



## INVESTIGATING EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF IMPLEMENTING ACTIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING SPEAKING

Le Hoang Minh<sup>1i</sup>,

Nguyen Thuy Thuy Duong<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Education and Training,  
Bentre, Vietnam

<sup>2</sup>Nam Can Tho University,  
Vietnam

### Abstract:

Active learning (AL) is widely implemented in Asia including Vietnam. However, to date, research on this method seems to be scarce, particularly in the context of Vietnam. This study aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of AL and its principles in teaching English speaking. In addition, the study also explores teachers' attitudes about AL implementation and their concerns about applying this method to their teaching context. Ten teachers of English teaching at a university in the Mekong Delta, South of Vietnam participated in the study. A semi-structured interview activity was employed to collect data. The results showed that the teachers generally had a high level of understanding of AL teaching principles and showed positive attitudes toward the implementation of it. The results also revealed teachers' concerns about implementing AL. In particular, three problems of large class size, students' mixed language proficiency and time limitation were addressed. Accordingly, possible suggestions for a better implementation of AL in teaching English speaking in Vietnam and similar contexts elsewhere will be provided.

**Keywords:** active learning, teachers' perceptions, implementation, speaking

### 1. Introduction

English plays a crucial role in the age of globalization. To be proficient in English, learners need to fully master 4 skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Leong and Ahmadi (2016) state that speaking is the foremost skill among the four skills that bridge students to know the world. Similarly, Richards and Renandya (2002) have noted that the majority of language learners in the world study English to develop proficiency in speaking English. Therefore, for a second and foreign language learner, the ability to

---

<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [lehoangminh@bentre.edu.vn](mailto:lehoangminh@bentre.edu.vn)

make conversations using the target language is one of the most important aspects of language learning (Bailey, 2006). Nevertheless, speaking in English has become challenging and it is in fact not an easy task for most English learners to grasp (Arifin, 2017). As the most emergent aspect of language skill relating to communication, speaking is precisely often the skill that learners cannot gain enough competence during classroom time (Zhang, 2009). To develop speaking skill, students need to practice as often as possible both inside and outside the classroom environment. Due to the influential significance of speaking skill, useful teaching methods should be applied to offer learners more opportunities to practice speaking in their classroom. Suitable method teaching helps create interaction in language classrooms and motivate learners as well as encourage a supportive environment for language learning.

It should be noted that every government member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has adopted English as a standard language used for communication in different countries and has recognized the need to improve teaching and learning English (Kirkpatrick, 2011). It is evident that improving English speaking has been considered as an essential goal for developing most of the aspects in each country in Asia including Vietnam. In recent years, the educational system of Vietnam is gradually changing according to social changes and global development. Being fluent in English speaking has become the target of language teaching and learning in Vietnamese teaching context. It aims to step up the educational goals to respond to social needs. Because of the importance of English language, the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) of Vietnam has implemented a project called the National Foreign Language Project 2020 with the current purpose to renovate thoroughly the tasks of teaching and learning languages within the national educational system in the period 2008-2020.

Although the Vietnamese government concerned changes to meet the learners' needs for teaching and learning English, particularly speaking skill, there are still obviously existing problems in English language teaching that might hinder Vietnamese learners' English competence including speaking ability. Firstly, the teaching curriculum is designed following a top-down policy-making mechanism, that is the policymakers are the ones who determine the subject matter for the teaching syllabus. This, as a result, might limit learners' needs analysis (Nguyen, 2018). In addition, Le (2011) argues that there is a great emphasis on theoretical information with little regard for practical experience or skills. Therefore, the learners were given few opportunities to try out their English-speaking abilities.

Secondly, with regard to teaching methods, a common teaching model seen in most Vietnamese classrooms is that the teacher provides information and the learners have to try to understand and memorize what the teacher says (Nguyen, 2014). As a result, the learners are supposed to be extremely passive and reluctant to actively participate in classroom activities. In addition, while hands-on instructions are supposed to be communicative-oriented according to the goals of the reform in language education proposed by the MoET of Vietnam, testing seems to focus heavily on measuring learners' achievement of form-based tests. As a result, the teachers tend not to apply methods that

they have been suggested by the MoET, i.e, Communicative Language Teaching or Task-based Language Teaching but seem to go back to their traditional form-based teaching (Nguyen & Phuong, 2020).

Meanwhile, AL method has appeared as a potentially effective solution for communicative language teaching due to its principal features (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Lumpkin et al., 2015; Silberman, 1996), and it has been successfully implemented in some Asian contexts (Nonkukhetkhong et al., 2006; Yusuk, 2020); and I, therefore, hypothesized that it might turn to be a potential choice for a method in language teaching in Vietnam. In particular, AL places a strong focus on promoting learners' communication ability (Malik, 2011). AL is said to be learner-centered education (Pedersen & Liu, 2003) and contributes to promoting learners' motivation in learning (Harasim et al., 1997). In general, AL provides beneficial results for both learners and teachers in their teaching and learning process. AL activities offer students opportunities to practice language skills, enhance students' retention and develop critical thinking. Students who are involved in higher-order thinking to solve problems can achieve higher scores than those who learn from traditional textbooks without understanding, analyzing and constructing (Dole et al., 2007). It also benefits the teacher by giving them opportunities to access the students' understanding and responsibility for their own learning process.

Nevertheless, it is inevitable that the implementation of AL in Asian contexts in general and in Vietnam, in particular, has faced several factors (Sahar, 2014; Yusuk, 2020). It is clear that there are certain differences between AL teaching principles and the current trend of language teaching in Vietnam, i.e., teacher-centered and form-based education, heavy dependence on textbooks and the like (Ayele, 2014; Girma, 2013; Noom- Ura, 2013). Regarding teachers' ability to implement AL in their practical classrooms, a number of concerns have been foreseen and evidently reported by researchers as well as teachers such as the lack of experience and expertise in creating AL activities or the lack of clarity of their perceptions in theory, or insufficient time to employ AL (Alemu, 2010; Bonwell, 2000; Van De Bogart, 2009). Furthermore, the teachers who are currently used to teaching by traditional form-based teaching methods seem not to be willing or ready to change their teaching methods (Menon, 2008). In fact, they lack an appropriate professional development path in their teaching career (Alemu, 2010; Menon, 2008). Moreover, Stephen et al. (2006) described the process of teaching and learning English by Vietnamese teachers and learners as a teacher-centered model mainly involving listening to lectures, taking notes and reproducing information memorized for the exam. To explain the rationale for taking the traditional teacher-centered approach to teach English, Thompson (2009) argues that Confucian ethics prevail in the thinking of both teachers and students by teaching learners to be obedient and quiet in the classroom when they are at a young age. As a result, a docile, respectful, and quiet learning style is thought to be that learners do not take risks to ask questions, talk, and express their opinions in the classroom, while the teacher has played a dominant role in classroom

practices with little opportunities for learners to creatively involve in doing things and constructing new knowledge themselves (Nguyen, 2014).

From the above-mentioned issues, the question raised is whether AL can be successfully implemented in the context of Vietnam where the teaching philosophy is still strongly influenced by traditional form-based teaching and assessment. With this in mind, we conducted a study in which we aimed to investigate Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions towards AL method in teaching English speaking skill. Accordingly, possible pedagogical implications and insights for implementing AL in English-speaking classrooms will be addressed.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Perceptions

Lindsay and Norman (1977) state that perception is the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world. They further point out that perception better describes one's ultimate experience of the world and typically involves further processing of sensory input.

Perception includes all those processes by which an individual receives information about his environment – seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting and smelling. In the same vein, perception is described as a procedure of gleaning information via physical senses and the brain activity of critical analysis (Forgus & Melamed, 1976). Grinstein and Keim (2010) argue that perception directs the sensory process in which humans touch, see, hear, smell, and taste, then spawn congruent signals from the surrounding environment. In defiance of being framed from divergent paths, almost all of them pinpoint several similarities en masse. At length, perception is a process of subjectivity and creativity via which humans accredit literal meanings to neurological data by means of sensory receptors in response to comprehending themselves and others. Perception plays a role in human awareness and assimilation when it comes to interpreting the impetus from the outer world, as well as how we field the input in action.

Borg (2003) states that perception refers to *“an amalgam of what teachers know, believe, and think, which has been traditionally described by constructs such as knowledge, belief, attitude, value, perception, and rationale”* (p. 49). In this respect, the power of teacher perceptions, including intentions, attitudes, values, expectations and assumptions about teaching and learning, influences and shapes classroom practices and behavior.

Perception is the way of relating what is sensed with what we know. And it is also a process by means of which we receive and interpret information from the world around us. Elliot et al. (2000) stated perception as a practice of defining and giving meaning to any stimuli based on individuals' interpretation. Pajares (1996) uses perception as opinions, attitudes, values, judgments mental conceptual systems and perspectives.

The term perception, as stated in the Oxford Dictionary (2012), refers to the ability to see, hear or perceive something through the senses. It is considered a related way of understanding or explaining something that occurred in the brain based on a logical and

critical way of analysis. In the same vein, Ward, Grinstein and Keim (2010) state that perception is the process of interpreting the world so that people can be able to form a mental representation of the surrounding environment.

As perception is a process by which a person interprets and organizes events to produce a meaningful experience of the world, it is an observer's quality, state, capability, awareness or appreciation of objects, processes or situations in his environment (Brewer, 1999). Thus, perception has a place in language teaching and learning. Nespor (1987) stated that a person without any perceptual ability would not be able to learn a language. Simply put, perception is how a person perceives the world (McDonald, 2012). Based on these definitions, perception used in the current study refers to what the teacher thinks, believes and acts toward the issues of AL implementation in English-speaking classes. In addition, individual perceptions are central to this study as they can reveal and bring about a better understanding of EFL teachers' understanding of AL in the speaking classroom. Perception within this study, therefore, refers to EFL teachers' personal or subjective viewpoints, conceptions and beliefs on AL.

## **2.2. Speaking**

Howarth (2001) defines speaking as a two-way process of communication in which ideas, information or feelings are shared. Similarly, Burns and Joyce (1997) argue that speaking is an interactive process of constructive meaning that involves two or more people who use language for interaction and transactional purposes. Chastain (1988), in his view, defines speaking as a process of combining background and linguistic knowledge to produce an oral message that is conveyed to the listeners.

Bygate (1987) defines speaking as a process which includes not only the use of the right sounds, but also the choice of words in the right order to convey the right meaning. In line with this, Nunan (2005) states that speaking is a productive skill involving producing a system of verbal communication to find out the meaning. Thus, speaking is considered combining sounds in a systematic way according to language-specific principles to form meaningful utterances. Hence, it is suggested that the learners should start with mastering the smallest units-sounds and move through mastery of words and sentences to discourse (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001).

In fact, speaking is a means to present an object which a person wants to reach and to show feeling through expressions in the verbal process. One in daily routine has the speaking ability to do social contact with others and to develop interaction. Teachers also in doing instruction must have good speaking ability in order to help students understand the teaching materials as well as present and discuss with others. The teachers need to have good speaking skill to say thoughts and ideas for being able to communicate with students and other colligates. Torkey (2006) states that speaking is a skill needed to be developed and practised together with other linguistic features such as grammar or lexis. This means that speaking has to be developed and practised independently in the object of communication. It is a live skill which produces thoughts, requests, and ideas used in communication.

Itkonen (2010) states that pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, accuracy and fluency are considered the main components of speaking. Pronunciation is defined as the accepted standard of sound and rhythm for words in a given language. Luoma (2004) states that the sound of speech can refer to many characteristics of speech flow such as individual sound, pitch, volume, speed, pause, stress and intonation. Therefore, if the pronunciation is correct, the speaker will fully understand the conversation.

Vocabulary is a set of lexemes including single words, compound words and idioms (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992). The lack of vocabulary often causes learners primary problems in second and foreign language learning (Nunan, 1999). Hence, Krahnke (2004) suggests that improving knowledge of vocabulary in a foreign language is particularly important at the basic level or even higher. Luoma (2004) stated people often use their speech in the form of vocabulary to create an image of themselves for others. This implies that people while interacting with others need to use speaking skills. Speaking is a means of communication for presenting ideas or feelings verbally. Through interaction, therefore, people can get and develop vocabulary. It is noted that a person needs to speak to others to form his/her self-image or to allow other people to know him/her rightly. Needless to say, this idea must be understood by the teachers. In the instructional process, the teacher has to give the opportunity to students for developing their speaking skill in communication resulting in enhancing vocabulary. He/she is responsible for teaching learners how to speak well in social interaction because speaking is a verbal skill which produces linguistic expression systematically for presenting meaning.

Grammar is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence (Brown, 2000). Sentences are created by grouping and arranging words in the correct order used to express our ideas and thoughts. In order to speak English correctly, learners must put words together to form correct sentences (Ur, 1996). Therefore, grammar is also one of the important components in conveying meaning.

In terms of accuracy and fluency, learners need to pay attention to the correctness and completeness of the form of language when speaking. In other words, they should focus on correct vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. About fluency, it is one of the most important criteria to help learners communicate effectively. Fluency means the ability to communicate without blanks and pauses that make interactions incomprehensible (McCarthy, 2006). It means someone can communicate without having to pause and think too much about what the other person is saying.

In a similar vein, Thornbury (2005) states that accuracy is the capacity of using correct forms where utterances of speech do not contain errors in terms of phonology, syntax, semantics or discourse of a language. Accuracy in speaking refers to how correct learners' use of the language system is, including their use of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary in communication. Dealing with fluency can be seen as the ability of using language in real-time, focusing on meaning and drawing on more lexicalized systems. Undoubtedly, fluency is a speaker's abilities including talking at length with

few pauses, producing sentences coherently, reasonably and semantically, expressing ideas appropriately in a variety of contexts, and being imaginative and creative when producing utterances. Also, fluency is the speed close to a native speaker's pausing, rhythm, stress and intonations and the opportunity to improve speaking fluency can be created through a large demand of communication.

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that speaking is an activity in which the speaker produces utterances to express his/ her ideas in order to exchange information, so the listener can understand what the speaker means.

### **2.3. Active learning**

AL has been defined by many scholars in literature due to the fact that it is not possible to provide universally accepted definitions for all of the vocabulary of AL. AL is generally defined as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process. Bonwel and Elison (1991) state that AL requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing. The core elements of AL are student activity and engagement in the learning process. AL is often contrasted to the traditional lecture where students passively receive information from the instructor.

Silberman (1996) states that AL is an approach to instruction involving engaging students with the lesson through discussions, problem-solving tasks, case studies, role plays and the like. AL places a greater degree of responsibility on the learner, but instructor guidance is still crucial in the AL classroom. AL has common characteristics including student engagement in classroom activities; a less focus on information transmission and more focus on students' skills development; student participation in higher order thinking (e.g., analysis, synthesis, evaluation), student participation in activities (e.g., discussion reading, writing), and more attention on students discovering their own attitudes and values.

AL is a term used to cover all teaching formats that involve student engagement. These include a broad range of formats that target analysis, reflection, and problem-solving, known as directed learning exercises and discussion classes. They also include team-based and individual projects, and a group of practical classes that includes dissections, laboratory practical classes, clinical skills center exercises and patient-associated activities. A humbling truth for all teachers is the fact that what the student does is more important in determining what is learned than what the teacher does (Shuell, 1986).

Brown (2007) defines AL as a form of learning in which the learners use opportunities to decide about aspects of the learning process. He also defines it as a mental activity that refers to the extent to which the learner is required to use his or her mental capabilities in the process of learning. Still, another definition was found in the Lexicon of Online and Distance Learning which reads, students who are active learners, process, discover, and apply learned information to new areas and try to solve new problems by previous information (Tomei, 2009).

Malik and Janjua (2011) define AL as *“engaging the students in some activities that stimulate them to think about and react to the information presented”* (p. 963). Prince (2004) states that *“active learning requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing”* (p. 223).

Another view of AL is learning through performing, doing, and taking actions that students take initiative during their learning (Soltanzadeh et al., 2013). In general, it differs greatly from learning through a one-way distributive or teacher-centered environment (Van De Bogart, 2009). Likewise, as Meyers and Jones (1993) claim, AL involves providing meaningful opportunities for learners to speak, listen, write, read and ponder about the content, and concerns of an academic subject.

To support these views, Alemu (2010) argues that AL can be mental or physical, including students' active participation in course materials with carefully formulated activities. Stern and Huber (1997) state that AL involves mental activities where learners face challenges in using their mental abilities to promote the learning process. In addition, AL provides opportunities for learners to speak and reflect through problem-solving tasks, small group discussions, simulations, case studies, role-play, and other activities, all requiring learners to apply what they are learning (Meyers & Jones, 1993).

AL includes any activity encouraging students to participate in learning approaches engaging them with course materials and enhancing critical thinking ability as they make applications beyond the classroom. Bonwell and Eison (1991) stated that, *“some cognitive research has shown that a significant number of individuals have learning styles best served by pedagogical techniques other than lecturing”* (p. iii). For example, discussions, questioning techniques, and short writing activities in class can skillfully engage students' exploration of the subject matter (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Bachman and Bachman (2011) argued that the constructivist approach places students at the center of the learning process as teachers help students interact with content and create their own knowledge. After investigating student perceptions and finding students with different types of academic motivation responded differently to instructional practices, Komarraju and Karau (2008) concluded that different instructional techniques should be used to most effectively reach all students. They stated, *“Teachers using instructional techniques that encourage students to reflect on their own learning, provide them with feedback, give them a chance to review material and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning tend to increase learning”* (p. 73). Merely attempting to pass knowledge on through lectures is much less effective than engaging students in the learning process. The passivity of lecture-based courses can be effectively transformed using active learning strategies focusing on students rather than on teachers as the conveyers of all knowledge. Interactive learning prepares students better as they are exposed to the thinking approaches of classmates foreshadowing the interdisciplinary teams of real-world situations (Machemer & Crawford, 2007).

Diamond (2008) argued that active involvement was much more effective than passively listening to lectures and offered several insightful assessments. Cavanagh (2011) added higher student motivation, better student attitudes, improved critical

thinking skills, and more self-directed learning. Additionally, Yazedjian and Kolkhorst (2007) suggested that AL activities positively affected the degree of students' retention and retrieval of knowledge and therefore confirmed that AL helped students make practical applications of abstract concepts.

Good and Brophy (1990) stated that current research focuses on the idea that students do not passively receive information from the teacher. Instead, they rather actively mediate by trying to make sense of what they have received and relate with what they have already known about the topic. Thus, students develop new knowledge through the process of active construction.

In line with the above idea, Bethel (2011) explained that AL is a social process that puts an emphasis on collaboration and the exchange of ideas, experiences, values and attitudes. Therefore, AL brings a comprehensive collection of instructional strategies together in one source-through active involvement in the learning process and interaction with others.

In this research, AL is defined as teachers' instructions to actively involve learners in doing speaking activities and learners' active responsibility for their own learning process. It is worth mentioning that one of the most important key characteristics of the AL method is the active participation and interaction of students in the learning process. Therefore, AL is highly relevant to classroom activities where the teacher acts as a facilitator and motivator to encourage students to participate actively in classroom activities (Prince, 2004).

### **2.3.1. Basic principles of AL**

AL techniques enable students to shed their traditional role as passive receptors, learn, and use new skills meaningfully (Hermann, 2013). Key scholars, Dewey and Piaget, were proponents of AL in classes. Learners are engaged in several activities such as reading, discussing, writing, and developing skills of which a few of the most important are those of evaluation, reflection, analysis, and synthesis. AL is based on the constructivist approach (Ford, 2010). In fact, it is a basic component of a constructivist classroom (Cojocariu, 2010), stating that students should be the ones who create their own understanding and information by experiencing concepts and reflecting on them.

One of the most prominent principles of AL is learner-centered education (Garman & Piantanida, 1996; Prince, 2004). In learner-centered education, learners take an active role in the learning process and normally the teacher acts as the activator of learning. It is said that actively participating in the learning process is a key element of AL. Incorporating student activities into traditional lectures and promoting student engagement in these activities can be a typical example of AL. AL is based on a learning theory called constructivism, which emphasizes the fact that learners build their own understanding. According to constructivist theory, learning is a meaningful process. It is stated that learning mainly takes place through social interactions with others, such as teachers or colleagues (Alemu, 2010; Lima, 2016).

Another important principle of AL is that it helps learners increase their ability to retain information and apply knowledge by improving critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It also promotes teamwork and motivation, helping to improve understanding of course content. Additionally, AL gives students better confidence to use and improve their language proficiency. It also offers new learning resources and different learning styles that increase learner engagement and course satisfaction (Hung, 2015; Sahar, 2014).

AL allows the use of previous knowledge and experience to make connections with what the learners are learning. It also encourages the application of new perspectives by providing opportunities for open and reflective discussions of different perspectives on a particular topic (Alemu, 2010). AL helps teachers choose appropriate goals at a difficulty level that suits the needs of learners. It also provides time for teachers to perform the instructor's aids functions of facilitation, listening, and movement (Mulatu & Bezabih, 2018).

In AL, the teachers need to take the role of a facilitator in the learning process, who creates a learning environment in which learners can learn to reconstruct new information and analyze and practice it. Bonwell and Eison (1991) state that integrating visual aids, demonstrations, and other teaching techniques in classroom presentations are also one of the roles of teachers in active classrooms.

### **2.3.2. Main features of AL**

It is said that AL plays a crucial key in introducing activities into the traditional lecture and promoting student engagement. To be specific, these elements are examined below, with an emphasis on empirical support for their effectiveness.

First of all, AL helps introduce student activity into the traditional lecture. Simply put, AL is introducing student activity into the traditional lecture to help them acquire the language more effectively. To do this, for example, the teacher can pause periodically and have students clarify their notes with a partner. This can be done two or three times during an hour-long class. Because this pause procedure is so simple, it provides a baseline to study whether short, informal student activities can improve the effectiveness of lectures. Ruhl et al. (1987) show some significant results of adopting this pause procedure. In a study involving 72 students over two courses in each of two semesters, the researchers examined the effect of interrupting a 45-minute lecture three times with two-minute breaks during which students worked in pairs to clarify their notes. In parallel with this approach, they taught a separate group using a straight lecture and then tested short and long-term retention of lecture material. Short-term retention was assessed by a free-recall exercise where students wrote down everything, they could remember in three minutes after each lecture and results were scored by the number of correct facts recorded. Short-term recall with the pause procedure averaged 108 correct facts compared to 80 correct facts recalled in classes with straight lecture. Long-term retention was assessed with a 65-question multiple-choice exam given one and a half weeks after the last of five lectures used in the study. Test scores were 89.4 with the pause

procedure compared to 80.9 without pause for one class, and 80.4 with the pause procedure compared to 72.6 with no pause in the other class.

Many proponents of AL suggest that the effectiveness of this approach has to do with student attention span during lecture. Wankat (2002) cites numerous studies that suggest that student's attention span during lecture is roughly fifteen minutes. After that, Hartley and Davies (1978) found that the number of students paying attention begins to drop dramatically with a resulting loss in retention of lecture material. The same authors found that immediately after the lecture students remembered 70 percent of the information presented in the first ten minutes of the lecture and 20 percent of the information presented in the last ten minutes. Breaking up the lecture might work because students' minds start to wander and activities provide the opportunity to start fresh again, keeping students engaged.

Second, AL helps promote student engagement in learning. Simply introducing activity into the classroom fails to capture an important component of AL. The type of activity, for example, influences how much classroom material is retained. It is emphasized that good activities develop a deep understanding of the important ideas to be learned. To do this, the activities must be designed around important learning outcomes and promote thoughtful engagement on the part of the student. The activity used in the classroom, for example, encourages students to think about what they are learning. Adopting instructional practices that engage students in the learning process is the defining feature of AL.

Needless to say, the importance of student engagement is widely accepted and it is evident that student engagement possibly supports the effectiveness of student learning on a broad range of learning outcomes. Astin (1993) reports that student involvement is one of the most important predictors of success in college. Hake (1998) examined pre-test and post-test data for over 6,000 students in introductory physics courses and found significantly improved performance for students in classes with substantial use of interactive-engagement methods. Test scores measuring conceptual understanding were roughly twice as high in classes promoting engagement than in traditional courses. Statistically, this was an improvement of two standard deviations above that of traditional courses. Other results supporting the effectiveness of active-engagement methods are reported which show that the improved learning gains are due to the nature of active engagement and not to extra time spent on a given topic.

In addition, critical thinking is a fundamental component of AL. It can be defined as a process where students analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the information for problem-solving and decision-making instead of memorizing or repeating the text without understanding, analyzing and constructing (Dole et al., 2007). Besides, AL is related to cognitive processes. It happens when learners from different educational backgrounds and contexts share their own knowledge and experiences with their peers to acquire a new language (Michael, 2006). In addition, on a higher level of Bloom's (1956) classification of cognitive process, learners are expected to be able to understand the

usefulness of new knowledge and how to use that knowledge in a meaningful and appropriate way.

Furthermore, AL often refers to student participation and interaction in the learning process (Garman & Piantanida, 1996). This participation can be an indicator of a learner's willingness to learn actively and participate in the instructional activities in speaking classes. In other words, it implies that learners are responsible for their learning as owners and creators of new knowledge rather than passively receiving the information passed by the teachers.

AL includes activities such as problem-solving and information gap tasks in small groups, simulations, case studies, and role-play (Meyers & Jones, 1993). In this way, teachers encourage learners to not only simply participate in the learning process, but also use intellectual skills to think, interpret information learned, and make relevant decisions to the course of study. Learners take an active role in their own learning process and direction, using their critical thinking and decision-making skills, and collaborating with other learners (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

#### **2.4. Research on the effect of implementing AL in teaching speaking**

Guayasamín (2008) conducted a study about using techniques in AL to improve speaking ability during English language learning for students enrolled in the 6th grade at Padre Miguel Gamboa high schools in Orellana province during the period 2007-2008. This was a combined method study involving 222 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students. Two questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data for the study. The survey focused on measuring the effects of components of extracurricular planning, improved bridging learning, and meaningful learning. The results show that most teachers did not apply motivational techniques in AL classes because of their lack of experience in teaching AL techniques. Therefore, they could not offer students active speaking lessons to help them practise and understand the English language.

Another study was done by Hasan (2021). This study aims to demonstrate that the AL strategy can improve the students' speaking skill of SMP Negeri 1 Sidrap. The researcher used a pre-experimental design. The participants of this research were 26 students in eighth grade. The data were collected through an oral test. The pre-test and post-test were used to measure the student's improvement in speaking skills before and after the treatment. After analyzing data from the pre-test and post-test. The results show that the t-counted value  $t$  is larger than the t-table value. It means that using AL can improve the speaking skills of the year eight students of SMP Negeri 1 Sidrap.

Similarly, Ramli (2019) conducted a study that aimed to know the application of AL Activities to Students' Speaking Ability. This research used a pre-experimental method. The participant of the research was the second-semester students of English Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Universitas Bosowa Makassar in the 2017/2018 academic year which consisted of one class. In conducting the research, the researcher used a total sampling technique because there is only one class of second-semester students. Data collection was performed using a speaking test consisting of a

pre-test and a post-test. The results of the research and discussion indicated that there is an improvement in students' speaking ability through AL Activities. It can be concluded that the AL Activities are effective to improve students' speaking ability in Semester Two of the Department of English Education Department of Education and Training of Bosowa Makassar University.

#### **2.4.1. Research on concerns in implementing AL in language classrooms**

Sahar (2014) conducted a study to investigate concerns about implementing AL. This study used questionnaires and a structured observation with 100 participants to collect data. The study pointed out some major issues in implementing AL. Firstly, time limitation was a problematic issue. To illustrate, the teachers believed that AL was a time taking approach than traditional ways of learning. The teachers lacked the time to actively involve their students in the learning process. Even though the teachers showed positive views based on results taken from classrooms due to improvements in students' learning ability and fun way of teaching, still the amount of time remains the main concern (Burns & Myhill, 2004). Secondly, the lack of classroom space inhibits group work and large classes of more than 40 students per class. In crowded classes, the teachers were not willing to instruct students individually. Therefore, they skew toward a lectured-centred approach. Thirdly, it is the amount of content to be covered in one session. Although students learn more, using AL approach, the teachers responded that it was not applicable to cover all study material in one session (Burns & Myhill, 2004). Finally, lacking materials in implementing AL is a real matter. In the AL approach, in fact, it requires a number of exercises and subjects which are currently not available for teachers.

Debele (2017) investigated difficulties that both teachers and students at a university face while implementing AL. The raised issue of the study is that students' participation in the classroom is said to be an integral element of the learning and teaching process promoting quality of education. Students' participation, however, can be low due to the influences of different factors. This problem is widely prevalent and tangible in the context of the study. Therefore, this action research was conducted with particular emphasis on first-year students to improve their participation in classroom activities by using AL techniques. A descriptive survey type was used for this study. The study combines questionnaire, interview, and observation as key research tools. Open and close-ended questionnaires were developed and it was delivered to the respondents in order to assess the participation of students in the classroom to design AL strategies. The data were collected in and outside of the classroom. The results showed that the limited participation of students in the classroom was due to the teachers' approach, socio-cultural background and lack of confidence, language barriers, lack of incentive method, lack of proper seating arrangement, silence, shyness and lack of group discussion. Generally, the study shows that the classroom participation of students was improved. Intervention strategy packages implemented in the course of this research illustrate significant changes in the level of classroom participation. More importantly,

AL methods were applied and could make a difference in the classroom participation of students at the university. It is evidenced by data which displays all the factors that were affecting their participation in the classroom were minimized and the progress was very remarkable. This trend does not only enhance classroom participation but also provides a guarantee for the quality of education. Thus, it is supportive for instructors and educational institutions if they properly and adequately utilize AL methods in their teaching-learning course of action.

Yusuk (2020) employed a descriptive design of both quantitative and qualitative for exploring 41 EFL teachers' perceptions of AL implementation at a university in Thailand. The study was conducted based on the assumption that although Thai students study English as a compulsory subject for twelve years in primary and secondary school, their English language competency is generally lower than in other ASEAN countries. This might have been attributed to the teacher-centred approach in EFL classrooms. AL has been suggested as a better approach for English learning in Thai schools, but more research is needed to confirm the previous findings in the Thai context. This study investigated the practices and perceptions of 41 school teachers after 40 hours of training on the AL approach. Observation, questionnaires, and interviews were administered. The findings revealed the positive effects of AL on teachers' perceptions. In addition, the results from the classroom observations showed that the approach implemented in the classroom was moderately practical. However, the findings from classroom observation disclosed that classroom facilities did not fully support AL. The findings of interviews unveiled some negative impacts of AL that could hinder the effective implementation of AL in the classroom such as limited resources, space, and time, as well as challenges in classroom management. Overall, teachers' perceptions of the AL approach were positive. The results showed that concerns such as the lack of materials, the lack of air conditioning in hot weather, space limitations, and limited classroom facilities were reported. These factors hindered the effectiveness of implementing the AL approach in the classroom. The results conformed to the findings of studies by Noom-Ura (2013) and Noopong (2002) who mentioned that the inadequate budget for teaching materials, classroom facilities and space were the main problems which can hinder the success of English language teaching.

Mulatu and Bezabih (2017) investigated EFL teachers' perceptions and practices of AL of three selected secondary schools in Ethiopia. To conduct the study, a descriptive survey design was employed. The participants were a total of 12 teachers and 60 students from high, medium and lower achievers. The study was conducted by a mixed-methods approach including qualitative and quantitative data collection tools such as questionnaires and interviews, and observation checklists. The findings of the study revealed that most of the participants had perceived AL positively. However, teachers' practices of AL were low in classrooms. The major factors hindering the effectiveness of AL implementation were found including large class sizes with fixed sitting arrangements, inadequate teacher training, a tendency of focusing on teacher-centered

method, and time scarcity. It is recommended that responsible stakeholders need to rearrange the conditions and facilitate necessary inputs for the implementation of AL.

In summary, from the previous studies mentioned above, most findings identified different aspects of AL implementation including teachers' and students' perceptions, practices and concerns in AL implementation. However, it is worth mentioning that AL has not been fully investigated in the context of English language teaching in Vietnam. Therefore, the aim of the current study was to explore how Vietnamese teachers perceive AL in their language teaching context, particularly teaching English speaking.

### **3. Material and Methods**

#### **3.1. Research aims**

The research aims to investigate the EFL teachers' perceptions of implementing AL in teaching speaking. Therefore, the study consists of three primary purposes including (1) investigating EFL teachers' understanding of AL principles; (2) exploring teachers' attitudes towards AL implementation; and (3) figuring out the concerns that the EFL teachers are facing in implementing AL in classrooms.

#### **3.2. Research questions**

Based on the research aims, the current study was conducted to address the three main questions as follows:

- 1) To what extent do Vietnamese EFL teachers understand the principles of AL?
- 2) What are Vietnamese EFL teachers' attitudes toward implementing AL in teaching English speaking?
- 3) What are Vietnamese EFL teachers' concerns in implementing AL in teaching speaking?

#### **3.3. Research design**

A descriptive survey research method was employed in this study to investigate EFL teachers' understanding of AL principles, their attitudes toward AL implementation, and their concerns about implementing AL using interviews. According to Mohajan (2018), descriptive methods attempt to describe systematically a situation, problem or phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher used the descriptive research method since it is important in gathering data on what people think, feel and do. It describes the data in nature which narrates the existing condition. Moreover, the qualitative research method helps to collect information which allows by using data-gathering tools like interviews. It is appropriate to assess and interpret problems from different angles of perspectives.

Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data for the study. By doing so, this study is said to help reveal the investigated phenomenon in a deeper manner. In addition, through semi-structured interviews, teachers' perceptions towards AL implementation were effectively investigated.

### **3.4. Participants**

The setting of the current study was taken at the university. In this study, the participants' responses were collected with a convenient sampling method. A total of ten teachers of English including 5 male teachers (50%) and 5 female teachers (50%) volunteered to participate in the study. The average age was 31 years. Regarding teaching experience, it is noted that two teachers have taught English for four years (20%), six teachers have taught English for 7 to 9 years (60%) and the rest of the two teachers have experienced teaching English for more than 10 years (20%). All of the teachers (n=10) have been recruited as full-time teachers at the university and they all got Master's degrees in the field of English Language Teaching Methodology.

Concerning the teaching background, the participants in this study have had at least 4 years of teaching experience. It is noted that all the teachers are said to be familiar with AL since they had experienced this teaching method in their classroom-based practices before they participated in the study. In fact, implementing AL in language teaching is a current policy encouraged by the university.

### **3.5. Research instruments**

In this study, a semi-structured interview activity was employed which allowed the researcher to collect data on teachers' perceptions of implementing AL in English-speaking classrooms. Patton (2002) stated that interviewing is a helpful way to find out the things that people cannot directly observe, and the interview aims to allow people to get insights into other people's perspectives in an effective way. In addition, the interview is remarked as a method of triangulation to determine the consistency of the data. From these perspectives, needless to say, conducting an interview activity is the most useful and convenient means of collecting data for the current study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A semi-structured interview is a combination of structured and unstructured interviews in which most of the content and procedure of interviewing have been planned to help the interviewer focus on the intention of asking questions in the interviews while an unstructured interview requires the interviewer to be flexible in the interviewees' specific situation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Thus, basically, each teacher participating in the interview of the current study was asked the same questions through the same sequence. Thanks to the gained information from semi-structured interviews, it was possible to compare and contrast the information, which made it possible to interpret and draw the conclusion from the findings.

It is noted that the interview questions were translated into Vietnamese, the teachers' mother tongue for two purposes. First, this allows the researcher to get an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions of AL principles and to find out how teachers' perceptions are reflected in their attitudes and concerns about employing AL in teaching and speaking in classrooms. Second, this helps the participating teachers feel convenient and confident in providing as much information as they could.

The semi-structured interview (see Appendix 1), was a sixteen open-ended-question interview and was developed based on Mulatu & Bezabih (2018) framework for

investigating teachers' perceptions of AL in language teaching. Also, the interview questions were modified by the researcher to reach the goals of the study which focused on 3 main areas including how the teachers understand about AL principles, how they think about the implementation of AL, and what they concern about AL implementation.

Specifically, the interview consists of three parts. Part 1 includes five open-ended questions for investigating participants' understanding of AL principles. Part 2 has six open-ended questions exploring teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of AL, and part 3 comprises five open-ended questions investigating the teachers' concerns about implementing AL. In the latter phase, all of the participants' responses were transcribed and analyzed to find out their perceptions of AL implementation. In addition, the responses were translated into English by a translator which was also then double-checked by an independent translator for ensuring original meanings. All the data was recorded for further analysis afterwards.

### **3.6. Data collection procedures**

After the researcher selected a specific design for the study which is consistent with the objectives of the research, the next step was to collect the research data. In collecting the data for this study, all necessary ethical procedures were followed. Before officially delivering the interview, it was piloted to check its reliability and validity as well as practicality. An interview protocol was first sent to three teachers to check whether the questions were comprehensive and clear. In addition, expected comments from the piloted teachers were collected resulting in a proper version of the interview afterward. In order to collect data, the next step was conducting individual interviews with the sample teachers so as to carefully examine their perceptions of AL. Following this, a semi-structured interview was made with 10 selected teachers. As the interview was in progress, the interviewer took note of important sections of the talk to use for analysis, to add more questions, and to motivate the interviewee that she/he has something good to talk about.

As for particular procedures, the researcher first emailed the teachers to provide an information statement about the research and seek their voluntary participation. All ten teachers agreed to participate in an interview after signing a written consent form. The participants were instructed to use Vietnamese in answering the interview and they were all informed that the interview was audio recorded. About the interview, it was conducted via Zoom. Each of the interviews lasted for about 35 to 45 minutes. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim. All the questions were to investigate participants' perceptions of implementing AL in speaking classrooms including their understanding of AL principles, their attitudes, and their concerns in implementing AL in their speaking classes.

### 3.7. Data analysis

Qualitative methods of data analysis were employed in order to answer the research questions and to attain the objectives of the study. The data gathered through the responses of the interviewees were analyzed qualitatively in the form of text.

A thematic analysis method (Braun et al., 2014) was adopted for data analysis to explore how teachers perceived AL and its related issues in teaching speaking. The interview transcripts were coded through an iterative process, and the emerging themes answered three research questions regarding teachers' understanding of AL principles, the teachers' attitudes toward AL implementation and their concerns about implementing AL in teaching speaking. Based on the analysis of the data, the researcher could summarize the research findings, drew conclusions from the findings and suggested recommendations.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Overall, the teachers had a high level of understanding of AL principles and showed positive attitudes toward AL implementation. Regarding teachers' concerns when implementing AL, large class size, students' mixed language proficiency, and the issue of time limitation were addressed.

### 4.1. Teachers' understanding of active learning principles in teaching speaking

The results show that the teachers shared a high level of understanding of AL and its related principles. To be specific, all of the teachers (n=10), dealing with the roles of learners in AL classrooms, showed a strong agreement that learners should be actively involved in interactive activities. Teacher 1, for instance, said:

*"In AL classrooms, I think that learners must always be ready to participate in classroom activities. They have to show their willingness and active roles in joining group work or open discussions because they must be the owners of their learning."* (Teacher 1)

Similarly, another teacher shared:

*"I think that learners should be the center of all activities. They have to actively get involved in their learning. They have to generate their own ideas which they have accumulated from their past experiences and then use them in debates or problem-solving tasks. Moreover, the learners have to take responsibility for their learning, and make decisions on how, what and when to learn."* (Teacher 3)

Regarding the role of the teachers in AL classrooms, all of the teachers (n=10) shared that they had to take the role of facilitators rather than controllers. Specifically, Teacher 4 said:

*“About the role of the teachers in AL teaching, I think that the teachers should try to push active learning among learners in different ways. For example, they can encourage learners to join communicative tasks or provide them with support such as guidelines, clear instructions, etc.” (Teacher 4)*

Similarly, Teacher 5 pointed that:

*“To conduct AL teaching, I personally think that the teachers need to create the best conditions for learners to discover their own way of learning. The teachers do not put their learners aside by doing nothing but allow them to engage actively in classroom activities together with their peers. I don't mean that teachers are automatically out of the learning process. Instead, they manage their teaching in a way that intentionally facilitates and guides learners to the targeted learning outcomes.” (Teacher 5)*

The results showed that the teachers had a strong belief that AL helps enhance learners' level of understanding in learning. The teachers shared that learners have to discover information by themselves with the help of teachers and peers during the learning process and this, as a result, could help learners much in increasing their level of understanding of the lesson. To illustrate, one of the teachers said:

*“When I applied AL, I realized that the learners could understand the lesson better due to the fact that they were given a number of conditions and opportunities to participate in learning activities such as discussions and sharing activities. In addition, through self-reflection and peer feedback activities, the learners could gain great insights into learning.” (Teacher 2)*

In a similar vein, Teacher 8 said:

*“In the AL classroom, learners were given authentic tasks. Therefore, they could share information as well as knowledge with peers as much and naturally as possible. Besides learning from the teacher, the learners, in my opinion, could be able to get more benefits from their friends through pair or group work resulting in developing their level of understanding of the lesson.” (Teacher 8)*

With regard to the principle that AL creates opportunities for learners to share learning experiences, all teachers (n=10) agreed that AL effectively gives learners the opportunity to interact with each other through a variety of tasks such as pair work, group work or problem-solving tasks. Teacher 3, for instance, shared that, *“From my experience, I think that AL could provide learners with opportunities to share their learning experience through doing activities with their peers”*. Similarly, Teacher 6, for instance, said:

*"When I applied AL techniques, I realized that this could help learners a lot, especially in promoting them to take part in communicative tasks contributing to developing their learning experience and sharing ability. Also, they could learn much from their friends through joint activities." (Teacher 6)*

Regarding AL's providing opportunities for learners to construct their knowledge, the results showed that all teachers (n=10) agreed with this statement. Dealing with this, one of the teachers, for instance, strongly agreed that:

*"One of the biggest benefits of AL is that it helps learners construct their own knowledge and know how to find their necessary sources of data, not just based on the instructions or knowledge given by the teacher. In my AL classroom, for example, I see that my learners could deal with the problems quite well during their learning process which subsequently helped develop their knowledge for their own sake." (Teacher 8)*

Similarly, Teacher 9 said:

*"I think that AL is really powerful in helping students construct their own source of knowledge. By actively engaging them in different tasks, the learners could target to a different pool of knowledge and experience. Gradually, they could improve a lot in their learning." (Teacher 9)*

In addition, regarding the principle that AL enhances the active involvement of students in learning, all teachers (n=10) agreed on this. Teacher 4, for instance, said that AL offers her learners good opportunities to participate in group discussions, and problem-solving tasks which require them to share or negotiate with peers. Sharing the same view, Teacher 7 said:

*"I strongly believe that AL pushes learners to be more involved in learning. You know when I delivered AL teaching, most of the activities were done mainly by the learners in the form of groups or pairs. I normally asked them to come up with a product. Interestingly, they had to work together and complete the task successfully." (Teacher 7)*

*"The results also indicated that all teachers (n=10) agreed that AL enhances the independent learning of learners. According to them, in AL, learners are independent in learning because they have to be responsible for their own task as well as their contribution in activities" (Teacher 8).*

Sharing a similar view, Teacher 3 said:

*"From my observation, I see that learners could be able to deal quite well with questions independently, even the challenging ones thanks to their uses of gained experience and*

*knowledge. In fact, the level of independence in learning among learners could be better enhanced."* (Teacher 3)

In responding to whether AL can be adjusted based on learners' different levels of language proficiency, all participants (n=10) showed their agreement on it. Teacher 4, for instance, said:

*"I cannot deny that learners share different levels of proficiency in the same class. So, this is a real challenge for me to conduct teaching. Thanks to AL which can be flexibly adjusted and applied to different groups of learners, for example, by mixing strong and weak learners together in group work, I can facilitate teaching more effectively".* (Teacher 4)

In addition, Teacher 10 shared that:

*"I will let the strong learners work with the weak learners whether they can push each other or not. If the weak still lack confidence and other friends are too dominant, I will move them to the average group or to the weaker group so that they can show their good. There are many ways to adjust the exercise too, first I must also consider the learners' scale to design the lesson, do not apply one type of exercise to the whole class with different levels."* (Teacher 10)

With regard to the principle of AL's promoting learners' cognitive process and critical thinking skills, the results indicated that almost all teachers (n=9 out of 10) showed agreement on it. They supposed that AL enables learners to solve problems analytically as well as assists them to develop critical thinking skills during the learning process.

Teacher 3, for instance, said:

*"When learners participate in AL, i.e., discussion, debate, etc., they have to find ways to convince others to listen to their ideas or to respond to the debate. Therefore, their ability to think critically will surely increase".*

Similarly, Teacher 10 said:

*"AL enables learners to engage in the activity that forces them to reflect upon ideas and how they are using those ideas. Besides that, AL requires learners to regularly assess their own level of understanding and skill at handling concepts or problems in a particular discipline. The process of keeping learners active in their learning through activities enables them to be more involved in gathering information and developing critical thinking."* (Teacher 10)

However, it is noted that one of the teachers (Teacher 2) showed her disagreement with this principle. She said:

*"It depends on the learning content, the process of knowledge accumulation, and the learner's initiative in learning to say whether or not learners' cognitive process is promoted and critical thinking skills are developed." (Teacher 2)*

Regarding the principle that AL enhances learners' self-confidence, nearly half of the teachers (n=4 out of 10) showed their uncertain beliefs about it. They supposed that learners' self-confidence primarily developed from their inherent inner character. As for an illustration, Teacher 7 said: *"This depends on the learners' characteristics and learning style, so the level of confidence will increase more or less"*. Similarly, Teacher 1 said:

*"When we talk about learners' self-confidence, I think that it depends on the characteristics and abilities of each individual student. I mean some are actually introverts or they have low proficiency in English. So, they may be shy at first with AL. In fact, not all students who learn with AL can develop their self-confidence in the same way." (Teacher 1)*

However, six out of the ten teachers believed that AL can help enhance learners' self-confidence. Particularly, Teacher 3 said:

*"I think that learners can be able to develop their self-confidence ability quite well in the AL classroom due to the fact that they are often given opportunities to try out their effort through a variety of tasks. As a result, they can continuously accumulate knowledge and experience during their learning process contributing to increasing their confidence while doing tasks." (Teacher 3)*

Similarly, Teacher 6 said:

*"In AL, learners often interact with each other to share or exchange their ideas. Furthermore, learners have to present their ideas in front of the whole class through presentation activities. This greatly and gradually enhances the level of confidence of the learners." (Teacher 6)*

The results showed that all of the teachers (n=10) had a strong belief that AL involves learners in problem-solving activities such as problem-solving tasks, case studies, and role plays. To illustrate, Teacher 7 said:

*"In my AL class, I see that learners were highly involved in interactive tasks such as decision-making or problem-solving. From my observation, I see that the learners were really motivated in sharing, teaming or debating in situations. No need to say, they can develop their ability to solve problems well." (Teacher 7)*

In a similar vein, Teacher 10 said:

*"Yeah, I often provided my students with opportunities to solve the problems themselves because I think that they will learn more if they do so instead of waiting for my instructions. In my class, most of the time, the learners had to negotiate and discuss problems together with their peers to come up with a conclusion or a decision." (Teacher 10)*

In brief, most EFL teachers had a high level of understanding of AL principles which was reflected in all the responses. Obviously, all of the teachers understood AL principles quite well as well as showing a deeper understanding of AL features. For a comprehensive view of EFL teachers' perceptions of implementing AL in teaching speaking in the classroom, a detailed interview analysis was provided in 4.2.

#### **4.2. EFL teachers' attitudes toward implementing AL in teaching speaking**

Based on the analysis of the results obtained from the interviews, in general, teachers had positive attitudes towards the implementation of AL due to the number of benefits that this method could bring to the classroom. For one, the teachers agreed that applying AL teaching was beneficial for both the teachers and learners. All of the teachers (n=10) believed that AL could provide a relaxed learning atmosphere contributing to promoting learning outcomes. Teacher 3 shared that:

*"My learners liked debating activities a lot because they felt more relaxed and excited than working with from-based exercises. Some of my learners told me that they would like to come to my class because they could practice English via activities." (Teacher 3)*

Similarly, Teacher 8 said:

*"I see that my students were motivated when I allowed them to freely engage and interact with their peers through communicative tasks. You know, we had a great learning environment together and my students performed very well in class." (Teacher 8)*

Furthermore, the results also showed that almost teachers (n=8 out of 10) strongly agreed that AL helps activate learners' needs and interests. Teacher 5 showed detailed agreement that:

*"AL method gives students the opportunity to work in groups with their friends and discuss problems. In the process of discussing and interacting with each other, they can talk freely in learning. Accordingly, they will be more interested in working with friends than listening to the teacher's lectures." (Teacher 5)*

Additionally, Teacher 6 showed his strong agreement with it by giving a practical example. He said:

*"For example, I often design a game for students to play while learning, whatever they like. In addition, I give an exercise and students work in groups. At that time, they will have freedom of speech, and they will speak more. AL is really positive in promoting speaking."* (Teacher 6)

Nevertheless, Teacher 1 and Teacher 7 had the same thoughts about AL, they supposed that AL did not activate learners' needs and interests. They mentioned that:

*"AL method only helps students more active. In terms of AL helps activate learners' needs and interests that depend on the students' characteristics."* (Teacher 1)

With regard to the interview question stating "What do you think about students find it easy to study with AL?". The results indicated that more than half of the teachers (n=7 out of 10) supposed that their learners had no difficulty when studying with the AL method. One of the teachers showed that:

*"If students study at universities, it will be suitable to apply this method. They are more self-disciplined and responsible than high school students."* (Teacher 8)

On the other hand, some teachers (n=3) believed that students did not find it easy to study with AL due to some factors including students' low level of language proficiency and students' timid psychology. Teacher 1, for instance, shared:

*"Because of high school students are studied by the traditional way of learning. When they study at university, they will be a bit strange, a bit surprised, a bit difficult for those with low language ability."* (Teacher 1)

In addition, Teacher 9 said:

*"Better students will probably like this method, while low-level students will only like listening to lectures and not working in groups. Some low-level students are not self-reliant, so solving problems will be a bit more difficult for these subjects."* (Teacher 9)

Besides, dealing with the question of whether it is easy for the teachers to implement the AL method in the classroom, three issues of large-sized classes, time limitations and students' mixed levels in a class were mentioned as challenging factors that prevented teachers from implementing AL. Teachers 5 and 6 shared their perspectives:

*"Learners have characteristics of shyness and usually are under pressure when talking in front of class, so it is not easy to implement this method for all levels of speaking English."* (Teacher 5)

*"Teachers have to take a lot of time to prepare and design some activities as well as the limitation time of implementing AL in classroom with a large amount of students."* (Teacher 6)

In addition, the teachers agreed that students' language use could be significantly increased through the process of involving them in AL activities. To put it simply, teacher 6 acknowledged that, *"the students could be capable of performing well in class" and this actively contributes to "the group sharing activities such as answering questions, discussing or expressing opinions, and even winning in group competitions"* (Teacher 7).

The results also indicated that the teachers were willing to continue to apply AL in their teaching. Dealing with this, Teacher 10 said:

*"I have no reason to stop AL in my teaching unless I have no choice that I must do that. I cannot deny the positive effect of this wonderful teaching method, at least what has already happened in my classroom so far."* (Teacher 10)

Sharing the same view, Teacher 5 said:

*"I am sure that I will continue to use AL in teaching speaking because AL is an effective teaching method for improving my learner's speaking ability. I cannot say that I only apply AL but I am quite sure that its main principles and philosophy will be primarily focused in my teaching in the future."* (Teacher 5)

To sum up, although there were still some factors that made teachers and students challenging to implement and study AL, the results indicated that most participants believed that AL promoted learners' needs and interests, and created a relaxed atmosphere for learners and teachers. As a result, they were willing to apply AL in their teaching speaking. It can be concluded that the EFL teachers' attitudes were positive towards AL implementation.

### **4.3. Teachers' concerns in implementing active learning techniques**

Regarding teachers' concerns in AL implementation, the results indicated three major factors including classroom condition factors, teacher factors, and student factors.

#### **a. Classroom condition factors**

The results showed that all of the ten teachers agreed that large class size was the most challenging factor influencing the success of AL implementation. They reported that a large number of students in a class possibly prevented them from managing learning activities resulting in ineffective AL implementation. To illustrate, Teacher 8 shared that: It is challenging for me to implement AL tasks in case of a crowded class because I have to manage many things at the same time. You know, I often organize group work or highly interactive activities such as debates or decision-making tasks. To make the

activity effective, I have to spend a lot of time supporting and facilitating groups. Honestly, it is too hard to make it possible if I have to teach a crowded class. (Teacher 8)  
Sharing a similar view, Teacher 6 said:

*"I find it difficult to conduct my teaching with AL in a crowded class. I taught many crowded classes last semester, more than 40 students in one class; and you know it was almost impossible for me to manage the AL activities effectively."* (Teacher 6)

Another teacher also said:

*"With a number of large learners are sometimes difficult for students to move to participate in active activities."* (Teacher 7)

Moreover, two teachers of ten teachers indicated that classroom facilities were very necessary when implementing the AL method in teaching speaking. Therefore, lacking supporting equipment might hinder the implementation of AL. Teacher 2, for instance, noted that:

*"Facilities play an important role in supporting learners' self-discovery, self-research and creativity. Because of lacking necessary equipment, some contents are ignored. Therefore, the class still considers the teacher as the dominant."* (Teacher 2)

In the same vein, Teacher 5 showed:

*"It is very necessary to have a large library or many computer systems to help students study directly at the school. Lack of appropriate facilities greatly affects students' self-study, so the school should be fully equipped to help increase their self-study ability."* (Teacher 5)

The results also revealed that time limitation was a big concern among the teachers. In other words, all teachers (n=10) shared the same view on the issue of time limitation when talking about AL implementation. In fact, most teachers claimed that the time available in the classroom was not enough to organize AL teaching. Teachers 8 and 9 for instance, said:

*"In a teaching session, I had to give new knowledge, review old knowledge, divide groups, organize activities, guide tasks, and evaluate the activities after each activity. Thus, I did not have enough time to complete all types of work."* (Teacher 8)

*"The students needed to do a lot of things in AL classes such as exchanging their ideas, discussing problem-solving tasks and so on. Therefore, no need to say, doing all the tasks might take a lot of time."* (Teacher 9)

### **b. Teacher factors**

Regarding to factors of the teacher, the results showed that all the teachers agreed that they had to spend a lot of time preparing AL activities prior to official teaching. However, their time for this activity was too limited since they had to do much administrative work given by the school. To illustrate, teacher 10, for instance, said she felt that, *"I am really overloaded with administrative responsibilities at school, apart from my teaching duties in the classroom"*.

Similarly, Teacher 1 said:

*"I don't have enough time to prepare well for my teaching. I have to deal with a number of duties on a working day. Besides teaching, I have to work as a teacher consultant, a tutor for weak students and so on."* (Teacher 1)

Besides, the results from the interview also showed that there were 2 out of 10 teachers had an agreement on the teachers were more familiar with traditional from-base teaching, so they did not want to change to a new method. To illustrate, some teachers said that:

*"Because of teaching traditional method for a long time, they will be surprised and lack confidence when they guide students to learn actively."* (Teacher 3)

*"Most of them are too familiar with the traditional way of teaching, so it is very difficult for them to change to the AL method, so they tend to teach in the traditional way more."* (Teacher 4)

### **c. Student factors**

Dealing with student factors, the results also showed that students' mixed language proficiency was a big concern when implementing AL in speaking classes. Teacher 1, for instance, said that it was *"difficult to assign appropriate activities to help students with different levels of language proficiency learn effectively"*. Similarly, another teacher shared that:

*"In my class, I often experienced that students with a higher level of language proficiency tended to dominate or did not cooperate well with the weaker ones. Furthermore, some weak students seemed to be too shy and passive to participate in classroom activities. To be honest, it is difficult for me to implement AL in such a mixed-level class."* (Teacher 7)

In addition, the results indicated that some teachers (n=2) agreed that learners tended to lose control of AL activity participation. They said that:

*"For teaching by AL, classroom management will be more difficult than the traditional method. Because students have to participate in active activities, interact with each other, communicate doing activities that cause noisy learning environment."* (Teacher 5)

In short, regarding teachers' concerns in AL implementation, the results showed that there were some factors that hindered teachers in implementing AL effectively such as large class size, lacking facilities, time limitations (classroom condition factors), time preparation, teachers' familiar traditional teaching method (teacher factors), and student's mixed language proficiency, student's loss of control (student factors). Among concerns, three of them that all of the teachers had a strong agreement. First, the issue of large class size prevented teachers from managing the class activities. Next, teachers faced difficulties when creating activities and assigning tasks for students of mixed language proficiency. Finally, the issue of time limitation was reported to be the most problematic concern for all teachers towards AL implementation.

## 5. Discussion

**Research question one:** To what extent do Vietnamese EFL teachers understand the principles of AL?

The results indicate that teachers had a high level of understanding of AL principles in teaching speaking. These findings are not surprising and congruent with previous studies (Mulatu & Bezabih, 2018; Ndebele & Maphosa, 2013; Yusuk, 2020).

The reason for this could be explained that because the teachers had gained valuable knowledge from previous training programs given by the university through workshop series and regular meetings where the teachers could share and discuss AL-related issues. Therefore, this offers teachers good opportunities to learn and experience more about AL resulting in teachers' high level of understanding.

Another explanation could be that due to the policy promoted by the university which allowed teachers the best opportunities to try out AL in their classroom-based teaching, the teachers therefore could learn and understand AL principles quite well. It is suggested that more training courses of AL should be encouraged and spread to other larger scales since they prove to be helpful and worth doing. To the teachers, they need to actively participate in AL training to update and learn more about AL theoretically on the one hand and on the other hand they need to try out more AL teaching in classroom conditions to fully be the owner of this teaching method.

In addition, educational leaders should provide the teachers with more favorable conditions to help them target AL implementation or to encourage them to conduct more sharing activities of AL. Also, providing necessary support in favor of AL such as equipping good teaching facilities, deciding the suitable number of learners in the classroom, or giving more time to the teacher is needed.

**Research question two:** What are Vietnamese EFL teachers' attitudes toward AL implementation in teaching speaking?

With regard to teachers' attitudes towards AL implementation, the findings reveal that the teachers had positive attitudes. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Malik, 2011; Soltanzadeh et al., 2013).

A possible explanation for the results could be the benefits of AL that it brought to the classroom. In fact, AL helps students gain better confidence to practice the learned language resulting in improving their language proficiency (Hung, 2015). In AL, learners are given ample opportunities so that they can speak to their classmates through problem-solving tasks, small group discussions or simulations and often do self-reflection through role plays or feedback-giving activities, all requiring learners to take an active role in learning creating a dynamic classroom (Agbatogun, 2014; Meyers & Jones, 1993).

Furthermore, teachers agreed that the AL method allows learners to voice their ideas which helps develop their sense of engagement with their peers (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Malik, 2011). No need to say, this can possibly create a positive classroom atmosphere resulting in increasing learners' motivation and enjoyment in the class (Van de Bogart, 2009; Watanapokakul, 2013).

For another, the teachers believed that taking the role of a facilitator rather than a controller in AL was beneficial since this brings great benefits to their learners (Bonwell & Eison, 1991) and therefore it is worth performing. Together with the teacher role, meaningful and authentic materials used in AL classrooms seemed to be a strong indicator contributing to improving learners' communicative ability and social interaction skills (Astin, 1993; Watanapokakul, 2013). The teachers, no need to say, showed their positive attitudes toward the application of AL.

However, it is worth saying that at the university where the research took place, both teachers and learners had to strictly follow the teaching syllabus given by the university including teaching materials which are also introduced as part of a top-down policy-making mechanism and said to be still in favor of form-based focus rather than communicative task-based orientation, so the teaching materials inevitably had a significant impact on the success of AL implementation. From these perspectives, it is suggested to policymakers and leaders of the university that there should be a vital need for providing teachers with favorable conditions and support to ensure that they can apply AL more effectively. By adjusting policies or offering appropriate sources in favor of AL teaching, for instance, the related stakeholders can help teachers much in AL implementation.

**Research question three:** What are Vietnamese EFL teachers' concerns in implementing AL in teaching speaking?

Regarding teachers' concerns in AL implementation, the findings indicate that time limitation was reported to be the most concern. This result is in line with previous studies (Buns & Myhill, 2004; Yusuk, 2020).

A possible reason for this could be explained that the teachers were not given enough time to conduct AL in their classroom-based teaching practices (Ayele, 2014; Alemu, 2010; Burns & Myhill, 2004). Sahar (2014) stated that it seems to be challenging for teachers to implement AL due to the scarcity of time covered in the curriculum. Sharing the same view, the teachers in the current study reported that they could not

cover all of the given tasks in the textbooks in such a limited time. In fact, to promote AL teaching, the teachers had to introduce a lot of communicative activities such as group work, presentations or problem-solving which are said to take a lot of time to complete (Eyob, 2014). Therefore, it is suggested teachers that need to be flexible and smart in selecting more suitable activities for AL teaching and on the other hand they have to pay much attention to the teaching curriculum to ensure that they still keep their teaching schedule on track. In addition, to policymakers, it should be mentioned that they need to seriously think about this issue and take appropriate actions toward it.

Another reason for the teachers' concern in terms of time limitation is that they had to do too much administrative work given by the university (Girma, 2013). To be specific, the teachers were asked to participate in extracurricular activities organized by the university such as orientations, English-speaking clubs, youth unions activities, etc. It can be undeniable that these activities consume a great amount of time for the teachers. Therefore, they were certain to be in a difficult status regarding time management for their AL teaching (Noom-Ura, 2013). This is to imply that the university leaders need to reconsider current policies related to the rights and roles of the teachers at the university and give them the necessary support to ensure they can enact their teaching job including AL teaching more properly.

The issue of large class size is also reported as a considerable concern in AL implementation (Noom-Ura, 2013; Noopong, 2002). This may result from the fact that the teachers were less confident in implementing AL in crowded classes. They seemed to be convinced that this method could not be effectively taught in large-sized classes because they had to deal with a lot of interactive activities which require a lot of close attention and care. However, these teachers fail to realize that in AL they can take advantage of peer interaction and group work as a means to organize interactive tasks. In fact, by having a well-organized plan in combination with strategic classroom management skill, the teachers can deal well with AL teaching even in large-sized classes (Alemu, 2010; Menon, 2008). All this may indicate that the teachers need to be supported with regard to classroom management skills which can be conducted through a variety of professional development activities organized by the faculty such as classroom observations among teachers or practice-oriented types of training such as coaching on the floor. In addition, it is suggested that educational leaders should support teachers thoroughly to help them implement AL more effectively. For instance, offering them the best conditions for implementing AL or revising policies in favor of AL teaching such as reducing the number of students in the classroom or allowing one more teacher assistant who timely supports the teacher during the teaching process.

Finally, the results showed that students' mixed language proficiency was also a big concern among the teachers. This finding is in line with previous studies (Eyob, 2014; Burns and Myhill, 2004; Nonkukhetkhong et al., 2006).

A possible reason for this can be explained by the difficulty that the teachers might face when assigning appropriate tasks to the whole class or why they make a decision in dividing groups for a debate or discussion (Girma, 2013; Soltanzadeh, 2013; Yusuk, 2020).

In fact, there still exists a problem that students with a higher level of language proficiency tend to dominate or do not cooperate well with the weaker ones (Moges, 2007). Thus, it is challenging for the teachers to conduct AL in such a mixed-proficiency class. Therefore, it is very important to suggest that teachers need to be highly aware of the appropriateness when organizing teaching activities. To help students deal well with AL tasks, the teachers could give clear instructions together with giving them a sharing mechanism in which high language proficiency students can help the lower ones to come up with common learning products. In addition, the teachers need to vary the level of difficulty of tasks to ensure that students of all proficiency levels can join. By doing so, the teachers can effectively encourage students to help each other resulting in developing students' ability to work with others as well as to take responsibility for their own learning.

## 6. Conclusion

The study shows that the teachers at university generally had a high level of AL understanding and showed positive attitudes toward its implementation in speaking classes. I find these results encouraging, particularly in terms of promoting AL teaching at a university in Vietnam. With key principles such as learner-centered focus, meaning-based education, and motivation promotion, AL can be seen as an effective teaching method that might possibly contribute to the development of learners' English language proficiency in speaking in particular and in all skills in general.

It is noted from the study that the training courses in which AL was included given by the university had a profound effect on teachers' understanding of AL. Moreover, teachers showed positive attitudes towards AL implementation. This indicates that they are willing to implement AL in their teaching contexts. However, several hindrances of AL were found. Thus, it is important that educational leaders and policymakers should provide teachers with more favorable conditions for implementing AL in their actual practices.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## About the Authors

**Le Hoang Minh** is working as an expert in charge of English Education at the Department of Education and Training in Ben Tre, Vietnam. He earned his Master's degree in Applied Linguistics. His main research interests include English Language Teaching, teacher training, and classroom-based studies.

**Nguyen Thuy Thuy Duong** is working as a teacher of English at Nam Can Tho University in Can Tho City, Vietnam. She earned her Master's degree in TESOL at Can Tho University, Vietnam. Her main research interests include Blended Learning, Task-based Language Teaching, and classroom-based studies.

## References

- Agbatogun, A. (2014). Developing learners' second language communicative competence through active learning: Clickers or communicative approach? *Educational Technology & Society*, 17(2), 257-269.
- Alemu B., M. (2010). *Active Learning Approaches in Mathematics Education at Universities in Oromia*, Ethiopia (Doctoral dissertation).
- Arifin, W., L. (2017). Psychological Problems and Challenge in EFL Speaking Classroom. *Language & Language Teaching Journals*, 10(1), 29-47.
- Astin, A. (1993). *What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited*. Josey-Bass.
- Ayele, D. (2014). *Teachers' job satisfaction and commitment in general secondary schools of Hadiya Zone, in southern nation nationality and people of the regional state* (Doctoral dissertation, Jimma University, Institute of Education and Professional Development Studies).
- Alandeom, O., & Sadler, T. (2008). *Interactive patterns and conceptual convergence during student collaborations in science*. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 26, 634–658, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/tea.20211>.
- Bachman, L. & Bachman, C. (2011). A study of classroom response system clickers: Increasing students' engagement and performance in a large undergraduate lecture class on architectural research. *Journal of Interactive Learning Research*, 22(1), 5-21.
- Bailey, K. M. (2006). Issues in teaching speaking skills to adult ESOL learners. *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy*, 6, 113-164.
- Baines, E., Blatchford, P., & Kutnick, P. (2003). Changes in grouping practices in primary and secondary school. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 39, 9–34.
- Bataineh, M. Z. (2015). Think-pair-share, co op-co op and traditional learning strategies on undergraduate academic performance. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 5(1), 217-217.
- Bennett, N., & Dunne, E. (1992). *Managing classroom groups*. Simon & Schuster Education.
- Bethel, B. (2011). *Practice and Perception of Bulbula School Community Towards the Implementation of Active Learning in Teaching English*. (Bulbula Secondary School in Focus). Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University. (M.A Thesis).
- Black, P., Harrison, C., & Lee, C. (2003). *Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Bloom, B. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives*. Book 1: Cognitive domain. Longman.
- Bonwell, C. (2000). *Active learning: Creating excitement in the classroom*. Active learning workshops. Retrieved June, 11, 2011.
- Bonwell, C. C., & Eison, J. A. (1991). Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom. *ASHEERIC Higher Education Report*, 1, 4-9.
- Borich, G. D. 2004. *Effective teaching methods*. Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching*, 36, 81-109.

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2014). *What can "thematic analysis" offer health and wellbeing researchers?*.
- Brewer, B. (1999). *Perception and Reason*. Oxford University Press.
- Brown, H., Alexander, R., & Mladenova, O. M. (2000). *Intensive Bulgarian: A textbook and reference grammar*. Univ. of Wisconsin Press.
- Burns, C. & Myhill, D. (2004). Interactive or inactive? A consideration of the nature of interaction in whole class instruction. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 34(1), 35-49.
- Burns, A., & Joyce, H. (1997). *Focus on Speaking*. National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia 2109.
- Bygate, M. (1987). *Speaking*. Oxford University Press.
- Carpenter, D. M. II, Crawford, L., & Walen, R. (2007). Testing the efficacy of team teaching. *Learning Environments Research*, 10, 53-65.
- Cavanagh, M. (2011). Students' experiences of active engagement through cooperative learning activities in lectures. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 12(1), 23-33.
- Chastain, K. (1988). *Developing Second Language Skills: Theory and Practice (3rd ed.)*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Cornbleet, S., & Carter, R. (2001). *The language of speech and writing*. Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education (5th ed.)*. London: Routledge/Falmer.
- Cojocariu, V. M. (2010). (Inter) active learning: value and applicability. *Gas University of Ploiesti, LXII(18)*, p. 144-161.
- Cross, P. (1987). Teaching for learning. *AAHE Bulletin*, 39(8), p. 3-7.
- Daouk, Z., Bahous, R., & Bacha, N. N. (2016). Perceptions on the effectiveness of active learning strategies. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*.
- Debele, E. T., & Kelbisa, E. M. (2017). The role of active learning methods for classroom participation: the case of first-year students of sociology in Samara University. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 22(7), 11-18.
- Diamond, R. M. (2008). *Designing and assessing courses and curricula: A practical guide (3rd ed.)*. Jossey-Bass.
- Dole, J. A., Hacker, D. J., & Nokes, J. D. (2007). Teaching high school students to use Heuristic while reading Historical texts. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(3), 492-504.
- Eguchi, M. & Eguchi, K. (2006). The limited effect of PBL on EFL learners: A case study of English magazine projects. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8(3), p. 207-225.
- Elliott, et al. (2000). *Educational Psychology: Effective Teaching, Effective Learning, Third Edition*. The McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Eyob, A. (2014). *A study on the implementation of active learning: Exploring its practices, challenges and opportunities in teaching English lessons*. Hawassa University, Ethiopia.
- Ford, M. (2010). Critique in academic disciplines and active learning of academic content. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 40(3), p. 265-280.

- Forgus, R. H., & Melamed, L. E. (1976). *Perception: A cognitive-stage approach*. McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Garman, N. B. & Piantanida, M. (1996). *Introduction to Active Learning*. A Module for Educators.
- Gillies, R. M., & Boyle, M. (2010). Teachers' reflection on cooperative learning: Issues of implementing. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26, p. 933-940.
- Girma, A. (2013). *Teachers' and students' perceptions and practices of active learning in communicative English class*. Hawassa University, Hawassa.
- Good, T. L., & Brophy, J. E. (1990). *Educational psychology: A realistic approach (4th ed.)*. White Plains, NY Longman Publishing Company.
- Granström, K. (2006). *Group phenomena and classroom management in Sweden*. In C. M. Evertson, & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues*. (pp. 1141–1160) Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publisher.
- Guayasamín, N., D., P., M. (2008). *Active techniques to improve the speaking in the learning process of the English language for students attending the sixth course at Padre Miguel Gamboa high school in Orellana province during the period 2007- 2008* Army Polytechnic school.
- Hake, R. (1998). Interactive-Engagement vs. Traditional Methods: A Six-Thousand-Student Survey of Mechanics Test Data for Introductory Physics Courses. *American Journal of Physics*, 66(1), p. 64.
- Hammar Chiriac, E. (2010). *Group work is not one, but a great many processes – Understanding group work dynamics*. In C. W. Danellis (Ed.), *Group theory: Classes, representation and connections, and applications (in press)*. NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.
- Harasim, L., Starr, R. H., Teles, L. & Turnoff, M. (1997). *Learning Networks: A Field Guide to Leaching and Learning Online*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Hartley, J., & Davies, I. (1978). Note Taking: A Critical Review. *Programmed Learning and Educational Technology*, 15, p. 207-224.
- Hasan, H., Kahar, A., Hermansyah, S., & Usman, U. (2021). The Improving Speaking Skills through Active Learning Strategy. *MAJESTY JOURNAL*, 3(1), 15-21.
- Hermann, K. (2013). The impact of cooperative learning on student engagement: results from an intervention. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 14 (3), p. 175-187.
- Hood, S., Barrickman, N., Djerdjian, N., Farr, M., Magner, S., Roychowdhury, H., & Hull, K. (2021). I Like and Prefer to Work Alone: Social Anxiety, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Students' Perceptions of Active Learning. *CBE – Life Sciences Education*, 20(1), ar12.
- Howarth, P. (2001). Process speaking 1. Preparing to repeat yourself. *Modern English Teacher*, 10(1), 39-44.
- Hung, H. (2015). Flipping the classroom for English language learners to foster active learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 28(1), 81-96.
- Itkonen, T. (2010). Spoken Language Proficiency Assessment: Assessing speaking, or evaluating acting?

- Janudom, R., & Wasanasomsithi, P. (2009). Drama and questioning techniques: Powerful tools for the enhancement of students' speaking abilities and positive attitudes towards EFL learning. *ESP World*, 8(5), 23-28.
- Johnson, D., & Johnson, F. (2003). *Joining together: Group theory and group skills*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Jones, L. (2007). *The Student-Centered Classroom*. Cambridge University.
- Kaddoura, M. (2013). Think pair share: A teaching learning strategy to enhance students' critical thinking. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 36(4), 3-24.
- Kenta, A. E. (2017). An Exploration of Teachers' Challenges and Practices in Implementing Active Learning Strategies. *American Journal of Art and Design*, 2(2), 42-51.
- Kirkpatrick, R., & Ghaemi, H. (2011). Beyond the communicative approach in language teaching. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, 1(3), 143-139.
- Komarraju, M., and Karau, S. J. (2008). Relationships between the perceived value of instructional techniques and academic motivation. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 35, 70-82.
- Krahnke, K. (2004). *Teaching English as a foreign language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Sage.
- Le, T. M., (2011). *An investigation into factors that hinder the participation of university students in English-speaking lessons*. University of Languages and International Studies: Vietnam.
- Leong, L. M. & Ahmadi, S. M. (2016). An Analysis of Factors Influencing Learners' English Speaking Skill. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 34-41.
- Lima, V. V. (2016). Constructivist spiral: an active learning methodology. *Interface-Comunicação, Saúde, Educação*, 21, 421-434.
- Lindsay, P. H. & Norman, D. A. (1977). *Human Information Processing, Second Edition*. Academic Press.
- Linsenmeyer, M. (2021). *Brief activities: questioning, brainstorming, think-pair-share, jigsaw, and clinical case discussions*. In *How-to guide for active learning* (pp. 39-66). Springer, Cham.
- Lumpkin, A. L., Achen, R. M., & Dodd, R. K. (2015). Student perceptions of active learning. *College Student Journal*, 49(1), 121-133.
- Luoma, S. (2004). *Assessing speaking*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.
- Lumpe, A. T., & Haney, J. J. (1998). Science teachers' beliefs and intentions regarding the use of cooperative learning. *School Science and Mathematics*, 3, p. 123-135.
- Machemer, P. L. and Crawford, P. (2007). Student Perceptions of Active Learning in a Large Cross-Disciplinary Classroom. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 8(1), 9-30.
- Malik, S. (2011). Active learning: An effective approach for large classes. *IPEDR*, 5, 214-217.
- Malik, S. & Janjua, F. (2011). Active lecturing: An effective pedagogic approach. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 3(2), p. 963-967.

- McCarthy, M. (2006). Fluency and confluence: What fluent speakers do. *Explorations in corpus linguistics*, 1.
- McDonald, S. (2012). New frontiers in neuropsychological assessment: Assessing social perception using a standardised instrument. *The Awareness of Social Inference Test. Australian Psychologist*, 47(1), 39-48.
- Menon, G. (2008). *Active-Learning Pedagogy: Policy, Professional Development and classroom Performance- A case study of two post-conflict context: Afghanistan and Somaliland*. U.S. Agency for International development Cooperation Agreement.
- Meyers, C., & Jones, T. B. (1993). *Promoting Active Learning. Strategies for the College Classroom*. Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.
- Michael, J. (2006). Where's the Evidence that Active Learning Works?. *Advances in Physiology Education*, 30, 159-167.
- Millis, B. J., & Cottell Jr, P. G. (1997). *Cooperative Learning for Higher Education Faculty. Series on Higher Education*. Oryx Press.
- Moges, A. (2007). *The assessment of the techniques practiced by EFL teachers in implementing active learning: Upper primary schools in Gondar Town in focus* (M.A Thesis). Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa.
- Moore, K. D. (2005). *Effective instructional strategies*. London: Sage Publications.
- Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 7(1), 23-48.
- Mulatu, M. & Bezabih, W. (2018). *Perceptions and practices of EFL teachers in implementing active learning in English classes: The case of three selected secondary schools in Dawro Zone, SNNPRS, Ethiopia*.
- Ndebele, C. & Maphosa. C. (2013). Promoting active learning in large class university teaching: Prospects and challenges. *Journal of Social Science*, 35(3), 251-262.
- Nespor, J. (1987). The role of beliefs in the practice of teaching. *Review of Educational Research*, 62(3), 311.
- Nguyen, A. T., & Phuong, H. Y. (2020). Impacts of a one-shot training program for in-service teachers on the application of Task-based Language Teaching. *Can Tho University Journal of Science*, 12(3), 38-46.
- Nguyen, D. K. (2018). A new application of Raymond Padilla's Unfolding Matrix in Framing Qualitative Data and the Follow-Up Activities for Educational Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17(5), 1-8.
- Nguyen, B. H. (2014). *Teacher change in science education in a Vietnamese university. A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education at Massey University, Manawatu, New Zealand* (Doctoral dissertation, Massey University).
- Nonkukhetkhong, C., Baldauf Jr, R. B., & Moni, K. (2006). Learner Centeredness in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. *Paper Presented at 26 Thai TESOL International Conference, Chiang Mai, Thailand*, 1-9.
- Noom-ura, S. (2013). English-teaching problems in Thailand and Thai teachers' professional development needs. *English Language Teaching*, 6(11), 139-147.

- Noopong, D. (2002). English teaching problems and the needs for professional development of teachers of English in education extended schools under the Jurisdiction of the Office of Primary Education. Nakhon Ratchasima. Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University. *English Program*.
- Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning*. Heinle & Heinle Publisher.
- Nunan, D. (2005). *Practical English language teaching*. McGraw-Hill.
- Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of Educational Research*, 66, 543-578.
- Patrick, L. E., Howel, L. A., & Wischusen, W. (2016). Perceptions of active learning between faculty and undergraduates: Differing views among departments. *Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research*, 17(3).
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. SAGE.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative social work*, 1(3), 261-283.
- Pedersen, S. & Liu M., (2003). Teachers' beliefs about issues in the implementation of a student-centered learning environment. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 51, 57-76.
- Phipps, W. (1999). *Pairwork: Interaction in the Modern Languages Classroom*. Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research.
- Prince, M. (2004). Does active learning work? A review of the research. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 93(3), 223-231.
- Raja, N., & Saeed, A. (2012). The effectiveness of group work and pair work for students of English at undergraduate level in public and private sector colleges. *Interdisciplinary journal of contemporary research in business*, 4(5), 155-163.
- Ramli, R. (2019). Promoting active learning activities to improve students' speaking ability. *Social Science Learning Education Journal*, 4(5).
- Richards, J. C., Platt, J., & Platt, H. (1992). *Longman dictionary of language teaching & applied linguistics*. Longman.
- Richards, J., C. & Renandya, W., A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ruhl, K., C. Hughes, and P. Schloss. (1987). Using the Pause Procedure to Enhance Lecture Recall. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 10, 14-18.
- Sahar, H. (2014). *Active learning in Kabul schools. Afghan teachers' views and practices*. Karlstads University.
- Santanello, C. D., Dow, A. C., & Bergman, S. J. (2014). Active Learning Strategies: Student Perceptions. *Academic Exchange Quarterly*, 18(1), 1096-1453.
- Schweitzer, D., & Brown, W. (2007). Interactive visualization for the active learning classroom. In *Proceedings of the 38th SIGCSE technical symposium on Computer Science Education* (pp. 208-212).

- Shuell, T. J. (1988). The role of the student in learning from instruction. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 13(3), 276-295.
- Silberman, M. (1996). *Active Learning: 101 Strategies to Teach Any Subject*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Sivan, A., Leung, R. W., Woon, C. C., & Kember, D. (2000). An implementation of active learning and its effect on the quality of student learning. *Innovations in education and training international*, 37(4), 381-389.
- Soltanzadeh, L., Seyed R. N. H., & Sakineh S. (2013). The effect of active learning on academic achievement motivation in high school students. *Archives of Applied Science Research*, 5(6), 127-131.
- Stern, D. Huber, G, L (eds). (1997). *Active learning For Students and Teachers. Reports from Eight Countries*. OECD Paris.
- Stephen, W., et al. (2006). *Observations on undergraduate education in computer science, electrical engineering, and physics at select universities in Vietnam, V.E. Foundation, Editor*. Vietnam Education Foundation: Washington.
- Storch, N. & Aldosari, A. (2010). Learners' use of first language (Arabic) in pair work in an EFL class. *Language Teaching Research*, 14(4), 355-375.
- Taye, G. (2008). *Perceptions and Practices of Active Learning in Dilla University*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University. (M.A Thesis).
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Pearson Education Limited Longman.
- Tomei, L. A. (2009). *Lexicon of online and distance learning*. R&L Education.
- Torky, S. A. E. (2006). *The Effectiveness of a Task-Based Instruction Program in Developing the English Language Speaking Skills of Secondary Stage Students*. Online Submission.
- Tsui, A. B. M. (1995). *Introducing Classroom Interaction*. London: Penguin.
- Thompson, J. (2009). Changing chalk and talk: The reform of teaching methods in Vietnamese higher education. *The George Washington University*, p. 68.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching: practice and theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Van de Bogart, W.G. (2009). *Active Learning Pedagogy: A new teaching methodology for a new generation of teachers*. Nakon Sawan Rajabhat University.
- Wankat, P. (2002). *The Effective Efficient Professor: Teaching, Scholarship and Service*. Allyn and Bacon: Boston, MA.
- Ward, M. O., Grinstein, G., & Keim, D. (2010). *Interactive data visualization: foundations, techniques, and applications*. CRC press.
- Ward, M., Grinstein, G., & Keim, D. (2010). *Human Perception and Information Processing in Interactive Data Visualization: Foundations, Techniques, and Application*.
- Watanapokakul, S. (2011). Supplementary materials for active learning: Development and implementation. *E-Journal for Researching Teachers*, 4(1), 1-22.
- Westbrook, F. (2011). Lessons from the other side of the teacher's desk: Discovering insights to help language learners. *English Teaching Forum*, 49(1), 2-7.
- Yusuk, S. (2020). Perceptions and practices of EFL school teachers on implementing active learning in Thai English language classrooms. *THAITESOL Journal*, 33(1), 36-56.
- Zhang, S. (2009). The Role of Input, Interaction, and Output in the Development of Oral Fluency. *English Language Teaching*, 2(4), 91-100.

Yazedjian, A. and Kolkhorst, B. B. (2007). Implementing Small-Group Activities in Large Lecture Classes. *College Teaching*, 55(4), 164-169.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions, and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions, and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage, or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations, and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed, and used in educational, commercial, and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).