasingly highlighted the needs of developing the quality of classroom practitioners. Many Vietnamese teachers have been trained to develop their English proficiency and pedagogical knowledge, including using classroom English. It, therefore, could explain teachers' confidence in their English-speaking skills. According to Teachers H and E, the requirements of English language proficiency among high school EFL teachers are high. Therefore, they improved their English proficiency in order to meet these requirements. They said:

"... The National Foreign Languages Project requires us to develop our proficiency in order to implement further reforms effectively. Therefore, we had to try our best to obtain level 5 of the VSTEP (Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency) certificate, which is equivalent to band 7.0 in IELTS. I got a really high score in the Speaking section, so I am confident in my speaking skills. Using English to offer the lessons to my students is not too challenging for me."

(Teacher H; 20s; Male; Teaching certificate; High level of Self-efficacy)

"... Many reforms in English teaching and learning have been implemented, and the National Foreign Languages Project is a typical example. It requires Vietnamese EFL teachers to learn updated knowledge and skills in order to successfully implement the reforms in teaching practices. One of the requirements is to obtain C1 level for those working at high schools. Fortunately, I made it with a satisfactory score. To be honest, my speaking skills are not really good, but explaining ideas in English is doable, I guess."

(Teacher E; 30s; Female; Teaching certificate; Medium level of Self-efficacy)

From the excerpts of the teachers, it becomes clear that EFL Vietnamese high school teachers have to take a standardized examination, VSTEP in particular, as an indicator of language proficiency, to be qualified as an English teacher. For the participants who are serving in teaching jobs at high schools in Vietnam, it could explain for their high level of confidence in their English proficiency.

Evaluating the level of task difficulty: In Vietnam, teachers in public schools use the national curriculum together with the ready-made textbooks to offer lessons to their students. Time constraints and the heavy load of knowledge each lesson carries do not allow teachers many opportunities to self-design the task or skills or even to adapt the tasks, so to evaluate whether these ready-made tasks are suitable for students could be a new experience and challenge for teachers. In the interviews, Teachers B and C, who found it challenging to evaluate the level of task difficulty they had used in their teaching practices, shared:

"... It is essential to provide my students with a variety of tasks matching into individual student's proficiency. However, I am not quite confident in my abilities to evaluate whether the tasks are suitable or not. And, of course, it will take a lot of time to design good tasks..."

(Teacher B; 30s; Male; Teaching degree; Low level of Self-efficacy)

"... I used to be stressed because I could not evaluate the task difficulty in order to help my students challenge themselves with an appropriate task. It also caused many problems in terms of students' disruptive behaviors. Those who found the assignments too easy would get bored soon and make noise when others were doing the tasks. It was a difficult time."

(Teacher C; 20s; Female; Teaching certificate; Low level of Self-efficacy)

It was challenging and time-consuming to design tasks that fit all students' needs and levels. As a result, the teachers were not confident in their use of tasks. Besides, they were highly aware that tasks could play a role in students' motivation or demotivation.

Dealing with unmotivated students: Demotivation occurs when students find the class uninteresting. Becoming unmotivated sometimes causes students' misbehaviors. To deal with that, teachers are expected to increase their students' learning motivation, provide them with a reason to study, or simply prevent them from misbehaving or disrupting their classmates. Nonetheless, it is easy said than done. Before officially serving for teaching duty, teachers would have a chance to participate in some educational psychology courses in order to help increase their understanding of students' behaviors. Yet, the effect of these courses seems to be not much satisfactory. Teacher D was not confident in her abilities to deal with unmotivated students who were not willing to engage in the learning activities. They remarked:

"... To some students, English is a boring subject because they do not know how to become better at the language. Therefore, they are not willing to learn in the English classes. When my students refuse to engage in learning activities, I often talk to them after class in order to encourage them to try more. But... it is not always effective. Moreover, these unmotivated students sometimes have disruptive behaviors, such as private talks, drowsing, and the like. For these students, I do not know what to do..."

(Teacher D; 30s; Female; Teaching degree; Medium level of Self-efficacy)

Data from the interviews indicated that English is not always an interesting subject for Vietnamese students. Instead of learning it actively, some students who are not interested in learning this subject, often refuse to engage in learning activities and cause some disruptions in English classes. Therefore, it raises a demanding mission for teachers that they have to deal with these unmotivated students before thinking of a successful class. Both strong and mild measures have been used to reduce students' disruptive behaviors. However, these measures are not always effective or successful due to students' lacking motivation to learn English.

Meeting students' particular needs for support: Individual students have their own needs, which they expect to be met. However, it is challenging for teachers to meet all students' needs. EFL teachers are expected to take care of more than 35 learners in a class. Those who have been in EFL teacher training programs are in general more advantageous to those who have been in English studies programs plus a teaching EFL certificate in terms of identifying and meeting learners' needs for teacher support. Teacher F, obtaining a teaching certificate, concerned about the difficulties of meeting all students' needs for providing them with sufficient support, stated:

"... It is challenging to identify individual students' needs in my teaching context. Regarding my teaching condition, there are often more than 40 students in a class. It could be easier if I took care of 40 or 50 students. However, I regularly take responsibility for teaching four or five classes a semester. To be honest, it is difficult to remember my students' names, so categorizing individuals' needs is something extremely challenging..."

(Teacher F; 20s; Male; Teaching certificate; Medium level of Self-efficacy)

The aforementioned excerpt shows that the teachers found it challenging to understand or recognize all students' needs in the Vietnamese context due to the problem of large class size, from 40 to 50 students a class. The teachers seemed to pay more attention to particular groups of students who really need their support rather than the whole class.

Discussion

The EFL teacher participants, in this study, hold a remarkably high level of confidence in their abilities in using instructional strategies effectively. Holding a strong belief in self-abilities may help EFL teachers perform better teaching practices (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Fathi & Derakhshan, 2019; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Williams et al., 2001; Yilmaz, 2011). Notably, previous studies affirmed that the teachers' self-efficacy in their choice of instructional strategies might significantly affect their teaching performances.

It is to say that the 21st century is well-recognized as an information age. The rapid development of information technology provides language teaching and learning with an advanced tool called multimedia. Multimedia has numerous benefits in English classes, namely sources of information, time saving, increasing students' imagination and creativity, and the like (Zhen, 2016). Consequently, it is essential to develop EFL teachers' knowledge of using multimedia in their classes. Furthermore, multimedia does not always bring benefits (Rustamovna, 2021). It is to say that EFL teachers are required to be aware of hidden dangers when overusing multimedia in their classes. It, therefore, requires EFL teachers to learn how to use multimedia effectively.

Learning how to test or assess learning outcomes plays a vital role in teaching and learning (Frank, 2012). Testing or assessment is expected to help the teachers address students' strengths and weaknesses, measure their learning outcomes, and determine whether teachers' performances are effective. The change of education affects assessing learning outcomes (Irons & Elkington, 2021). For instance, many alternative forms of assessment have been used in addition to tests in order to determine students' needs in their learning.

Without quality academic staff, it is nearly impossible to observe the successful implementation of education reforms. According to Prapaisit de Segovia and Hardison (2009), teachers' insufficient English proficiency was one of the most serious concerns in explaining the problems of the National Education Act of 1999 in Thailand. The project might bring unsatisfactory results, but great experiences for further reforms. As a result, in order to implement changes in the Vietnamese context, the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam has paid more attention to dealing with its academic staff (Nguyen, 2018). Consequently, Vietnamese EFL teachers are expected to meet the requirements of teaching through their English proficiency certificates.

Using well-thought and well-planned tasks is important in English classrooms as it is one of the major components sustaining students' efforts in learning (Karaaslan & Çelebi, 2017). Assigning inappropriate tasks does not only decrease students' learning performance but also increases problem behaviors in classroom (Gunter et al., 1993; Wenzel & Reinhard, 2020). Both "too difficult" and "too easy" tasks negatively affect students' manner in their classroom. For too difficult tasks, students tend to refuse to do the tasks and spend their time making disruptive or other behaviors (Gunter et al., 1993). Regarding too easy tasks, students could easily and accurately finish their tasks and spend the rest of time doing off-task things (Karaaslan & Çelebi, 2017). Therefore, EFL teachers are expected to evaluate the assigning task difficulty accurately. The more the assigning tasks match students' proficiency, the more students learn and develop.

One of the most challenging tasks EFL teachers could face in their class is to deal with unmotivated students (Ayaz et al., 2019). According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021), motivation is responsible for why a person decides to do a particular thing, how long he/she wants to do that thing, and how hard he/she fights for pursuing it. In case of that a student loses his/her motivation to learn English, he/she would choose to refuse to engage in in-class activities and give up on assigning tasks easily and quickly. As a result, students' learning outcomes and teachers' performance are lower than expected. Therefore, it is essential to provide EFL teachers with sufficient training. Additionally, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) advised that teachers themselves need to become good motivators who would their best to learn and choose suitable teaching strategies in order to meet their students' needs. Moreover, creating a positive motivational climate in the classroom seems to be a great idea to enhance students' motivation in their learning process.

The Vietnamese education system has recently innovated how English is taught and learned, shifting from content-based education to competency-based education. Students' communicative language skills have been paid more attention. Therefore, it is compulsory to meet EFL students' unique needs in order to provide them with the most suitable tasks for enhancing their communicative language skills (Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011). However, when the number of students increases, the mission of identifying individual students' needs becomes more complex. Large class size, one of the greatest barriers to English teaching and learning in Vietnam (Giang et al., 2018), prevents EFL teachers from completing the aforementioned mission. Encountering a diverse range of students requires EFL teachers to develop their knowledge of students' differences (Samson & Collins, 2012). According to Lap and Thao (2021), even some professional development activities enhanced Vietnamese EFL teachers' knowledge of learners, including learner uniqueness, some Vietnamese EFL teachers seem to under-evaluate the values of these learning opportunities. As a result, these teachers' knowledge of their students might be insufficient. Consequently, EFL teachers' awareness of the practical contributions of the training should be enhanced first.

Conclusion

According to the results of quantitative data and the findings of qualitative ones, the teachers were highly confident in their self-efficacy in their instructional strategies. Specifically, the teachers had strong beliefs in their specific skills, such as using multimedia effectively, using a variety of assessment techniques, and explaining ideas in English fluently. However, there is some space for them to improve; particularly, they need to develop their skills for evaluating the task difficulty, dealing with unmotivated students, or categorizing individual students' needs.

The major findings of the study revealed some useful implications for teaching and learning English. First of all, the term "teacher's efficacy" should be widely acknowledged in the context of teaching English. If EFL teachers take a serious interest in the role of teacher's efficacy in the classroom environment, it can have an impact on their choices of instructional strategies. Second, EFL teachers should build their confidence by learning more about how to evaluate a particular task, how to become an effective motivator, and how to identify what students need timely. As a consequence, stakeholders such as authorities or school administrators should give more opportunities for teachers to improve the level of teacher's efficacy through training courses or workshops so that they can apply their potential effects in various educational environments.

Recommendations

The researchers make two suggestions for further studies. To make the generalizability of the study possible, it is necessary to increase the number of participants from different English learning and teaching contexts, not only limited to the Mekong Delta of Vietnam but other parts of the country. Another recommendation is to focus on not only teachers but also students since students' learning success is much seen as the result of teachers' self-efficacy. Particularly, researchers should analyze students' average scores and then check the interaction of the levels of teacher self-efficacy and the scores. It is expected to see the tension between teachers' perceptions and practices. Retrospective studies on

the impact of EFL teachers' training programs on teachers' self-efficacy or testing the effect of a certain intervention program on in-service EFL teachers' use of instructional strategies so as to increase teachers' self-efficacy would be interesting in many EFL contexts.

Limitations

Limitations of this study also abound. First of all, because of the time limitation, the participants of the current study were restricted to only forty-six EFL teachers working in different school settings around the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. In other words, the number of participants for the questionnaire was not truly large enough to be representative of the population as expected, which could limit the generalizability of the results. Second, to investigate whether teacher's efficacy has an impact on students' learning outcomes or an investigation of students' attitudes toward teacher's efficacy is needed. For further investigation, those data may bring a better understanding of the impact of teacher's self-efficacy on their students' learning and teaching practices. Another area which could be worth investigating is how pre-service EFL teacher training programs influence teachers' self-efficacy and what makes in-service EFL teacher development programs effective in terms of assisting teachers to lift up their self-efficacy, a factor contributing to enhancing students' learning outcomes.

Authorship Contribution Statement

Trinh: Conceptualizing and monitoring the study, ensuring the writing quality, editing the report. Nguyen: Reviewing the literature, developing/ adapting instruments, collecting and analyzing data. Le: Checking the reliability and validity of the data, drafting the report.

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