



Investigating Vietnamese Students' English Language Anxiety: An Online TBLT Course

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**Investigating Vietnamese Students' English Language Anxiety:
An Online TBLT Course**

Nguyen Thi Dieu Phuong

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2024

CANDIDATE DECLARATION

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.
2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.
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ABSTRACT

The issue of inadequate English oral communication skill performance of many Vietnamese learners of English has persisted for many years and still requires effective solutions. The majority of university students still struggle with practical communication in real-life situations despite their completion of the national high-school seven-year English programme. Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has been identified as a potential cause of students' poor English communication skills. Cultural factors, combined with the anxiety of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation are considered main contributors to the English oral communication anxiety (EOCA), a specific aspect of FLA, experienced by Vietnamese learners.

This study aims to investigate the EOCA experienced by Vietnamese university students, factors contributing to EOCA and the effectiveness of an online task-based language teaching (TBLT) English course in reducing the learners' EOCA. The TBLT approach is chosen as its principal aim is to focus on learners' language oral fluency, which might diminish learners' EOCA. In addition, online learning environment is promising in reducing students' anxiety since it provides learners a safe learning space with less formal channels to interact with their teachers and classmates. Therefore, combining the TBLT and online learning is an effective solution for the aforementioned problem.

This study utilised a mixed methods approach for data collection and analyses. Empirical data collected from questionnaires were used to measure the participants' EOCA levels and investigate the factors contributing to EOCA. Data gathered via interviews were analysed to explore participants' experience and feedback on the online TBLT course as well as their perceptions on EOCA. Data collection conducted over four months, which was split into two studies. Study one is a large-scale study of EOCA, which was conducted with 166 students in a university in Vietnam. Study two is the online TBLT course with a sample of ten students who already participated in study one.

The findings suggest that EOCA, experienced by Vietnamese university students, is a widespread and long-term issue in English language classes. Students' personal and interpersonal anxieties, teacher and classroom-related factors, and linguistic difficulties are fundamental contributors to EOCA, with general trait anxiety playing a role as well. The online TBLT course is indicated to be effective in reducing students' EOCA at the group level on a long-term basis. Some specific factors of the TBLT approach, including pre-task samples, learner autonomy during task-solving activities, and collaborative learning, were helpful in reducing EOCA, particularly in the online context. The online learning environment offers flexibility and interactive engagement which is beneficial to decreasing EOCA.

The contribution of my study lies in the new insights it provides. The study combines quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding into EOCA amongst Vietnamese learners, revealing the impact of trait anxiety and other contextual and personal factors on EOCA. The study presents a novel perspective in educational research by suggesting the effectiveness of the TBLT approach in online learning contexts to reduce students' EOCA at the group level. It also emphasizes the role of technological tools in lowering student anxiety in virtual learning.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA: Communication Apprehension

EOC: English Oral Communication

EOCA: English Oral Communication Anxiety

FLA: Foreign Language Anxiety

FLCAS: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

FNE: Fear of Negative Evaluation

FTF: Face-to-Face

OLL: Online Language Learning

TA: Test Anxiety

T-Anxiety: Trait Anxiety

TBLT: Task-Based Language Teaching

SCMC: Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication

STAI: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory

WTC: Willingness To Communicate

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Contextual background: English language education in Vietnam

The rise of English as a dominant international language, which is crucial for both professional and personal communication, has been extensively recognised (Crystal, 2012; Gagliardi & Maley, 2010; Northrup, 2013; Riaz, 2019). Its reach goes beyond English-speaking countries, influencing education systems globally as a fundamental subject (Crystal, 2012). The need to learn and master English has grown increasingly important for people in many non-English speaking nations, especially for those engaged in international trade, academia, or other worldwide industries (Crystal, 2012; Fandrych, 2009; Guilherme, 2007). It is no exception for Vietnamese, with English emerging as the most common foreign language in the country (Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019; Phuong, 2017; Tran & Tanemura, 2020). There are three principal factors contributing to the importance of English in Vietnam. Initially, proficiency in English is considered a tool for improving the country's diplomatic relationships and economic cooperations on an international scale (Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019; To, 2010). Moreover, fluency in English often provides opportunities for securing high-earning positions in the Vietnamese job market, with employers prioritising English skills in recruitment (Doan & Hamid, 2019; Nghia & Vu, 2023). Lastly, for university students, English is crucial because it grants them access to extensive learning resources that are only in English and may provide them opportunities to study at well-known universities abroad (Le & Chen, 2018).

Given its vital importance, English has been established as a compulsory subject that Vietnamese students start learning formally from the

beginning of their secondary education (Hoang, 2016; Phuong, 2017). Moreover, university students, over the course of their studies, are required to undertake 270 hours of English language learning including four General English modules in their first two years and follow up with two English for Specific Purposes modules in their third year (Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019).

Ever since English was included into the national curriculum, its teaching and learning quality at all education levels have presented challenges for recent Vietnamese administrations (Huong & Albright, 2018). Grammar, vocabulary, and reading are the main activities of English programmes in Vietnamese public schools, which is the most common school system in Vietnam, while less attention was given to oral communicative skill development (Nguyen, 2008; Vu et al., 2020). The current textbooks used within Vietnamese English high school education prioritise building students' linguistic competence, mainly through grammar and reading, rather than promoting interactive and practical learning activities that foster communicative competence (Hien & Loan, 2018). Consequently, this leads to an unequal emphasis on reading and writing skills over the enhancement of English oral abilities (Huong & Albright, 2018).

In addition, English exam contents in Vietnam only focus on testing grammar and written skills. The backwash of such exams has caused high-school teachers and students to focus only on the aspects featuring in the exams (Vu et al., 2020). Many of the students have to spend most of the time concentrating on grammar exercises or practising reading and writing skills. As a result, the communicative skills are ignored completely (Hong, 2006; Pham, 2005). Classroom teaching methods also correspond with the format of

assessments, characterised by a focus on teacher-led instruction, reliance on textbooks, and a strong orientation towards preparing for examinations (Le, 2015). The overcrowded classrooms, students with low motivation, and a scarcity of teachers with the necessary qualifications are also significant issues (Hien & Loan, 2018; Le, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2014; Tran & Baldauf, 2007). Furthermore, Vietnamese students also experience foreign language anxiety (FLA) and a lack of confidence in speaking English (Le, 2023; Tran et al., 2013a & 2013b).

This educational context, with its heavy emphasis on grammar, vocabulary, and reading, and the corresponding neglect of oral communication skills, has resulted in many university students facing difficulties in English communication despite going through the official seven-year English program in high school (Sung & Spolsky, 2015). These students find it particularly challenging to communicate with English speakers from around the world, often due to insufficient and infrequent practice (Hong, 2006; Pham et al., 2014). Also, although they can achieve good grades in writing and grammar tests, they still struggle to develop their English oral communication skills, as evidenced by their poor performance in university speaking exams and difficulty in maintaining English discussions in class (Dao, 2017). Moreover, another difficulty for these students is that when they apply for positions in international organisations, their level of English is frequently considered insufficient to meet the required language standards (Nguyen, 2016; Tran et al., 2014).

To address this ongoing problem, the Vietnamese Government implemented the National Foreign Language Project 2020 in 2008. This project

aimed to introduce a revised English curriculum with an emphasis on enhancing the communicative abilities and fluency of Vietnamese students, shifting away from the previous focus on grammar and vocabulary (Government of Vietnam, 2008). The project aimed to make remarkable improvements in the language proficiency and professional communication skills of the workforce by 2015, particularly in key sectors such as information technology, finance, banking, tourism and business administration. The ambition extended to ensuring that by 2020, the majority of young Vietnamese completing their education in vocational institutes, colleges, and universities would be capable of using a foreign language with confidence. This proficiency was seen as a key to boost confidence of Vietnamese in cross-cultural interactions and enhance opportunities for further education and employment in an increasingly integrated and diverse global environment. The project also viewed foreign language skills as a strategic asset for Vietnamese citizens, contributing to advancing the nation's industrialisation and modernisation efforts (ibid.). Nonetheless, as conceded by the Minister of Education and Training at the time during a National Assembly hearing in September 2016, the project failed to reach its communicative learning goals (Hoang, 2017). This failure highlighted the necessity for a thorough reassessment of the goals and aims of the National Foreign Language Project 2020.

In response to the shortcomings of the initial National Foreign Language Project 2020, the Vietnamese Government recognised the need for significant changes and launched a revised plan extending from 2017 to 2025, relabelled as Project 2025 (Vu Duc Dam, 2017). This updated project is structured to repair the previous project's failings by setting clear, actionable objectives to

enhance the communicative proficiency of Vietnamese students. The strategy focuses on upgrading the quality of English language education across all academic levels. Its ultimate goal is to equip students with the language skills necessary for the modern, international workforce. Under the project's guidelines, English becomes a mandatory subject from the third grade (instead of sixth grade) to the twelfth grade, with the objective that students, after a decade of learning, will achieve an independent and intermediate level of English proficiency upon completing school (Vu et al., 2020). With the ambitious targets set and the extended deadline to 2025, the effectiveness of this policy in enhancing students' language skills for better employability in the global market is yet to be seen (Ngo & Tran, 2023).

In conclusion, the Vietnamese government's efforts through the National Foreign Language Project 2020 and its subsequent extension to 2025 show a commitment to improving English language education, particularly in English communication competence for Vietnamese students. Nevertheless, there are still some significant challenges in national curriculum and pedagogy implementation, involving a variety of factors and numerous obstacles (Vu et al., 2020). The journey to enhancing communicative competence in English amongst Vietnamese students is complicated, which is affected by infrastructural, pedagogical, and motivational issues. The success of these initiatives will depend not only on the implementation of revised English learning programmes and teaching methodologies but also on addressing broader structural issues such as classroom overcrowding, teacher training, and student motivation. Additionally, the reduction of foreign language anxiety and building confidence in English communication are crucial. As Vietnam

continues to integrate into the global community, the effectiveness of these educational reforms in preparing students for the demands of a globalised world will be a key measure of their success.

1.2 Foreign language anxiety, English communication anxiety and the need for research

As discussed in the previous section, improving English oral communication skills is not a major priority for Vietnamese high school students mainly because of their lack of motivation to develop these oral skills and the learning programs that overly focus on grammar and written skills. In addition, English in Vietnam is not just a subject in the curriculum but a key to unlocking higher education and career opportunities (Tran et al., 2007). Yet, the educational system focusing on achieving high academic scores often leads to the neglect of oral communication skills. As a result, numerous students admit that speaking is the hardest skill to master and enhance when attending university (Dao, 2017). This problem is often attributed to their lack of practice and confidence in their English proficiency (Nguyen et al., 2014).

The challenge of mastering spoken English is further intensified by cultural factors. Having a positive self-image and self-esteem is significantly important to Vietnamese individuals (Nguyen, 2002). According to Thompson (2009), Vietnamese students are often taught from an early age to behave obediently in class and show respect towards their teachers. Typically, they are discouraged from interrupting lectures with questions or expressing opinions that may differ from the lesson contents (ibid.). This practice fosters a passive learning style, which Dao (2017) notes can be challenging for many Vietnamese students to alter, even though it may no longer be suitable to modern

society (Tuyết, 2013). Furthermore, Dao (2017) and Tran et al. (2013a) observe that Vietnamese students frequently worry about how their English skills are perceived and criticised by teachers and peers. Thanh (2010) and Nguyen (2002) point out that a single mistake in speaking English might cause some students to become hesitant to speak again, leading them to keep their thoughts to themselves rather than engage in class discussions. Le (2000) found that most students in his study tended to be brief when they were asked to share their ideas after they made mistakes in speaking English. All these study findings indicate a broader tendency of reticence in classroom interactions amongst a considerable number of Vietnamese students. The reluctance to engage in English speech, intensified by fear of mistakes and criticism, is a manifestation of an aspect of foreign language anxiety (FLA), namely communication anxiety, a widespread issue in foreign language learning not only in Vietnam but also many non-English speaking countries (e.g., Heng et al., 2012; Kawashima, 2019; Kudo et al., 2017; Mak, 2011; Miskam & Saidalvi, 2018; Tran et al., 2013a; Woodrow, 2006).

Cultural factors, combined with the apprehension of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation and expressing different viewpoints, are considered key contributors to the English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) experienced by Vietnamese students (Bock, 2000; Le, 2023; Nguyen, 2002; Tran et al., 2013). This anxiety can, in turn, debilitate their ability to effectively communicate in English (Hewitt & Stephenson 2012; Tóth, 2012; Woodrow, 2006). Being aware of this anxiety, a significant portion of Vietnamese students expressed a desire to overcome this challenge in a study of Tran et al (2013b),

one of the few studies to date that explores Vietnamese students' awareness about FLA.

Previous studies have recognised the presence of FLA and its causes (e.g., Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzardo, 2014; Goñi-Osácar & Lafuente-Millán, 2021; Liu, 2006; Tran et al., 2013a & 2013b; Wardhani et al., 2019; Young, 1999), but there is a notable gap in research regarding effective interventions to alleviate this anxiety, particularly in the context of English oral communication anxiety amongst Vietnamese students. It leads to a need to identify solutions that can help students overcome their oral communication anxiety in English language classes and equip them with strong English communication skills. This need makes the discovery of effective methods to reduce this language anxiety a critical task in this context. In addition, as an English lecturer witnessing the actual struggles of my students, along with responding the aforementioned need, I am motivated to investigate English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) experienced by students in the university where I work. Therefore, I decided to conduct a study in order to measure students' EOCA levels, understand underlying causes of EOCA and develop instructional approaches to alleviate it. This study is not only an academic endeavour but also a practical effort to enhance the quality and effectiveness of English language teaching in Vietnam. It seeks to contribute to the extensive goal of preparing Vietnamese students for the globalised world, aligning with the objectives of the national educational reforms.

Building on the groundwork for this research, my examination of the literature addressing solutions for FLA or EOCA has revealed noticeable gaps, specifically in terms of reducing EOCA through the application of TBLT in

online learning contexts. The discovery is in line with the previously identified need for effective strategies to help Vietnamese students overcome their EOCA. The transition to online education has brought new challenges and opportunities to language learning, highlighting the importance of specific research in this area. Particularly in Vietnam, where integrating technology and online platforms in education is still developing (Ly et al., 2014; Pham & Ho, 2020), there is an urgent need for innovative teaching approaches and more in-depth investigations in these contexts. The use of online video discussion platforms has been shown to help diminish EOCA (Tuyet & Khang, 2020). This finding indicates a significant evolution in teaching methods to address both global challenges and technological advancements. However, the optimal use of online tools and teaching strategies for effectively tackling EOCA remains a large area for exploration.

TBLT methodology is believed to be a potential tool for reducing FLA since it can create a supportive environment where students can engage in collaborative problem-solving and peer learning (Bao & Du, 2015; Jones, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Subekti, 2020). However, the application of TBLT in an online setting, especially its role in helping learners overcome EOCA in English language classes, is still an emerging field with limited research. Although there is no direct evidence linking online TBLT to reduced language communication anxiety, the positive results obtained so far suggest its potential effectiveness in changing students' attitudes towards learning languages online (Hampel & Hauck, 2004; Hampel, 2006; Lai et al., 2011). The potential of TBLT, particularly in relation to online environments and the reduction of FLA, is an area deserving further attention. This lack of

comprehensive research emphasizes the importance of this study, which seeks to explore the complexities of EOCA in the Vietnamese context and identify effective strategies to alleviate it.

1.3 Aims, objectives and research questions

The first aim of this research is to examine a specific aspect of foreign language anxiety, which I term English oral communication anxiety (EOCA), amongst Vietnamese university students in English language classes. The initial focus is on determining the levels of EOCA amongst these students and discovering the factors contributing to it. Additionally, the study endeavours to evaluate the effectiveness of an online course employing a task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach in reducing EOCA. Lastly, the research aims to identify the elements within the online TBLT course that play a significant role in reducing EOCA.

The aims are achieved by addressing the following objectives:

- To examine and measure the students' EOCA in English language classes
- To investigate the factors contributing to EOCA
- To design and evaluate the effectiveness of an online intervention based on a TBLT approach in reducing the students' EOCA
- To explore which factors within the online TBLT course help reduce students' EOCA

Based on the aims and objectives, four research questions are proposed below:

1. To what extent do a small sample of Vietnamese learners of English (n = 166) experience anxiety when communicating orally in English language classes (EOCA)?
2. What are the underlying factors contributing to EOCA among students in English language classes?
3. Is an extracurricular online TBLT course effective in reducing the students' EOCA level?
4. If so, what factors of such an online TBLT course might help reduce students' EOCA?

1.4 Potential significance of the study

The potential significance of this study in the field of foreign language anxiety (FLA), particularly English oral communication anxiety (EOCA), English pedagogy, and methodological innovation is substantial. As a preliminary exploration into EOCA amongst Vietnamese university students, this research contributes to a more thorough understanding of EOCA, particularly in the context of Vietnam. By examining the levels and sources of EOCA in Vietnamese learners, the study aims to offer valuable insights for educators to adapt their teaching approaches more effectively to address the oral communication anxiety that students face in English language classrooms.

In terms of pedagogical implications, this research intends to shed light on the effectiveness of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in online settings, a relatively unexplored area. As online education becomes increasingly widespread, it is necessary to understand how TBLT can be adapted to virtual environments to alleviate EOCA. This study provides innovative perspectives

in this area, potentially guiding future lesson designs and teaching methodologies for online English language courses.

Another area of contribution is in the integration of technology in language learning. The study explores how online tools and resources can be employed to reduce students' oral communication anxiety. This exploration is particularly timely since the digital transformation in education is happening rapidly. The findings from this study develop the understanding of digital tools in language education, putting this research at the leading position of educational technology exploration.

In terms of research methodology, a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, is designed to offer a comprehensive analysis of EOCA and online TBLT. This methodological choice enriches the research data and strengthen the reliability of the findings. It thereby provides a potentially effective framework for future studies in FLA, particularly in EOCA, and language pedagogy.

Overall, this study makes significant contributions to the field of oral communication anxiety and English language teaching and learning, particularly in the context of Vietnam and other similar settings. It develops academic understanding of EOCA and its reduction and also offers practical solutions and strategies for educators dealing with the challenges of teaching English in a rapidly changing educational circumstance.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured into six comprehensive chapters, each of which serves a specific purpose in the overall research. Chapter 1, the introduction, has set out the foundation for the study. It has provided an overview of English

language education in Vietnam, presenting the rationale and potential significance of the research. This chapter has also clearly defined the study's aims and objectives as well as outlined the supporting research questions.

Chapter 2 presents an extensive literature review. This section explores the significance and development of English oral communication (EOC) skills in non-English speaking countries, involving both traditional and online learning environments. A thorough examination of foreign language anxiety (FLA) is undertaken to assess its various influential factors and relationship with language learning achievement. The chapter also focuses on English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) through a discussion of its definition, symptoms, and influence on oral English performance. Additionally, the chapter examines FLA sources and potential strategies for alleviation it in both traditional and online educational contexts. The chapter is concluded with a literature review of task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach, including its frameworks and the role it plays in reducing FLA and EOCA in both traditional and online learning settings.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology employed in this study. The chosen research paradigm, ontology, epistemology, and methodological approaches are discussed. The chapter provides full details of the research design, participant background, and research sites. It also justifies the use of the TBLT approach and describes the design and implementation of an online TBLT course and its pilot. The development and rationale for the data collection tools are elaborated upon, following by a discussion on the procedures for data collection and analysis. The validity, reliability, ethical considerations, and reflexivity of the research are also examined.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to presenting the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Chapter 5 offers an in-depth discussion of these results, particularly focusing on their relevance to the context and previous studies. Finally, chapter 6 presents the key findings and contributions of the study. It offers insights into implications for teaching practice and research methodology, acknowledges the limitations and challenges while conducting the research, and proposes suggestions for future studies. My personal reflection on the PhD journey is also presented in this final chapter.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review aims to explore the existing research on English oral communication (EOC) in non-English speaking countries, English oral communication anxiety (EOCA), and the pedagogical strategies employed to alleviate this anxiety, with a particular focus on the implementation of task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach in online learning contexts.

The chapter begins with a discussion on the importance and development of EOC skills in non-English speaking countries in both traditional classroom settings and online language learning environments. In addition, the review explores the broader concept of foreign language anxiety (FLA), its influential elements and relationship with foreign language achievement. The chapter also discusses EOCA in detail, including its definition, manifestations, and impact on EOC performance. The next sections discuss FLA in both traditional classroom and online learning contexts. The sources of FLA and solutions to reduce FLA in foreign language learning are also reviewed. Finally, the chapter introduces task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach and its models then discusses the application of TBLT in reducing FLA and EOCA in both traditional and online classrooms. The chapter concludes with a summary of the literature reviewed and a discussion on the literature review gaps.

2.2 English oral communication (EOC) in non-English speaking countries

2.2.1 The importance of English oral communication skill development in non-English speaking countries

English is not only the third largest language spoken by first language (L1) speakers worldwide but also the most dominant international language (Crystal, 2012). A decade ago, the number of English speakers in the whole world had already exceeded 1.7 billion (British Council, 2013). English is considered to play the role of a global language or a lingua franca (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020; Northrup, 2013; Riaz, 2019), which is evident in various sectors such as commerce, technology, scientific research and media (Nunan, 2001; Rose et al., 2022). More specifically, the prominence of English in academic publishing is remarkable, with leading journals across diverse fields like natural science, economics, sociology and politics published in English (Melitz, 2016). In non-English speaking countries, English is often used to access and share global scientific knowledge (Porto, 2014). In international travel, English is the official language for airport communications, in-flight announcements and safety instructions, in addition to the local language (Crystal, 2012). Furthermore, a large number of well-known broadcasting programmes, movies and songs are produced in English. In the business aspect, English is either the primary or one of the official working languages of a number of prestigious organisations in the world such as World Trade Organisation (WTO), World Bank (WB), European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Northrup, 2013).

As English plays an integral role in global interactions, the necessity to learn and acquire English has become increasingly crucial to many individuals in various non-English speaking countries, particularly those involved in international trade, academia, or other worldwide sectors (Crystal, 2012; Fandrych, 2009; Guilherme, 2007). Researchers have argued that, of all the macro English skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking), English oral communication (EOC) skills should be put as a priority in the teaching and learning process (East, 2021; Hoang, 2016; Idrissova et al., 2015). They are considered the important skills since foreign language learners should be capable to communicate in that language (Chuan, 2009). Locke (2013) states that speaking, which is the most basic and common form of human communication, can lead to difficulties in social interaction and accumulating frustration and depression if individuals are unable to effectively understand or express their thoughts and feelings. To language learners, good speaking skills make a contribution to their reading and writing skill development because their grammar and vocabulary are improved throughout speaking activities (Tiwari, 2008). Furthermore, possessing oral communication proficiency means a greater chance for better education, jobs and future promotion (Baker & Westrup, 2003) since a large number of international education organisations and multinational companies employ English as their primary working language (Charles, 2007). From the above studies, it can be inferred that the importance of EOC development in non-English speaking countries has been widely recognised.

However, EOC skills are considered challenging to obtain to English language learners in non-English speaking countries (Ahmed Al-Hassaani &

Mahmood Qaid Al-Saalmi, 2022; Dao, 2017; Tavi, 2010). Mastering English speaking skills is a difficult task as it requires a comprehensive understanding of several key elements such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Language learners may be able to self-study these spoken skills through books or other media tools but to improve and master them, they need authentic interactions with other people (McDonough, 2004). They need to be able to understand their interlocuter and also express themselves clearly, which can be challenging if they struggle with the linguistic components (Hoang, 2016). A number of foreign language learners in non-English speaking countries still face difficulties in sharing their thoughts in English, pronouncing words correctly, understanding word meanings, and using phrases appropriately in a face-to-face conversation (Idrissova et al., 2015; Somsai & Intaraprasert, 2011; Zulkurnain & Kaur, 2014). The situation is similar in Vietnam. Numerous university students still experience difficulty in improving their EOC competence (Dao, 2017). This problem is exhibited in their poor performance on university oral exams, despite good results in written and grammar tests, and their struggle to maintain participation in class discussions in English (ibid.). Furthermore, when Vietnamese graduates apply for jobs in international organisations, their English performance are often assessed as hardly adequate to meet the language requirements (Nguyen, 2016; Tran et al., 2014).

In conclusion, while the importance of EOC skills is widely recognised, the acquisition of these skills appears to be a considerable challenge for many learners, particularly in non-English speaking countries. Therefore, it is

necessary to address the issue and explore effective strategies to enhance learners' EOC competence.

2.2.2 English oral communication skill development in foreign language learning

2.2.2.1 English oral communication skill development in the sphere of traditional/physical classroom setting

In this study, the term “traditional classroom” refers to a physical, face-to-face classroom. The development of English oral communication (EOC) skills in traditional classroom settings is one of the common topics studied in English language teaching. There are numerous studies highlighting the complexities and challenges involved in EOC skill development, particularly for second language learners (e.g., Al-Hassaani & Al-Saalmi, 2022; Kashinathan & Abdul Aziz, 2021; Sha'Ar & Boonsuk, 2021; Somsai & Intaraprasert, 2011).

In the traditional classroom setting, face-to-face interactions between students and teacher and among students are the primary mode of communication. This direct interaction is key to second language learning and it supports students' oral communication skill development (Gass & Mackey, 2014; Kemp & Grieve, 2014). It is argued that techniques like repeating, checking understanding, and asking for clarification used by second language learners and their conversation partners helps make the language input clearer. This focus on understanding through conversation can help learners comprehend the input better and then improve their language proficiency (Gass & Mackey, 2014). Students also achieve a profound understanding of the target language in the classroom due to the opportunities for immediate interactions, which allow them to clarify grammar explanations with their

teacher and classmates (Wright, 2017). Furthermore, the immediate response or feedback from teachers and peers helps students correct their misunderstandings on the spot, enhancing their learning process. It also fosters a smooth conversation flow as students can engage with real conversation partners, and the exchange of ideas is often straightforward (Kemp & Grieve, 2014).

Despite the benefits of traditional classroom settings, there are several challenges that students have to face, particularly in the context of EOC. One such challenge is the lack of opportunities for students to practise spoken English in the classroom due to oversized classes, time constraints, and teachers' unpreparedness to use English as the primary mode of instruction (Dao, 2017; Effiong, 2016; Ibna Seraj & Habil, 2021). Insufficient opportunities to practise speaking in English is one of the reasons for hindering students' progress in achieving fluency and building confidence (Alam et al., 2022; Shalihah et al., 2022).

Additionally, the emphasis on mastering grammar and vocabulary in traditional classrooms, which sometimes overshadows the focus on communication, can impede the progression of spoken language abilities. An English syllabus may not adequately address students' demands on enhancing their English speaking skills (Dao, 2017). Dao's study (2017) found that a significant number of Vietnamese students believed their English textbooks were impractical in helping them developing their spoken English skills. The materials often lacked sufficient speaking exercises, and the provided activities seemed ineffective in strengthening their EOC competencies.

What is more, face-to-face interactions in traditional classrooms can induce anxiety in learners. This nervousness often stems from fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation (Liu & Jackson, 2008; Mak, 2011; Shabani, 2012; Tóth, 2010), lack of confidence in their language abilities (Gkonou, 2013; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Yan & Horwitz, 2008), and the pressure to respond without preparation in classroom activities (Yaniafari & Rihardini, 2021). The instant feedback from teachers during speaking activities also discourages students from using the target language, leading to an increased speaking anxiety (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Furthermore, the traditional classroom settings may not always create an atmosphere that encourages students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English. A study conducted in Bangladesh found that students' WTC was greatly influenced by the classroom environment, which could either enhance or decline their interest to communicate with others (Alam et al., 2022). This is consistent with findings from other studies, which have identified classroom environment as one of the principal indicators influencing students' WTC (Effiong, 2016; Li, 2022). However, these findings should be interpreted with an understanding of the specific cultural and educational contexts in which the research was conducted. Since cultural differences can lead to diverse language learning approaches, it is crucial to understand how traditional classroom settings can impact students' willingness to engage in communication.

Various pedagogical strategies have been proposed to alleviate these challenges described above, including providing opportunities for students to practise speaking, using group discussions and role plays to enhance fluency (e.g., Krebt, 2017; Liu, 2006; Woodrow, 2006), and focusing on communication

rather than just grammatical accuracy (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). However, the effectiveness of these strategies is dependent on the teacher's pedagogical perceptions and the teaching context (Nghia et al., 2020). In several Asian educational settings, the traditional classroom approach continues to be teacher-dominated, which significantly limits students' opportunities to engage in active English speaking and practice within the classroom environment (King, 2013; Liu, 2002; Nghia et al., 2020). It may not adequately cater to learners' diverse learning needs (Al-Hassaani & Al-Saalmi, 2022). In addition, traditional classrooms are bound by their physical dimensions and infrastructure, which can be challenging to group discussions (Xenos, 2018). Multiple group discussions happening simultaneously can lead to distractions, with one group's conversation interfering with the others. There is also a limit in technology integration and resources that groups can use simultaneously in the physical classroom (Lai & Li, 2011). This raises questions about the effectiveness of the pedagogy and learning environment in some traditional classroom settings in fostering EOC skill development and suggests a need for more learner-centred and technology-integrated approaches.

In light of these findings, while the traditional classroom settings offer structured learning environments and direct teacher-student interactions, they can sometimes limit the interactive experiences necessary for effective EOC skill development. The constraints of class size and time, learning atmosphere and sometimes outdated teaching methodologies can discourage students' motivation to practise speaking the target language. To effectively enhance students' EOC skills, it is essential to investigate and incorporate different

strategies that address the existing challenges mentioned above. In the age of globalisation and digital technology, online learning seems to be a potential option because it is able to provide an adaptable, interactive, and student-centred environment that encourages practice in EOC. The following section will discuss the development of EOC skills in the sphere of online language learning.

2.2.2.2 English oral communication skill development in the sphere of online language learning (OLL)

Having emerged in the late 20th century, computers and Internet-based technologies have been commonly employed in language learning and teaching (Meskill & Quah, 2013). Online language learning (OLL) has been introduced as one of the study modes by many educational institutions (Majid, 2012). OLL can refer to blended language learning or fully OLL (Blake, 2011). Blended language learning is a combination of traditional classroom learning mode and web-based online approaches (Nicolson et al., 2011). On the other hand, fully OLL means learning procedures are implemented completely online based on technology and the Internet. There are no face-to-face interactions between instructor and students (Sun, 2014).

When it comes to benefits of OLL, it can be said that online resources and implementations to support language learning are easier to access than in the past (Stickler & Shi, 2013). During situations like the Covid-19 pandemic, when face-to-face teaching is not feasible, online learning offers teachers and students a continuous learning environment, unaffected by health crises or physical distances (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2022). OLL is considered a time saving and convenient tool for both language instructors and learners (Meskill

& Anthony, 2015). Rather than commuting to a physical classroom, they can simply select an online course that suits their schedules and dedicate their efforts to enhance both their teaching quality and learning skills. In addition, there are many ways to teach and learn a language online which have been developed, including the use of digital communication through emails, social networking, video calls, and chat room discussions (Yang & Chen, 2007). Online learning setting not only emulates the traditional classroom through the electronic white board tool but also allows the use of a broad range of equipment such as visual supports, recording and archiving in individual and public chat, breakout rooms for small group discussions, which encourages students' participation and promotes their communicative skills in the target language (Lin, 2014; Meskill & Anthony, 2010; Mežek & Kaufhold, 2023). With the advent of real-time video, synchronous computer-mediated communication activities have become a primary tool for enhancing foreign language speaking skills (Blake, 2017). Videoconferencing offers students an alternative to traditional classroom speaking practices. In fact, small group video sessions can provide a more concentrated speaking experience than what is typically available in a classroom setting where a student might only participate few times in an hour (Blake, 2015). Online learning also enables international communication opportunities for students (Coverdale-Jones, 2000; Kato et al., 2016). Through interactions with speakers from other countries, learners can have more authentic practice, which contributes to learners' communication skill development (Meskill & Anthony, 2010; Miceli et al., 2010; Sun, 2011). Moreover, the exposure with English speakers can help students increase their motivation to speak English and reduce foreign

language anxiety (FLA) by familiarising learners with diverse accents and dialects, making them more comfortable in real-world interactions (Vurdien, 2019).

While the advantages of online language learning are evident in terms of accessibility, convenience, and global interactions, virtual classroom platforms, and indispensable online learning assistant tools, can further strengthen the above benefits and enhance the learning experience with several advanced features. The recorded online learning sessions allow students to revisit them for clarity, revision or assignments (Xenos, 2018). For instance, teachers can assign tasks based on specific moments in the recorded session so that students can review and reflect on what they learnt. In addition to recorded sessions, virtual classrooms also provide a chat feature. When students have questions for their teacher, they can utilise the chat feature to send the questions to either the teacher alone or to the entire class. This tool is especially beneficial for those who might be hesitant to express their confusion publicly or are self-conscious about their oral English abilities (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2022). Another feature, breakout rooms, facilitates group discussions without the physical limits of a traditional classroom (Lee, 2021). Regular use of these rooms, followed by group feedback, can be particularly effective in improving students' oral communication skills (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2022). Last but not least, the feature of shared whiteboards and documents can promote teamwork by allowing groups to collaboratively construct texts and complete language exercise (Asoodar et al., 2014; Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2022).

Despite the significant advantages of OLL and virtual platforms, they also come with challenges that may affect the language acquisition process. One of the most prominent drawbacks is the absence of physical, face-to-face interactions (Matiso & Makena, 2022). Paralinguistic cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and body language play an indispensable role in understanding and communication (Guyer et al., 2021). In OLL, the occasional absence of video interactions or having insufficient visual cues can lead to a risk of miscommunication, which can potentially hinder the language learning process. (Matiso & Makena, 2022). Also, the absence of non-verbal cues often makes students hesitant to voluntarily answer to questions or share their views since they are uncertain about when to join a discussion or how their opinions might be received (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2022).

Another challenge is the potential for learner isolation while studying online. The absence of a classroom community and limited opportunities for spontaneous peer interactions can lead to feelings of detachment and anxiety (Gherheș et al., 2021; Hurd, 2007). Interacting with peers offers psychological benefits for second language learners since it enables them to easily spot and revise their partners' speech mistakes and refine their own errors based on feedback (Philp et al., 2013). The isolation in online learning environment can impact students' motivation and engagement, both of which are fundamental for effective language learning (Rahmat Budiman, 2015). Furthermore, the absence of immediate feedback in some online platforms can impact students' EOC skill development (Matiso & Makena, 2022). When learners do not receive immediate feedback, they might be overly cautious and anxious about making errors. As a result, they become hesitant to communicate in the target

language. This apprehension can hinder their ability to speak a language fluently, especially if they are already struggling with limited vocabulary and lack of practice (ibid.). The delay in feedback or the inhuman automated feedback in online settings can sometimes cause students to feel disconnected from the learning process and reduce their motivation to study (Rahmat Budiman, 2015).

In addition, online learning relies on technology, Internet connections and electrical devices heavily. Technical problems and inconsistent internet speeds can disrupt lessons, causing fragmented and sometimes frustrating learning experiences (Agung et al., 2020). Such interruptions can be particularly annoying during live sessions (Azlan et al., 2020).

Regarding the aspect of enhancing EOC skills for learners in non-English speaking countries via online courses, including Vietnam, some related studies could be found (Cifuentes & Shir, 2001; Pham et al., 2014; Yang & Chen, 2007). However, the EOC skill development is not the main focus but just a minor aspect in these studies. These studies aim to understand the effectiveness and challenges of OLL, with a common focus on the exploration of how digital platforms facilitate or hinder language skill development, particularly in English.

One prominent observation from the studies is the initial enthusiasm of students towards OLL (Pham et al., 2014; Yang & Chen, 2007). The convenience of online platforms, the diverse communication forums, and the innovative methods, such as videoconferencing and chat rooms, initially appear to be promising. However, as time progresses, certain limitations become apparent. For example, while students in these studies

acknowledged improvements in writing skills, the enhancement of EOC skills remained a challenge, especially for students with lower English proficiency. They often felt excluded in synchronous activities like video conferences.

Furthermore, the nature of online interactions has been highlighted. The absence of genuine human connection in online interactions is a significant drawback even though shy students find online platforms a safe place to express their thoughts (Pham et al., 2014). Despite the benefits of improved writing skills, the lack of authentic human connection in online interactions is substantial and appears to be consistent (Cifuentes & Shir's, 2001).

In summary, as can be noted from the above studies' findings, there is some evidence that OLL courses can promote learners' EOC skills moderately. Nonetheless, since EOC development is not the primary focus, OLL potential in improving EOC skills still has not been fully discovered. Moreover, most of the studies try to improve students' communication skills through writing only. This approach seems to be inefficient since there are several drawbacks of OLL revealed in these studies. For example, in the studies which used online video conference (e.g., Pham et al., 2014; Yang & Chen, 2007), the teaching strategy appeared to be ineffective since students with poor language proficiency did not truly have a chance to practise their speaking skills.

When it comes to the context of foreign language learning in Vietnam, up to the time this study was conducted (pre-pandemic), learning English online was still uncommon although Internet access had become a daily activity there (Ly et al., 2014). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, according to

Pham & Ho (2020) just 2% (33,638) of all higher education students nationwide, a total of 1,581,227, participated in distance learning, the official term referring to online learning in Vietnam (MOET, 2017). Online learning had been suggested for numerous years in Vietnam, yet it failed to gain significant enthusiasm from universities, academics, and students during that time (Maheshwari, 2021). A primary reason of this problem was the reluctance of some Vietnamese teachers to integrate technology into their teaching methods and there were no policies from Government to encourage the use of technology in teaching and learning there (Dang, 2011). Moreover, there was no fundamental motivation to embrace new educational models in universities in Vietnam, including investments in technology (Pham & Ho, 2020).

The outbreak of the Covid-19 caused a global crisis in many aspects from health, economy to education. All educational institutions in the world were forced to close down and switch to online teaching. Although technology has been applied to language teaching for years (Baralt & Gomez, 2017; Harmer 2007; Lam & Lawrence, 2002; Meskill & Anthony, 2010; Tomlinson, 2009), it was for the first time in human history, all teachers worldwide had to rely solely on the Internet to conduct their lessons (Gherheş et al., 2021). The instant transition from traditional, physical classroom teaching to online learning was not easy for students, instructors, or administration (Serhan, 2020). Many of them were not ready for this huge challenge and Vietnamese teachers and students were no exception (Maheshwari, 2021). It was critical to distinguish the courses intentionally designed for online delivery which features live, interactive, instructor-led sessions in real time and the

unplanned, rapid shift to emergency online instruction of the pandemic (Francescucci & Foster, 2013; Hodges et al., 2020; Mežek & Kaufhold, 2023). The latter often lacked the comprehensive planning of regular online courses. Such type of online learning led to a synchronous delivery that did not take full advantage of established online educational practices. As a consequence, the quality of language teaching was affected (Hodges et al., 2020; Mežek & Kaufhold, 2023).

Even to date, when the critical phase of the pandemic has passed, the persistent effects of this hurried transition are evident in Vietnam. There are still some barriers related to technical skills, virtual learning conditions and infrastructure, administrative challenges, online instruction and lesson implementation, which hinder Vietnamese students from fully benefiting from online learning (Dao Thi Hong & Ha Hoang Quoc, 2021; Nguyen-Anh et al., 2023). These persistent issues highlight that the difficulties faced during the emergency shift to online learning have not been entirely resolved. The process of implementing effective online learning in Vietnam is still filled with challenges that require continuous effort and solutions.

In light of the comprehensive literature review of online language learning, many studies have explored the general benefits and challenges of online learning environment to foreign language learning. However, there are still substantial gaps in the literature, especially concerning the enhancement of EOC skills in non-English speaking countries like Vietnam. Although the benefits of online platforms in enhancing writing skills are frequently discussed, the challenges and strategies related to oral proficiency, especially in synchronous settings, are not given equal attention. There is a need for more

appropriate online teaching strategies to enhance the benefits of OLL in students' EOC skill development. Additionally, the challenges of transitioning to online platforms in regions like Vietnam, where technological integration in education is still in its growing stages, remain under-researched. The global shift to online education further highlights a demand for more targeted research concerning online language education in non-English speaking countries, such as Vietnam.

The literature review reveals the potential advantages of OLL in mitigating students' foreign language anxiety (FLA). However, it also highlights certain factors that might intensify FLA for some students. A deeper exploration of FLA within the online learning context is essential. The next section will provide an in-depth discussion of FLA experienced by foreign language learners.

2.3 Foreign language anxiety experienced by foreign language learners

2.3.1 Definition of general anxiety

Anxiety has been a focus of psychologists since the beginning of the twentieth century when Freud first stated it. According to him, anxiety is related to a fear or fright that any individual has experienced through their life (Freud, 1920). In later years, anxiety has been characterised as a feeling of unease and a nonspecific fear which is not directly link to any particular object (Scovel, 1978). Spielberger, one of the early researchers providing a more detailed definition of anxiety, defines anxiety as a “subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic, nervous system” (Spielberger, 1983, p.1). He also states that anxiety and fear are dissimilar since an individual's fear arises from actual

threat in his or her surroundings while the cause of anxiety remains unknown in some cases (Spielberger, 1983). Anxiety is manifested through some physiological reactions such as heartbeat surge, blood pressure increase, sweating and weakness feeling (Reber, 1985; Spielberger & Rickman, 1990). Besides the physiological signs, anxiety also causes the changes in how people behave such as a propensity to avoid anxiety-causing circumstances (Reber, 1985).

The construct of anxiety has been conceptualised as involving three typical types which are trait, state and situation-specific anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). Trait anxiety can be considered a constant personality feature of an individual (Scovel, 1978). It refers to the apprehension that someone frequently experiences in a variety of situations, even in non-threatening ones (MacIntyre, 1999; Rachman, 2013). It means that a person often responds to everyday situations with a lot of worry and stress (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991; Woodrow, 2006). Dörnyei (2005) says this kind of anxiety is a key part of a person's personality. It is stable and persistent and makes an individual consistently respond with anxiety to many different situations that might seem threatening. In contrast, state anxiety is a transient nervousness that only appears in a specific circumstance and cannot represent for a person's enduring characteristic (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). State anxiety represents the temporary and immediate anxiety experienced in response to perceived threats (Endler & Kocovski, 2001). Its intensity can vary depending on the nature and seriousness level of the event (MacIntyre, 1999).

To measure trait and state anxiety and the relationship between the two variables, Spielberger and his colleagues (1983) have developed The State-

Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) which comprises a State Anxiety subscale (S-Anxiety) and a Trait Anxiety subscale (T-Anxiety). Regarding the study findings, a positive correlation between the T-anxiety and S-Anxiety was revealed. Individuals with high levels of trait anxiety have a tendency to also show increased levels of state anxiety, even in circumstances that are generally unprovoking or neutral (Spielberger et al., 1983). In other words, people with high trait anxiety often see a wider range of situations as dangerous or threatening, and so, they feel state anxiety, a temporary anxiety, more often and more intensely compared to those with low trait anxiety (Endler & Kocovski, 2001). In addition, trait anxiety includes at least four distinct aspects, each of which illustrates a relationship with state anxiety (ibid.). Social evaluation trait anxiety indicates a person's tendency to experience heightened state anxiety in scenarios where they are being judged by others. Physical danger trait anxiety evaluates a person's tendency to exhibit high state anxiety in a situation where there is a potential for physical harm. Ambiguous trait anxiety describes one's reaction to circumstances that are new or unfamiliar. Lastly, daily routines trait anxiety is connected to circumstances associated with an individual's daily and non-harmful activities.

Situation-specific anxiety is theorised based on the trait and state anxiety discussed above. This condition is defined as trait anxiety limited to an explicit context (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). In other words, it is a stable feeling which is evoked under a particular given circumstance and a person may feel nervous in a context but not in others (Spielberger, 1983). While trait anxiety's focus is an individual's personality and state anxiety's main concern is the anxiety-provoking situations, situation-specific anxiety put an emphasis

on both. Therefore, a number of researchers argue that situation-specific anxiety is relevant to FLA since it refers to a learner's apprehension that only occurs in a language learning context such as giving an oral presentation, taking a test or discussing with classmates in the target language (Horwitz et al.1986; Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). A more detailed discussion on FLA will be provided in later sections.

2.3.2 Definition of foreign language anxiety (FLA) and English oral communication anxiety (EOCA)

Horwitz and Young (1991) propose two approaches to conceptualise FLA, which are “anxiety transfer” and “unique anxiety”. The former approach is based on an assumption that FLA is transferred from general anxiety. More specifically, anyone who has trait anxiety will also experience the anxiety in foreign language learning context. In other words, a learner's personality has an influence on his or her language learning. However, studies following this approach reach contradictory results (Horwitz, Tallon, & Luo, 2010). Chastain's research (1975) is a typical example of “anxiety transfer” approach. He investigated the relations between anxiety and foreign language performance in French, German and Spanish at elementary level. The results were different for the three groups of participants with negative, positive and non-significant correlations, which was difficult to interpret (Horwitz, 2010). The reason for the contradictory results is that there is no specific and precise definition and measurement for the type of anxiety being studied (Scovel, 1978). After Scovel's conclusion on “anxiety transfer” approach, researchers on anxiety have been more cautious in defining the type of anxiety they study (Horwitz, 2010), which leads to the birth of the second approach, “unique

anxiety”. This approach is based on a hypothesis that FLA is a type of anxiety that only occurs in a particular language learning situation (Gardner, 1985). This approach has generally become more plausible than the “anxiety transfer” approach since studies following this approach can provide strong evidence of how anxiety affects foreign language learning (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). These studies claim that FLA can significantly hinder language learning and performance. Even students from prestigious universities with high SAT scores, who unlikely to have first language difficulties, experience FLA. This suggests that FLA affects learners regardless of their first language skills, impacting their learning speed and ability to demonstrate their knowledge in a foreign language.

Horwitz and her colleagues (1986) are early researchers investigating FLA comprehensively. They define FLA as a unique mix of individual perspectives, beliefs, emotions, and behaviours that are linked to the distinct process of learning a language in the classroom environment (Horwitz et al., 1986). Another definition that gives a succinct description of FLA is from MacIntyre and his colleagues (1998). According to them, the term second/foreign language anxiety is used to describe the feeling of anxiousness provoked when learners learn or use a second language or foreign language. In other words, FLA is defined as situation-specific anxiety which provokes in particular activities such as speaking in public or participating in a foreign language class (Horwitz, 2001). Sharing the same viewpoint, MacIntyre (1999) and Chiang (2010) claim that FLA is distinctive

and different from other anxiety types since it appears in different specific foreign language learning context.

Several studies have focused on exploring the relationship between trait anxiety and foreign language anxiety. Horwitz (1986) found a positive correlation between the two above variables but the significance was low ($r = .29, p = .002$). She also found a positive correlation between trait anxiety and test anxiety ($r = .53, p = 0.001$). However, the common variance share between the two measures was just 28%, therefore, they are “reasonably independent” (Horwitz, 2001, p.115). Similarly, Chiang (2010) found a significant positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .339, p < .01$) but the common variance was just 11.2%. Similar result ($r = 0.322, p < 0.001$) was obtained in Botes et al.’s study (2022). They all claimed that the moderate correlation suggested that while the two constructs were related, they were distinct and independent from each other.

Building on the broader concept of FLA, English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) specifically refers to the apprehension or fear experienced by individuals when engaging in verbal interactions in English (Horwitz et al., 1986; Yahya, 2013). As Aida (1994) suggested, individuals with high communication apprehension often avoid or retreat from conversations. They are typically reserved and try to avoid discussions or interactions. Moreover, many students with communication anxiety are reluctant to participate in language classes, feeling tense and nervous, and are often apprehensive about sharing their ideas in front of classmates (Jones, 2004; Price, 1991; Young, 1990). Students commonly manifest anxiety, particularly when engaging in speaking and listening activities in their chosen foreign language

(Horwitz et al., 1986). This often leads to instances when students are required to speak in front of others or when facing evaluations, whether they are oral or written, they often become paralysed even though they know language rules. In some cases, learners encounter difficulties recognising sounds, which cause their confusion when listening to instructors, audio recordings, or classmates. Other potential signs of this anxiety include class absenteeism, quietly occupying the back seats in the classroom, nervously preparing to take exams by pacing in front of the classroom, and actively avoiding opportunities to communicate in the foreign language (Petrić et al., 2021). All these actions can consequently threaten their academic progress (ibid).

2.3.3 Three influential elements of FLA: Horwitz' perspective

Horwitz and her team (1986) identified three situational anxieties closely tied to language learning: communication apprehension (CA), test anxiety (TA), and fear of negative evaluation (FNE). There has been a common misconception suggesting that these three anxieties define FLA, when they are, in fact, merely associated with it (Horwitz, 2010). Considering the relationship between FLA and learning outcomes, these three factors can be perceived either as results of or contributors to FLA, depending on the specific context (Horwitz, 1996; Horwitz, 2010). In other words, FLA is influenced by, but not made up of, these three anxieties - a distinction especially applicable for test anxiety. Scholars such as Aida (1994) and Liu & Jackson (2008), among others, have extensively studied these effects since their introduction. Their work has established a foundation for subsequent studies investigating the origins and sources of FLA.

Communication apprehension (CA) is the anxious feeling provoked in interpersonal communication. In other words, it refers to a shyness which is featured by an individual's fear of interacting with other people, whether in listening ("receiver anxiety") or in speaking ("oral communication anxiety") (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.127). People who have difficulties in speaking in groups or in public are likely to face serious anxiousness in an uncontrollable context like in the foreign language class (Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1990). In addition, CA also leads to learners' frustration when they think they are unable to express themselves properly and their interlocutors do not understand them or vice versa (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). As a result, students' attention may be drawn to their low self-perception instead of learning or they may become reticent in their class (Arnord, 2011; Noor et al., 2015; Price, 1991). Hence, they will try to avoid any situation involving the target language or even skip their class (Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzardo 2014; Phillips, 1992).

Test anxiety (TA), as initially conceptualised by Horwitz et al. (1986), stems from the fear of imperfections in performance. It is the type of fear in target language performance that learners experience when they set an unrealistic demand to achieve an excellent test result (Horwitz et al., 1986). Students' TA can arise from their beliefs about the test validity, time restrictions, assessment approaches, test layout, its duration, the setting of the test, and the comprehensibility of the guidelines provided (Young, 1999). Students experiencing TA will face long-term significant stress because tests, quizzes and frequent assessments are indispensable in the foreign language classroom (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986). Horwitz et al. also claim that oral

communication can simultaneously cause CA and TA. Therefore, to some students, oral communication tasks are sometimes considered an evaluation rather than a task for skill improvement.

Fear of negative evaluation (FNE) occurs when learners are overly concerned about others' criticisms of their foreign language ability. FNE is similar to TA to some extent but its scope is broader than TA's since it can appear in various social situations outside the classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986). Regarding FNE inside the classroom, it can be indicated that the activities which involve teachers and peers' evaluation such as speaking or giving a presentation in the target language are the greatest cause of FNE (Price, 1991; Tóth, 2010; William & Andrade, 2008; Young, 1990). Furthermore, FNE also manifests through the fear of making mistakes and leaving poor impressions on others (Shabani, 2012). Learners experiencing FNE are likely to feel anxious when speaking in front of the class, which leads to their reticence in the foreign language classroom (Liu & Jackson, 2008; Mak, 2011).

Although the three aforementioned types of anxiety are fundamental effects of FLA, they may not equally contribute to FLA (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al, 1986). In some studies, CA and FNE are found to be the most important influential factors of FLA (Aida, 1994; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Shabani, 2012). In the current research, the primary focus is on addressing both CA and FNE. These two factors are of particular interest because they play a fundamental role in the broader context of English oral communication anxiety (EOCA). CA and FNE are also confirmed to be linked to each other (Mak, 2011). The study found that negative self-assessment significantly contributed to the anxiety students felt when speaking in class. Such apprehensions could adversely

affect their oral performance, particularly when they were required to actively engage in activities like role-plays and discussions. Essentially, the fear of negative judgment from both teachers and classmates, especially when errors were made in communication, was a primary source of their anxiety during English-speaking activities in class. Considering the primary aim of this study is to identify and implement solutions to alleviate EOCA among learners in English language classes, a deeper understanding of CA and FNE becomes necessary.

2.3.4 FLA measurement instruments

Several scales have been developed to measure FLA such as French Class Anxiety Scale (Gardner & Smythe, 1995), English Use Anxiety (Clement, Gardner, & Smythe, 1977) and English Test Anxiety (Clement, Gardner, & Smythe, 1980). Of all the scales created, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed in Horwitz et al.'s study (1986) is acknowledged as “a turning point in language anxiety research” (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012, p105). Since the introduction of FLCAS, there have been more studies examining the roles of FLA in foreign language learning with reliable results.

The FLCAS was initially designed by Horwitz in 1983 and then developed and finalised by Horwitz in collaboration with some colleagues in 1986. It is a self-report including 33 statements using 5-point Likert Scales from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” to measure respondents' anxiety level in the foreign language classroom. The FLCAS measures the three influential elements of classroom-based FLA which are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. This scale has

been used in English which is its original language version (e.g., (Aida, 1994; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2000; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000; Saito et al., 1999) as well as translated into participant's first language (e.g., (Kruk, 2018; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013; Tran et al., 2013b; Yang, 2012).

According to Horwitz et al (1986), the FLCAS is a reliable scale because it reached a high alpha coefficient of 0.93, with each item showing significant correlations when compared with the total scale. Additionally, its reliability over an eight-week period was demonstrated with a test-retest correlation of 0.83, which is statistically significant. This scale is also validated by many subsequent studies (e.g., Aida, 1994; Awan et al., 2010; Horwitz, 2010; Kruk, 2018; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Liu, 2006; Macintyre et al., 1998; Macintyre, 2007; Tran et al., 2013b; Young, 1991). The alpha coefficient index reported in these studies ranged from .67 to .95. In addition, unlike most of FLA studies which researched the FLA in learning a western language, Aida (1994) employed FLCAS in a study with ninety-six American students learning Japanese. Despite the completely different language studied, the results in internal consistency and test-retest reliability tests were similar with Horwitz et al', which were $r = .94$ and $r = .80$, $p < .01$. These results show that the FLCAS can be applied in different languages from western to non-western ones.

Since the FLCAS is designed to specifically measure anxiety related to the oral communication (Horwitz, 2016), it offers comprehensive coverage of FLA in speaking including CA and FNE. Hence, the FLCAS fits with my study purposes. Its established reliability, validity, and simple implementation also feature its appropriateness for this study. Therefore, the scale was chosen to

be the key measurement to identify my participants' English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) level.

2.3.5 The relationship between FLA and foreign language achievement

Before discussing the relationship between FLA and foreign language achievement, it is necessary to mention the two forms of anxiety that are related to learning performance. The first one is facilitating anxiety which encourages learners to cope with a new learning task and increases their focus on doing the task efficiently (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Dörnyei, 2005; Scovel, 1978). The second form is debilitating anxiety which puts an adverse effect on learning performance. It motivates learners to avoid a certain task and inhibits their performance (Dörnyei, 2005; Scovel, 1978).

On one hand, a moderate level of anxiety has been shown to be beneficial. Chastain (1975) and Cakici (2016) suggest that this "facilitating anxiety" can improve performance, encourage learners to face challenges, and enhance cognitive focus and alertness. Zhang (2001) and Kleinmann (1977) add that a certain level of anxiety keeps learners engaged and willing to take risks, which is essential for language proficiency. When language learners are willing take risks, they will take any chance to use the target language to obtain a deeper understanding and gradual improvement in their language skills (Cervantes, 2013). Furthermore, Ewald (2007) found that students enjoyed courses they found challenging. This implies a link of a degree of anxiety with enjoyment and motivation. However, contrasting views from Krashen (in an interview with Young, 1992) and Horwitz (1990) indicate that while some anxiety can be helpful in simpler learning contexts, it may not

be beneficial for more complicated tasks like language learning. This suggests that the impact of anxiety on language learning is not straightforward and depends on the balance between being a motivational force and a potential difficulty.

On the other hand, debilitating anxiety seems to draw more researchers' attention than the facilitating anxiety (Horwitz, 2000). Debilitating anxiety in language learning, as opposed to facilitating anxiety, has been widely studied and is consistently linked to negative outcomes in language learning. Groundbreaking research by Horwitz et al. (1986) and subsequent studies by Aida (1994), Elkhafaifi (2005), Liu (2006), Awan et al. (2010), and Cakici (2016) have found a clear negative correlation between high levels of FLA and student performance. These studies across various languages and contexts show that students with higher anxiety levels generally achieve lower grades, struggle more with listening comprehension, and participate less in class.

From the discussion above, it is asserted that FLA can be considered one of the predicting factors to foreign language performance. Nevertheless, Sparks and Ganschow (1995) argued that poor foreign language learning and low language proficiency might be not consequences of FLA but the reasons causing it. Although they mentioned this belief in their study, they failed to explain why FLA was a consequence of poor language learning since they only focused on the impact of cognitive insufficiency on foreign language learning. In particular, Sparks and Ganschow proposed the Linguistic Coding Deficit Hypothesis (LCDH) which assumed the key elements influencing foreign language learning are most likely rooted in one's first language

(Sparks & Ganschow, 1991). They suggested that learners' difficulties in their L1 could have a negative influence on their foreign language learning, which leads to FLA. To support this claim, Sparks and Ganschow carried out another study in which they investigated the differences in FLA and some related variables including participants' L1 levels, memory and foreign language aptitude (Ganschow et al., 1994). They divided their participants who were Spanish students in an American college into three levels of FLA – high, average and low. They found out that participants in high and medium anxiety groups achieved low scores in their first language and foreign language aptitude. The results also showed that high anxiety level students were distinguished from low anxiety level ones by the L1 and foreign language variables although they shared similar cognitive capability and overall academic results. In a more recent study of the same author group (Sparks et al., 2000), they maintained their viewpoint that undeveloped first language skills caused poor foreign reading skills, in turn, contributing to FLA.

Yet, Horwitz (2000) and MacIntyre (1999) have expressed their disagreement with the aforementioned hypothesis of Sparks and Ganschow. MacIntyre (1999) has a reply to Sparks and Ganschow (1995) that FLA might be not only a consequence but also a cause of poor language learning. It can interfere with both students' learning process and their ability to demonstrate what they know. Specifically, anxious students may learn more slowly than non-anxious ones since they have to simultaneously focus on a task and their reactions to it. They possibly know about a topic but are incapable to demonstrate relevant information in the target language. As a result, the worse their performance in learning the foreign language is, the higher level

of anxiety they have to suffer and vice versa. Similarly, Horwitz (2000) also has a response to Sparks et al. (2000) in which she agrees that L1 disability can cause FLA to some language learners. However, she emphasizes that the number of learners experiencing FLA outnumbers the ones with poor L1 skills and that there are still successful foreign language learners struggling with FLA. To support this, she cites a series of studies (e.g., Aida, 1994; Horwitz, 1986; Phillips, 1992; Price, 1991; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Saito, Horwitz & Garza, 1999; Young, 1990) whose samples were mostly from prominent universities with high Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores. Obviously, these participants could not be assumed to have first language incapability. She also raises a counter-question to Sparks and his team, asking why learners would experience anxiety when learning a second language, based on the assumption of FLA being linked to L1 skills, but not feel similar anxiety in their L1 (Horwitz, 2000). Apart from these two well-known scholars in FLA field, Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000) as well as Chen and Chang (2004) also challenge the LCDH by claiming that FLA always plays a crucial role in foreign language learning with or without the effect of first language skills. Furthermore, FLA formation cannot be attributed to the sole factor of cognitive insufficiency. Other factors related to learning and socio-cultural context should be taken into consideration as well (Macintyre, 1995; Yang, 2012).

In sum, from the above discussions, the correlation between FLA and learners' foreign language performance has been revealed and supported. FLA is indicated to be one of the important factors that can predict learner's foreign language achievement (Woodrow, 2006). Therefore, if students can

deal with their FLA, they may be able to perform better in their target language learning.

2.3.6 The relationship between FLA/EOCA and oral performance

Among the four fundamental skills of foreign language learning, speaking skills appear to arouse the most serious FLA (Liu, 2006; MacIntyre, 1999; Miskam & Saidalvi, 2018; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013; Price, 1991; Young 1990). Therefore, there are a great number of studies related to the FLA in oral performance, compared to studies on FLA in the other skills (Tóth, 2010). All of the studies mentioned above highlight the increased apprehension and stress learners feel when they are required to speak in a foreign language, especially in front of others. Both Young's (1990) survey of university and high school students in the US, and Price's (1991) interviews revealed that students were most nervous when speaking in front of their peers. This finding suggests an association between speaking anxiety and fear of public speaking or perfectionism.

Woodrow (2006), Liu (2006), and Miskam and Saidalvi (2018) also agree that oral English performance in class triggers significant anxiety. In addition, Woodrow (2006) specifically points out that learners from Asian Confucian Heritage Cultures experience higher levels of anxiety than other ethnic groups. In their culture, being silent in class is valued as a respect to teachers and learners' face-saving strategy whereas frequent speaking is a sign of showing off or a chance to show their mistakes to others (Liu, 2002; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Similarly, in Vietnam, cultural emphases on obedience, respect for teachers, and fear of criticism considerably affect learners' reluctance to speak in English, contributing to communication anxiety (Dao,

2017; Nguyen, 2002; Thanh, 2010; Thompson 2009; Tran et al., 2013a; Tuyết, 2013). However, this observation should be interpreted cautiously to avoid cultural stereotyping. It is important to recognise that individuals within any cultural group can have diverse reactions and experiences although cultural influences like the value placed on silence and the fear of making mistakes in public can contribute to anxiety.

Oral communication anxiety appears to cause learners' negative attitude towards the oral communication learning (Liu & Jackson, 2008). MacIntyre (2007) defines students' decision to speak in foreign language class as their willingness to communicate (WTC). When students' WTC is low, they lose the opportunities to frequently practise the target language, which is one of the crucial factors to oral language improvement (Boonkit, 2010; Mahdi, 2015). In addition, students who experience FNE seem to overly focus on their possibilities of making mistakes, which causes interruptions in their speech flow and poor impression on their speaking skills (Heng et al., 2012). They tend to avoid class participation and interaction to prevent making mistakes and being judged by their teachers and peers (Wardhani et al., 2019). Furthermore, highly anxious students are likely to overrate both the quantity and severity of their mistakes (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). They even blame their mistakes on FLA, which is never an excuse of non-anxious students. Such very pessimistic reaction is one of the reasons causing the low achievement in anxious learners' oral performance (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002).

Research consistently shows that speaking anxiety negatively impacts oral performance in language exams. Phillips' (1992) study with English-speaking students learning French found that higher anxiety levels correlated

with lower scores and shorter, less structurally correct answers in oral exams. Hewitt and Stephenson (2012) confirmed these findings in a similar study with English learners in Spain, where increased anxiety led to lower oral performance. Studies by Tóth (2012) and Woodrow (2006) further supported this by discovering that students with high anxiety levels had a tendency to be less fluent and active in direct conversations with L1 speakers outside the classroom. These studies collectively show a clear trend where serious speaking anxiety adversely affects oral language proficiency.

FLA is also suggested to have the similar influence on oral performance in OLL context. Across various studies, speaking activities consistently emerge as the most anxiety-provoking, with higher anxiety levels resulting in difficulties in language production (Coryell & Clark, 2009; Hurd, 2007). These studies also demonstrate that anxiety in online learning environments hinders risk-taking and language precision as in traditional classroom settings, subsequently affecting communication effectiveness. In addition, Martin and Alvarez Valdivia (2017) point out that feedback is essential but its immediacy can increase anxiety, particularly amongst those with high anxiety like it does in traditional classroom setting. McNeil (2014) states that online tools can alleviate but not entirely remove FLA. Misalignment amongst student abilities, tasks, and learning environment can increase anxiety, which can adversely affect their English oral performance. However, Yaniafari and Rihardini (2021) contrasted these findings when they found that students generally feel less anxious in online speaking classes. Their oral performance may be fostered because the reduced fear of negative evaluations in such settings create a more comfortable environment for oral practice.

In conclusion, both online and traditional language learning environments present challenges to oral performance, with speaking skills being particularly affected by oral communication anxiety. While online platforms offer distinct advantages that may help alleviate the anxiety, there is still a negative association between anxiety and oral performance across both contexts. It is necessary for foreign language teachers to recognise the situations that initiate FLA and implement strategies that both understand learners' situations and aim to alleviate its degree and negative influences on students' language learning process.

2.3.7 FLA in traditional classroom context

FLA has been widely researched in traditional classroom since the 1980s (e.g., Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzardo, 2014; Horwitz, 1988; Liu, 2006; Tran et al., 2013a & 2013b; Wardhani et al., 2019; Young, 1999). These numerous studies over time have emphasized the significance of this phenomenon in traditional classroom settings. The findings of all the studies mentioned give strong evidence for the existence of this kind of anxiety. FLA appears in all age groups from primary students to adult learners (Gürsoy & Akin, 2013; Liu & Chen, 2013; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). These study results indicated a proportional relationship between participants' age and FLA. As participants' age increased, so did their level of FLA. The heightened expectations, increased self-awareness, and the pressure to achieve linguistic proficiency could be potential factors exacerbating FLA in older students.

In addition, of all four macro skills, speaking is considered to be the most-anxiety provoking activity in the classroom (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 2001; Liu, 2006; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013; Woodrow, 2006;

Young, 1991). Speaking, especially in a classroom setting, is a public activity. Mistakes are not just judged by the teacher but also by peers, intensifying the fear of negative evaluation (Arifin, 2017; Liu, 2006). Furthermore, speaking requires instant language processing, which can be challenging for learners struggling with vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency simultaneously (Bhatti, 2021; Wang, 2014). Beyond linguistic accuracy, speaking also demands an understanding of cultural distinctions, tones, and non-verbal cues (Bashir et al., 2011). All these factors make speaking even more complicated to master.

Unlike other countries, few studies have addressed FLA experienced by Vietnamese foreign language learners in the traditional classroom (Le, 2023). Notably, Tran et al. (2013a & 2013b) conducted two significant studies involving 419 non-English major students from five schools within a university in the North of Vietnam. These students were subjected to a comprehensive research methodology that included questionnaires based on the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986), Generalised Belief Measure (McCroskey, 2006; McCroskey & Richmond, 1989, 1996) and Generalised Attitude Measure (McCroskey & Richmond, 1989, 1996; McCroskey, 2006). Additionally, they participated in semi-structured interviews and wrote autobiographies detailing their English learning experience. A more recent study by Le (2023) further investigated the phenomenon, focusing on 300 university students in Central Vietnam who enrolled in English-medium instruction classes. This research employed the FLCAS, follow-up interviews, and classroom observations to collect data. The findings from Le's study (2023), which were in line with those of Tran et al. (2013a; 2013b) revealed that Vietnamese students experienced

a moderate degree of FLA. Common sources for this anxiety included students' fear of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation (FNE), and lack of confidence in speaking English in class. Le's study also found a significant negative relationship between students' FLA and their English proficiency.

In conclusion, while a number of studies have investigated FLA in traditional classrooms globally, there is a noticeable gap in the literature concerning Vietnamese foreign language learners since only a limited number of FLA-related studies have been conducted in Vietnam. The consistent findings across these studies indicated a moderate level of FLA amongst Vietnamese students, which adversely affected their English achievement. However, although these studies provide valuable insights, they primarily focus on the broad perspectives of FLA from both teachers' and students' viewpoints only. They also suggest that Vietnamese educators should consider the profound impact of FLA on students' performance. Given the implications, it is crucial for teachers and policymakers in Vietnam to come up with solutions and strategies that can alleviate FLA in order to promote a more encouraging learning environment for English language acquisition.

2.3.8 FLA in online learning context

As education shifts towards online platforms, understanding FLA in online learning environment is vital. The move to online learning may bring new challenges and possibilities for managing FLA. However, FLA in online learning context is still an emerging area of research and there are a limited number of studies which have researched FLA in this context (e.g., Coryell & Clark, 2009; Hurd, 2007; Majid, 2012; Martin & Alvarez Valdivia, 2017; Pichette, 2009; Yaniafari & Rihardini, 2021).

There is a recurring theme across studies that learners experience intensified anxiety at the beginning of online language courses. As identified by researchers like Majid (2012) and Ushida (2005), initial apprehension is often caused by a lack of familiarity with the digital learning environment and a perception of the absence of face-to-face interactions. As learners progress through the course, many reported a decrease in FLA. The results suggest students' adaptability to the online environment and increased comfort over time. In addition, the effectiveness of online video discussion platforms in alleviating students' EOCA has been demonstrated (Tuyet & Khang, 2020). The study employed Flipgrid, an online platform, to facilitate the teaching of English speaking skills. This platform provided a relaxed and engaging setting for students to practise English by recording videos of their speech and receiving feedback from their teachers and classmates. After using Flipgrid, participants reported their confidence in their English speaking abilities increased and their fear of making mistakes and negative evaluations diminished.

An important factor influencing FLA is the design and delivery of online language courses. For example, Coryell and Clark (2009) propose that anxiety can get worse when linguistic precision is overemphasized and authentic communication opportunities are limited. In addition, feedback, a key component of the learning process, also has profound implications for FLA in online settings (Martin & Valdivia, 2017). The level of FLA is one of the factors affecting students' beliefs on corrective feedback. While immediate corrective feedback can be valuable, it can intensify FLA if it is not delivered with sensitivity.

What is more, several studies have compared FLA levels in traditional and online learning environments. Pichette (2009) found no difference in FLA level of classroom-based students and online students. In contrast, Yaniafari and Rihardini (2021) asserted that students in online speaking class experienced less anxiety compared to those in traditional face-to-face classroom. They also suggest that the mode of instruction might not be the sole determinant of FLA. Factors such as linguistic similarities and the fear of negative evaluations also play significant roles in learners' FLA.

To sum up, it can be concluded that FLA does exist in online learning context. FLA often occurs in the beginning of an online course when students are unaccustomed to the new learning environment and procedures. Some studies report the decline in learners' FLA level after a period of learning online, which infers the possibility of online learning in reducing FLA. However, the literature still has notable gaps. The role of specific technological tools and virtual platform features and the influence of online teaching strategies to mitigate FLA in online settings need further investigation. As digital education continues to evolve, a deeper understanding of FLA in these contexts becomes essential. Hence, there is a necessary to conduct further detailed studies on these aspects.

2.3.9 Sources of FLA

FLA has been shown to have adverse effects on learners' attitudes towards foreign language learning and their learning achievement in the previous sections. Hence, it is not surprising that finding the sources of FLA has become an interest to a number of researchers in the field. There are a variety of reasons for FLA which have been found such as learner

perceptions (Shabani, 2012; Yan & Horwitz, 2008), fear of negative evaluation (Kitano, 2001; Mak, 2011; Tóth, 2010), fear of making mistakes (Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzaro, 2014; Goñi-Osácar & Lafuente-Millán, 2021; Liu & Jackson, 2008), perfectionism (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Price, 1991), learners' low level of proficiency in the target language including the lack of vocabulary and grammar and poor pronunciation (Alnahidh & Altalhab, 2020; Ewald, 2007; Gkonou, 2013; Goñi-Osácar & Lafuente-Millán, 2021; Kruk, 2018; Rafada & Madini, 2017), teacher influence (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Kim, 2009; Young, 1991), class atmosphere and class procedures (Gkonou, 2013; Von Worde, 2003; Woodrow, 2006).

Young (1991) proposes a comprehensive review of six sources that cause FLA: “1) personal and interpersonal anxieties; 2) learner beliefs about language learning; 3) instructor beliefs about language teaching; 4) instructor-learner interactions; 5) classroom procedures; and 6) language testing” (p.427). Young's classification of FLA sources seems to be organised and useful to follow. Each category in the list is discussed below.

First, personal and interpersonal anxieties are related to learners' low self-esteem and competitiveness. Learners with low self-esteem are always concerned about how their classmates judge their language ability and performance (Young, 1991). They are afraid that their peers will look down on them when they make a mistake in their language class (Liu & Jackson, 2008; Shabani, 2012; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). In other words, they are suffering FNE, which has a direct ratio with their level of FLA (Kitano, 2001). In addition, learners' competitiveness is also a common contribution to FLA. It makes learners underestimate their own language ability and

believe that other students' language skills are superior to theirs (Price, 1991; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). As a result, they start to doubt their ability and feel more and more anxious when they perceive that others perform better than they do. Moreover, since learners lack confidence in their ability, they feel nervous when facing a learning task that they consider impossible to complete (Gkonou, 2013). Hence, it can be said that learners' self-efficacy negatively affects their learning since it diverts learners from concentrating on how to complete the learning task to overly focusing on their own perceptions (Gregersen & Macintyre, 2014; Mak, 2011).

Second, learner beliefs about language learning also play a crucial role in their FLA (Luo, 2018; Price, 1991; Young, 1991). Foreign language learners have been reported to have unrealistic expectations about their learning. For instance, they desire to possess the accent of first language speakers or they have to speak the target language perfectly (Horwitz, 1988; Kitano, 2001; Young, 1991). Furthermore, learners believe that they must have good memory, language aptitude and the ability to imitate in order to be fluent in the target language (Yan & Horwitz, 2008). When learners are unable to achieve what they expect in their learning, they will feel frustrated and disappointed, resulting in their ability suspect (Ohata, 2005). In other words, "when beliefs and reality clash, anxiety results" (Young, 1991, pp.428).

Third, instructor beliefs about language teaching can provoke learners' FLA. Some teachers believe that their role in class is not a facilitator but a strict instructor who should dominate the class and correct every learner's mistakes (Young, 1991). However, teacher's domination in class turns out to demotivate learners' class participation and also frighten them (Awan et al.,

2010). Additionally, some instructors underestimate the importance of FLA and consider it a natural phenomenon in language learning (Tran et al., 2013b). They suppose that students should have an adequate anxiety level to focus on their study. Therefore, they try to keep a stringency with their students in class, which results in students' FLA (Briesmaster & Briesmaster-Paredes, 2015). This belief seems to go against students' perspective. Students only feel comfortable in class when their teacher is friendly, optimistic and humorous (Lee, 2010; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). It could be noted that instructor beliefs about language teaching is one of the factors deciding their ways of conducting their class, which may inadvertently create a stressful learning atmosphere to students (Briesmaster & Briesmaster-Paredes, 2015).

Fourth, instructor-learner interactions which are frequent activities in the language classroom may trigger FLA. One of the typical anxiety-provoking interactions is teacher's tough manner in giving feedback or correction to learners' mistakes, especially in oral performance (Gkonou, 2013; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Young, 1991). For example, if students are frequently interrupted for corrections regarding their accent during a conversation, or if they receive harsh feedback from the teacher, students' FLA will be increased since they feel like they are being humiliated in front of the class (Price, 1991; Tóth, 2011). Although mistake correction can cause students' learning anxiety, a majority of students still recognise the importance of their teacher's feedback in their learning progress (Zhang & Harimi, 2014). Therefore, it is the instructor's duty to take the timing, frequency, and most

importantly, the methods used in correcting errors into consideration (Young, 1991).

Fifth, a number of classroom procedures are believed to cause learners' FLA. Young (1991) lists five top anxiety-provoking class activities which are "oral presentations", "oral skits", "oral quizzes", speaking the learning language in a group and orally responding to the teacher without preparation (p.429). A lack of adequate preparation before a performance is associated with increased apprehension among learners (Subekti, 2019). Broadly, having to orally perform the target language in front of the class is the activity causing the most serious FLA to students (Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzaro, 2014; Liu, 2006; Miskam & Saidalvi, 2018; Woodrow, 2006; Young, 1991). Numerous students have admitted that they feel nervous when they are called on to answer a teacher's question unpredictably (Kim, 2009; Price, 1991; William & Andrade, 2008). In contrast, Von Worde (2003) claims that some students feel the anxiety being built up even when they know the next turn of speaking is theirs. This happens when the teacher calls students in the order of seating. In addition, students also experience FLA in the class which moves too fast and the teacher continues forward without caring whether students can keep up with the lesson (Von Worde, 2003). The feeling of being left behind is unpleasant and depressing, contributing to students' FLA (Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzaro, 2014; Khattak et al., 2011).

Sixth, the final potential source of FLA, according to Young (1991), is language testing. FLA appears when students encounter an unfamiliar test in which format and content are different from what students have learnt in their class (Huang & Hung, 2013; Young, 1991). This will lead to students'

frustration when doing the test and the anxiety about their performance. Moreover, any evaluation test which affects students' learning result or determines their learning progress could raise students' FLA level (Daly, 1991). Test anxiety may also arise from students' negative experience with exams in the past (Wang, 2005). This may lead them to a demand to perform better in the upcoming tests, which sometimes is unrealistic for their real ability. Consequently, they will feel worried and irritated when facing the tests or getting poor test results (Horwitz et al., 1986). In this case, students experience anxiety due to how they perceive tests, not necessarily because of the tests themselves, which in turn makes the testing situation extremely stressful for them (Gkonou, 2013).

Overall, from the above studies, it can be concluded that FLA can stem from various sources. These sources can be linked together in different learning situations and contexts. While linguistic problems such as grammar and vocabulary are mentioned broadly as a source of FLA, the detailed struggles of students, especially when confronted with complex topics, do not seem to be thoroughly explored in the existing studies. Also, the literature does acknowledge the psychological impact, such as lack of confidence and fear of negative evaluation, but a detailed exploration of how these elements associate with peer comparison and feelings of inferiority seems missing. Moreover, the selection and relevance of lesson topics are areas that seem to be under researched in the existing literature. He's study (2013) is the rare one claiming the unfamiliar topics as a factor intensifying students' foreign language speaking anxiety. It is fundamental that teachers should select lesson topics that are relevant to students' interests and majors in order to

boost their learning motivation and task engagement (Alnahidh & Altalhab, 2020; Banegas, 2013; Yeşilçınar & Erdemir, 2022). Despite this, existing studies do not seem to take into account the impact of topics' nature on students' anxiety, whether they are practical, unfamiliar, or overly abstract.

Another aspect that appears to be underexplored in the current literature is the role of teachers and classroom factors in causing anxiety. While the impact of teacher-student interaction is acknowledged, there seems to be insufficient focus on how the operational aspects of teaching, classroom management, clarity of instructions, and the pace of the lessons affect students' anxiety. There is also a lack of discussion on preparation time allocation and how it affects students' feelings of anxiety during oral tasks.

In sum, to form a thorough understanding of FLA and to develop effective strategies for alleviating anxiety in language learning settings, it is important to investigate the factors that contribute to students' FLA more in-depth. Along with the thorough understanding of FLA sources, knowledge of effective solutions to FLA may support teachers in helping their students overcome FLA and improve their language learning performance. The next section will discuss the solutions to reduce FLA in foreign language learning.

2.3.10 Reducing FLA in foreign language learning context

Although there have been new and advanced teaching methodology and strategies introduced to reduce FLA, FLA still exists (e.g., Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzardo, 2014; Awan et al., 2010; Liu, 2006; Luo, 2018; Tran et al., 2013a; Wardhani et al., 2019; Yaniafari & Rihardini, 2021; Yeşilçınar & Erdemir, 2022).

Many studies on FLA consider teachers the most important factor responsible for reducing students' FLA (e.g., Mak 2011; Price 1991; Woodrow

2006; Young 1991). First of all, teachers should be aware of the existence of FLA and its negative effects on learners' learning process and performance (Hashemi, 2011). Teachers should also get to know learner perceptions about language learning and their learning difficulties by holding personal or group meetings with students (Luo, 2018). From these discussions with students, teachers can adjust their behaviour or teaching methods to help alleviate their students' FLA (Al-Saraj, 2014). In addition, teachers should clearly understand their role in class as facilitators, with learners positioned as the true centre of the class (Young, 1991). Hence, teachers should try to create a relaxing and encouraging learning atmosphere where both teachers and students appreciate each other (Ewald, 2007; Galante, 2018; Tran et al., 2013b; Young, 1999).

However, while it is imperative that teachers are aware of FLA, it can be challenging for them to understand how FLA manifests itself in culturally diverse classrooms. When students are hesitant to share their struggles because of cultural influences or fear of judgment, it can be difficult to accurately assess learners' perceptions and difficulties. Furthermore, some factors such as large class sizes, diverse student needs, and institutional policies may limit the ability to adapt teaching behaviours and strategies. It may also not be feasible for teachers in traditional, teacher-led educational systems or within fixed curriculum frameworks to transition to a facilitator role, even though it is ideal. Therefore, while teachers play a vital role in reducing FLA, the complexities and practical limitations they may face in different educational contexts must be taken into consideration in order to develop a more sophisticated approach which can address FLA in language learning.

Since learner beliefs make an important contribution to their FLA (Luo, 2018; Ohata, 2005; Price, 1991; Yan & Horwitz, 2008; Young, 1991), it is necessary for teachers to find effective teaching strategies to alter learner beliefs to optimistic directions (Lou, 2018). More specifically, teachers should explain the role and effects of FLA to students so that they know FLA is a common and unavoidable experience in class. Thus, students should accept FLA and get ready to cope with it (Hashemi, 2011; Phillips, 1992; Tran & Moni, 2015). Moreover, teachers should help students to identify achievable expectations instead of unrealistic ones (Horwitz, 2008). It is also teachers' task to ensure students that mistakes are a vital part of learning process and there is no need to worry about making errors (Hashemi, 2011; Young, 1990). The way teachers give feedback and correct learners' mistakes should be carefully taken into consideration as well. Teachers should deal with students' mistakes gently and avoid the overcorrection (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Lee, 2010; Phillips, 1999).

It is suggested that teachers should arrange students to work with other classmates in pairs or small groups because giving an oral presentation or speaking in the target language in front of the class always provokes high level of anxiety in students (Bao & Du, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Subekti, 2020; Wang, 2018). Pair work and group work seem to bring learners the most relaxing feeling (Liu, 2006; Nagahashi, 2007; Woodrow, 2006). Furthermore, Horwitz et al. (1986) reports that if students have sufficient time to prepare their performance in advance, they will not feel anxious when speaking the target language. In other words, learners' FLA can be reduced when they have more opportunities to practise or rehearse oral language in advance (Liu 2006;

Subekti, 2020; Willis, 2012). This preparation time is not for students to learn their talk by heart, but to create the structure of their discussion and practise it in a more natural, unrehearsed, and spontaneous way (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014).

When it comes to online contexts, OLL can possibly offer a more comfortable and calming environment for students than traditional classrooms (Yaniafari & Rihardini, 2021). Coverdale-Jones (2000) and Coryell & Clark (2009) believe that online tools, like emails, chat rooms, and video conferences can foster more friendly interactions. Especially, it has been discovered that chatting can assist shy students in engaging in discussions more actively (Bruce & Stakounis, 2021). Since these online interactions are less formal than face-to-face classroom settings, students' FLA can potentially be reduced in the online environment (Hashemi & Abbasi, 2013; Kruk, 2018). Furthermore, thanks to archive tools of online platforms, teachers can review the lesson and assess their students' performance after the class (Meskill & Anthony, 2015). By analysing what has happened in class via videorecording, teachers can evaluate the classroom atmosphere and identify what they should do or change in their teaching methods as well as their attitudes to create a more relaxed learning environment (Matsuda & Gobel, 2004).

Nonetheless, the OLL context is not without its challenges. While platforms offer tools that allow teachers to review lessons (Meskill & Anthony, 2015), this continuous control might unconsciously heighten students' feelings of being under scrutiny. Hurd (2007) presented a contrast in student experiences with OLL. On the one hand, some students appreciated the privacy and individual attention of one-to-one online sessions, they found relief

in the absence of peer pressure and potential criticism. On the other hand, there were students who felt even more anxious when learning English alone online. They missed the opportunity to evaluate their skills against their peers, which is an important factor to determine if their English has improved or if they needed to make more efforts. Additionally, they experienced a sense of isolation as they could only practise English with the tutor. Hence, it would be better for learners to collaborate with their classmates than studying alone in this context (Salmon, 2002).

In conclusion, it can be noted that online learning can possibly help alleviate students' FLA. If the aforementioned solutions to FLA reduction in the traditional classroom can be used in conjunction with online platforms, it may create an efficient approach to conquer FLA. Yet, so far, few studies have explored the potential impact of the online learning environment on diminishing students' FLA. Furthermore, a gap exists in the learning context of Vietnam, where no empirical studies exploring strategies for Vietnamese teachers and learners to overcome FLA could be found. With the potential of OLL in reducing students' FLA and the existing gap in the research literature, I have considered to go further in this issue and look for a suitable effective teaching and learning method to help Vietnamese students tackle FLA. One of the proposed solutions for the aforementioned issue is an implementation of task-based language teaching approach in an online learning environment. The reasons for this choice will be discussed in the next section.

2.4 Task-based language teaching (TBLT)

2.4.1 Introduction of task-based language teaching

2.4.1.1 Definition of task-based language teaching

Over the last three decades, task-based language teaching (TBLT) has gained significant interest among language educators, with numerous research efforts exploring its various aspects (e.g., Dinh, 2022; Duong & Nguyen, 2021; Ellis, 2003; Ellis, 2017; Lai & Li, 2011; Nunan, 2004; Willis & Willis, 2007). This method prioritises the process of teaching and positions communicative language teaching as the foundational aspect in curriculum development and teaching goals (Littlewood, 2004; Nunan, 2004). TBLT is defined as a pedagogical approach in which second language learners have to solve tasks by using the target language (Mustafa, 2012). TBLT prioritises meaning over form, highlighting the practical use of the target language (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Van den Branden et al., 2009).

In TBLT, the "task" is the central element that fosters interaction and emphasizes the learner-centred and experiential approach by requiring students to interact with others to process input and generate output towards a defined goal (East, 2021). Tasks in TBLT approach are related to learners' needs in communicating in real life situations such as opinion-sharing, decision-making and problem-solving (Wesche & Skehan, 2002; Willis & Willis, 2007). In addition, from a task-based learning perspective, individuals learn a language not just for its functional application, but also through actively using it (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Van den Branden, 2006). Therefore, to improve students' linguistic understanding, educators should present them with

practical tasks. These tasks should motivate students to build and assimilate knowledge through active engagement (Van den Branden et al., 2009).

2.4.1.2 Task-based language teaching models

Although the foundational principles of TBLT are consistent, which prioritises meaning over form and promotes authentic language use, there are various ways to conceptualise and implement this approach. Three frameworks that have significantly influenced the TBLT field are those proposed by Willis (1996, 2012), Ellis (2003), and Nunan (2004). Each of these frameworks offers unique perspectives and methodologies that serve different teaching contexts and learner needs.

Willis (1996, 2012) presents a TBLT model that is structured into three distinct phases. The Pre-task phase introduces the topic, provides task samples and highlights relevant language functions to students. The Task Cycle phase involves students working in pairs or groups to complete tasks, with teacher support if needed. They then prepare and report their findings or outcomes of their discussions to the entire class. Finally, in the Language Focus phase, students and the teacher analyse language from the tasks and conclude with a practice of forms used during the tasks. The specifics of each phase in the framework are presented in the figure below.

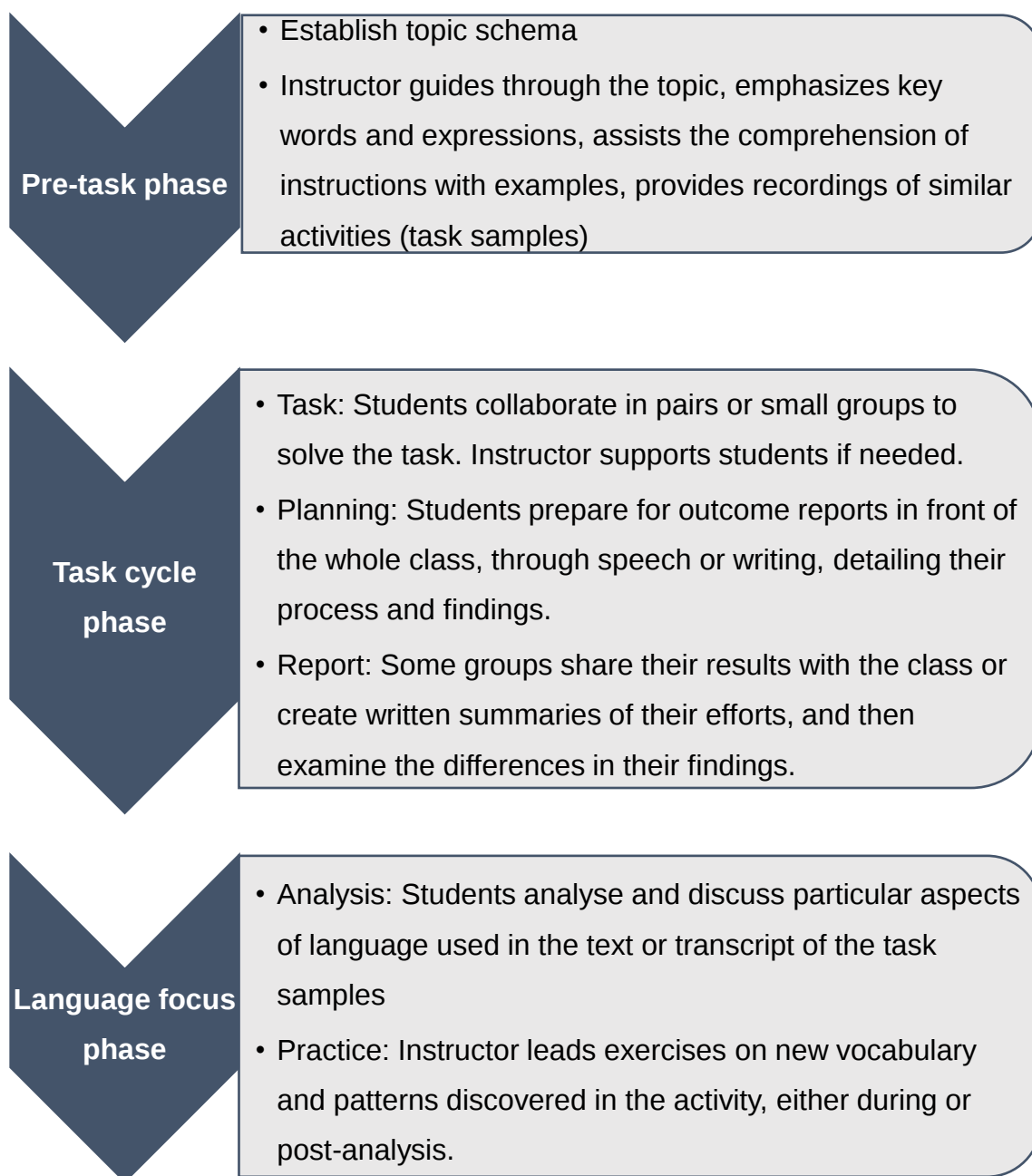


Figure 2.1

TBLT framework based on Willis's model (1996, p.38)

Ellis (2003) offers a TBLT approach that both retains the phases presented in Willis' model and introduces a factor of flexibility. The language focus phase in Ellis' model is adaptable and can be included at any stage of the teaching process. This flexibility is the distinct characteristic of Ellis' approach. It provides teachers the freedom to introduce a linguistic focus

whenever they think it most effective, rather than being bound to a specific phase.

Nunan's TBLT model (2004) is more intricate compared to the other two, offering a multi-step approach to language teaching. It begins with a foundational context establishment for the tasks by building schemata. This is followed by controlled practice, offering students structured practice opportunities. The next phase, authentic listening practice, exposes students to authentic, real-world language usage. Then the focus shifts to specific linguistic elements and directs students' attention to particular components of the language. This structured approach then gives way to freer practice, where students are granted more autonomy in their practice sessions. The last step of Nunan's approach is the introduction of pedagogical task in which students undertake a comprehensive task, integrating and applying all of what they have learned. Nunan's approach features for its comprehensiveness since it ensures students to be exposed to a broad spectrum of activities. Hence, students' learning experience can be broadened.

When exploring these frameworks in depth, it is evident that TBLT involves a variety of methodologies rather than a singular approach. Each method has its own advantages and strategies. The decision to adopt a specific framework is influenced by the curriculum's aims, the students' needs, and the context of the educational setting (Baralt & Gómez, 2017). The next section will discuss the application of TBLT approach in reducing FLA and identify which TBLT model is considered helpful in addressing FLA.

2.4.2 Application of the task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach in reducing FLA

Regarding advantages of TBLT in foreign language teaching, this approach stands as a promising strategy to alleviate students' anxiety through a combination of features. TBLT can foster a secure environment where students can collaboratively engage in problem-solving activities and learn from their peers (Jones, 2007). This method, which often involves pair or group work, tends to create a relaxing and comfortable learning atmosphere, potentially reducing students' anxiety (Bao & Du, 2015; Liu, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Subekti, 2020). Working with peers within a TBLT lesson has also been found to enhance students' self-esteem which is a critical factor in causing FLA (Alnahidh & Altalhab, 2022), since it enables them to overcome their shyness, enhancing their optimistic feeling and confidence in their oral abilities (Scolaro, 2021). The increased self-esteem along with the responsibility students take while doing a task autonomously, which is due to the teacher not always being immediately available, encourage them to take risks in second language acquisition (Leaver & Kaplan, 2004; Prasad Bhandari, 2020). However, it is important to acknowledge that while the incorporation of pair or group work within this framework can contribute to a more relaxed learning atmosphere, it is not the sole factor in reducing anxiety. The anxiety-alleviating effects of TBLT are attributed to its comprehensive approach and the ability to create a meaningful context for communication, which goes beyond just group work, as other teaching methods do (Prasad Bhandari, 2020).

Moreover, Boonkit (2010) suggests that TBLT pedagogy improves students' vocabulary in use by providing opportunities for participants to express their thoughts in various settings. This practice subsequently boosts students' confidence and reduces their FLA. The approach also allows students to have some preparation time before speaking publicly, which will help them in improving their foreign language fluency and complexity (Willis & Willis, 2007). The fluency in public speech can, in turn, increase students' confidence in speaking the target language (William & Andrade, 2008). Also, TBLT is found to be able to significantly enhance oral communication skills if tasks simulating real-life situations are assigned (Jauregi et.al, 2011). All of these numerous benefits of TBLT make it attractive to communicative foreign language teaching in many non-English speaking countries (Baralt & Gomez, 2017; Lai et al., 2011). However, it is worth noting that students who are more reserved or afraid of making mistakes might hesitate to engage in communicative tasks (Liu, 2006; Nguyen, Warren & Fehring, 2014; Vallance, 2008). This issue can be diminished by the careful selection of tasks that encourage students to participate (Bailey, 2005; Patil, 2008).

Nevertheless, the studies cited above predominantly focus on the benefits of TBLT in traditional classroom settings only. The implementation of TBLT in online learning environment and its effect on assisting learners to overcome FLA in foreign language classes seem to be still a developing area of interest. The majority of existing research in the online sphere primarily explore students' reactions after their participation in online TBLT courses. Findings from studies by Hampel and Hauck (2004), Hampel (2006), and Lai et al. (2011) indicate a general satisfaction and positive learning outcomes

amongst participants in online TBLT courses. Additionally, there are some studies proposing frameworks for online TBLT instruction and examining potential challenges for educators (Baralt & Gomez, 2017; Gleason, 2013; Mustafa, 2012). These studies feature the multifaceted role of teachers in online TBLT settings, necessitating simultaneous engagement with multiple groups or individuals. Despite the lack of direct evidence regarding the role of online TBLT in reducing foreign language communication anxiety, the positive outcomes noted in these studies suggest the potential benefits of TBLT in reshaping students' attitudes towards learning the target language in the online learning context. The feasibility and effect of TBLT, along with its relationship with online settings and FLA reduction deserve more attention.

Of all the various TBLT models, Willis' TBLT framework has attracted considerable focus from researchers as a method for addressing FLA. Its structured progression, from the Pre-task phase to the Language Focus phase, essentially promotes a safer learning environment, a factor considered as crucial for addressing FLA (Liu, 2006; Subekti, 2020; Wang, 2018). The Pre-task phase is essential in alleviating anxiety because it provides students with a foundational understanding of the topic and preparation. It enables them to approach subsequent tasks with increased confidence and readiness (Kawashima, 2019). The Task Cycle phase, where students do a task either in pairs or groups with teacher's assistance, creates a supportive learning environment, which is essential in reducing anxiety (Nagahashi, 2007; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). The opportunity for planning and practising before reporting the task results to the whole class also allows students to gain confidence in speaking the target language, further reducing their anxiety

levels (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Liu, 2006). The Language Focus phase draws learners' attention to language structures or grammar at the end of the lesson. This phase offers learners an activity concentrated on accuracy, following the fluency-driven tasks in the earlier reporting stage (J. Willis, 1996). Initiating this stage with teacher encouragement and praise aims can alleviate learner anxiety (Tran & Moni, 2015). In addition, although Willis' model puts an emphasis on prioritising meaning over form, it does not entirely dismiss the importance of form in TBLT. Instead of focusing solely on specific language structures, it prioritises a comprehensive language experience. Working in small groups is also advantageous in online settings where technical challenges may hinder the smooth progression of whole-class activities (Agung et al., 2020). Lastly, encouraging students to progress at their own pace before concluding the lesson can help reduce anxiety stemming from peer comparisons, especially if students feel they are falling behind their peers (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Koga, 2010). Thus, Willis's model with its clarity and structured phases creates a supportive and predictable learning environment, which may help reducing FLA and boosting confidence among students.

In terms of research related to Vietnamese learners, it is difficult to find any study using TBLT in online learning with the specific goal to reduce students' English speaking anxiety. The current teaching methods in Vietnam do not seem to be effective in enabling the students to overcome their anxiety and be more confident in English communication ("Vietnam: Foreign Language Project," 2016). Thus, it is necessary to carry out research on applying TBLT in language online courses to examine whether this teaching approach along

with online learning environment can reduce Vietnamese students' anxiety in English language classes.

In conclusion, TBLT seems to be a fitting teaching strategy for this research, especially when considering the study's focus on EOCA. Its characteristic in promoting oral communication offers students a number of opportunities to actively engage in the target language. Moreover, the content of TBLT lessons often replicates authentic communication contexts, such as expressing viewpoints, event planning, decision-making, and problem-solving. It ensures that students are not just practising English in a classroom setting but are using it for genuine and practical purposes. Through this learning method, students can naturally integrate language knowledge and boost their confidence. Furthermore, TBLT can foster a secure and welcoming learning atmosphere, aligning with the primary objective of the online course to diminish students' EOCA. Nevertheless, the use of TBLT to tackle EOCA in online contexts, particularly for Vietnamese students, is still underexplored. Therefore, there should be further research on the effectiveness of implementing the TBLT approach in online learning to lower learners' anxiety in English language classes. This study aims to fill this research gap by offering insights into the potential of TBLT in enhancing Vietnamese students' confidence and reducing their English speaking anxiety.

2.5 Chapter summary and literature review gaps

Chapter 2 has provided a comprehensive literature review focusing on English oral communication (EOC) in non-English speaking countries, the importance of EOC skill development, foreign language anxiety (FLA) and the specific aspect of FLA, English oral communication anxiety (EOCA),

experienced by foreign language learners, and the application of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in online learning context as a potential strategy to reduce FLA.

The review highlighted the significance of EOC skill development in non-English speaking countries and emphasized the challenges learners face in acquiring these skills. It also discussed the importance of addressing these challenges and exploring effective strategies to enhance learners' EOC competence. Subsequently, the literature review of online language learning identified both its benefits and challenges, revealing substantial gaps in improving EOC skills, particularly in non-English speaking countries such as Vietnam. Research often focuses on the development of writing skills by means of online platforms but overlooks how to improve oral proficiency in synchronous settings and the challenges involved. In addition, there is a need for more focused research on online language education due to the worldwide transition to online learning after the Covid-19 pandemic. In Vietnam, where the use of technological integration and online platforms in education is still a developing phenomenon, innovative teaching strategies and more detailed studies on this setting are urgently needed.

FLA, especially in the context of EOC, was discussed extensively, with a focus on its definition, influential elements, measurement instruments, and its impact on foreign language achievement and oral performance. The negative relationship between oral communication anxiety and oral performance, both in traditional classrooms and online language learning environments were revealed. The literature review also discussed the sources of FLA and presented potential solutions for reducing it in foreign language

learning contexts. It highlighted the role of teachers in creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment as well as changing learners' belief on their language proficiency and personal anxiety. Instructor-student interactions and classroom procedures are also the primary causes of FLA, especially in foreign language speaking classes.

Finally, this literature review discussed the TBLT approach, its models and its potential as a teaching strategy to reduce anxiety and enhance confidence, particularly in traditional classroom settings. However, the review found a lack of research on the application of TBLT in online learning environments and its potential to alleviate FLA, especially in non-English speaking countries like Vietnam. This gap emphasized the need for the future research to investigate the effectiveness of TBLT in online environments and its potential to address FLA amongst learners in such context. The next chapter will present the methodology and research design for addressing these issues.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main goal of this chapter is to discuss the overall research approaches and methods of this study. To make it easy for readers to follow, the study aims and research questions are repeated at the beginning of the chapter. Then the research philosophical stance and rationale for research approaches are presented, followed with a detailed explanation of the research sample and data collection methods and procedure. The following section describes the data analysis. Issues related to ethics and reflexivity are also discussed at the end of this chapter.

3.2 Research aims and research questions

This study focused on exploring an aspect of foreign language anxiety (FLA), namely English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) as experienced by Vietnamese university students in English language classes. Determining the factors that contribute to EOCA was also a primary aim. In addition, this study endeavoured to evaluate the effectiveness of an online course using a task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach in reducing EOCA. It also aimed to identify the specific factors within the online TBLT course that contributed to the reduction of EOCA.

The aims were achieved by addressing the following objectives:

- To examine and measure the students' EOCA in English language classes
- To investigate factors contributing to EOCA

- To design and evaluate the effectiveness of an online intervention based on a TBLT approach in reducing the students' EOCA in English language classes
- To explore which factors within the online TBLT course help reduce students' EOCA

To achieve the above aims and objectives, four research questions which were also used as reference points for the framework of the study were formulated:

1. To what extent do a small sample of Vietnamese learners of English (n = 166) experience anxiety when communicating orally in English language classes (EOCA)?
2. What are the underlying factors contributing to EOCA among students in English language classes?
3. Is an extracurricular online TBLT course effective in reducing the students' EOCA level?
4. If so, what factors of such an online TBLT course might help reduce students' EOCA?

To answer the above research questions, a mixed methods approach was employed. A detailed justification of the research methodology and methods choice will be discussed in the next sections.

3.3 Rationale for research paradigm and approach

3.3.1 Research philosophical stance of this study

To make an appropriate choice on which research methods to use for a study, a researcher should start with understanding his or her philosophical worldviews since they act as a guide to research design and research methods

(Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). The term “worldviews” is also referred to as “paradigms” (Riazi, 2017) or “perspectives” (Shannon-Baker, 2016). Three of the widely discussed paradigms or worldviews in research literature are positivism, constructivism, and pragmatism. Involved in these paradigms are beliefs about

“the nature of reality and the research problem (ontology), and the relationship between the researcher and the researched of beliefs about the nature of knowledge (epistemology), the systematic procedures of data collection and analysis (methodology), and the role and place of values in the research process (axiology)” (Riazi, 2017, p.32).

Stemming from these beliefs, epistemology and ontology are the broadest philosophical assumptions which form the foundations of any study (Grix, 2010). Ontological and epistemological assumptions cannot be separated since the issues related to these beliefs are likely to emerge together (Crotty, 1998). The explanation of the current research paradigm (or framework) will be discussed ontologically and epistemologically.

When it comes to the three overarching paradigms mentioned above, positivism and constructivism represent opposite worldviews on reality while pragmatism is considered an option for abandoning the contradiction between the first two perspectives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). More specifically, positivism aims to describe an objective reality that is commonly agreed, by trying to quantitatively establish cause-and-effect relationships (Lodico et al., 2010). Positivists hold the view that there is an absolute truth and argue that fixed laws of cause and effect manage how the world works (Cresswell &

Cresswell, 2018; Muijs, 2011). They also view reality as singular, value-free and independent from the researched (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008).

In contrast, constructivism attempts to describe multiple realities based on the situational and personal context of each participant using qualitative methods (Lodico et al., 2010). Constructivists believe that knowledge is formed through individuals' viewpoints and interpretations based on their personal experiences (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Therefore, they deny the positivist view of a single reality and assert that an analysis free from subjective values or objectivity is unattainable (Grix, 2010).

Unlike positivism and constructivism, pragmatism primarily focuses on the methods effective in a given context, meaning those that help to achieve solutions for a specific problem (Lodico et al., 2010). Diverse viewpoints about reality are the ontological characteristic of pragmatism (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). In other words, reality is viewed as neither singular nor multiple but both (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Regarding the epistemological stance, pragmatists deny the dichotomy between subjectivity and objectivity (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). They believe that in one situation, the researcher needs to closely interact with the participants to get an adequate answer for a research question. In another circumstance, a hypothesis prediction can be validated using quantitative methods without an in depth interaction with the participants, such as a large-scale survey (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008).

Since the most important matter to pragmatic researchers is not the abstract philosophy but the effective solutions for a research problem, they focus on the importance of the research questions (Riazi & Candlin, 2014). They claim that research questions are the crucial factor determining the

research approaches and methods. Thus, pragmatists often focus on forming research questions first; then they attempt to define suitable approaches and methods to solve the problems. They prefer employing both qualitative and quantitative in the same project to gain a thorough understanding of the problem researched.

In short, it can be stated that pragmatists can have different perspectives and assumptions on a phenomenon. Therefore, they can use multiple distinct methods to collect different forms of data as long as they achieve the best and meaningful answers for their research problems (Cohen et al., 2018; Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

For this project, I took a pragmatic stance. I chose not to define reality as singular or multiple but both and took the most suitable methods to wholly examine the research questions of my study. The data collected was analysed statistically and qualitatively. The findings from both analyses were integrated to form meaningful answers to the research questions. The reasons why I decided to be a pragmatist in this project are presented below.

A foreign language classroom is not only a physical place where the teacher delivers a lesson and every student acquires the knowledge as taught. It is also a setting where each student experiences in a distinct way and is influenced by both external (e.g., tasks and physical space) and internal factors (e.g., anxiety, culture and personality) (Mahmoudi & Mahmoudi, 2015). Even though these factors may influence learners differently, the underlying causes exist in the real world and can be generalised (Bryman et al., 2022).

Wellington (2015) and Grix (2010) suggest that reality is subjective concept, shaped by the social interactions of individuals. Individuals interpret

the world around them based on their perspectives, and this understanding is influenced by their cultural and social backgrounds, the time they live in, and the environment they inhabit (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Therefore, I believe that individuals can have different viewpoints on a phenomenon based on how they believe and understand the world. The main focus of my research was students' English oral communication anxiety, its contributors, and the effectiveness of the TBLT online course in reducing the students' EOCA. These aspects are closely related to each participant's own experience and perception. Although language learners may have similar experiences with learning a target language since they are under the same study condition, what they think and perceive about an issue like language anxiety may not be the same. They may have different degrees of tolerance towards EOCA in the English language classroom and how they respond to an anxiety-provoking situation in classroom may not be the same. Hence, EOCA and the effectiveness of the TBLT course on students' EOCA could be investigated by interpreting each participant's perception and feelings through the close interactions between me and my students.

Nevertheless, the participants may not always be completely open about their true feelings. They may hide some personal insecurity if they are shy to talk about a sensitive topic, like EOCA. I believe a less personal feedback media such as a survey can improve objectivity on an individual level since questionnaires can be provided anonymously, and such confidentiality often motivates participants to answer honestly (Patten, 2017). Furthermore, no one can be trusted to be perfectly objective about oneself and it is very likely some aspects may still be over or underestimated on an individual basis. Thus,

it is important to use a consistent method to quantify their level of anxiety as an individual and as a group as well. A more quantitative measurement of anxiety levels can not only better define the presence of EOCA at the beginning and the end of the proposed intervention, but also allows monitoring changes throughout the stages of it. The objective numerical analysis of quantitative data can also highlight any bias or dissonance with the qualitative analysis. Thus, the reliability of the research can be improved.

Following Cohen et al (2018), I also believe that reality is not a constant but continually change to adapt to a new situation. An online learning context was considered a new learning environment to my participants since at the time of this study being conducted (pre-pandemic), they had not had any experience with online learning before. Thus, they might have to adjust their behaviours in order to be adaptable to this new circumstance. Some features of the new learning context might lead to a change in the students' perception on EOCA and their anxiety level.

With my viewpoints described above, I believed pragmatism was an appropriate and feasible philosophical stance for me to establish the methodological foundation of my research. In the next section, I will discuss the research approach of my study.

3.3.2 Research approach - Mixed methods

As discussed in the previous section, pragmatism was considered well-suited for establishing the methodological foundation of this study. Different research methods could be used depending on what works. The paradigm allowed me to explore the phenomena using a mixed method approach, consisting of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative research

effectively gains specific information about the values, behaviours, opinions of particular individuals or populations and gives an in-depth description or explanation about the topic investigated through word data (Dornyei, 2007). Meanwhile, the quantitative approach quantifies attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables to explain a phenomenon via numerical data (Muijs, 2011). A quantitative approach gives researchers an opportunity to collect data from a large sample size at the same time and gain the overall understanding of that population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

I adopted mixed methods because I agreed with Denscombe's (2014, p. 158) statement: "there is no single, best 'scientific' method that can lead the way to indisputable knowledge." In some cases, it might be useful for a researcher to approach a problem from different angles and try to form a theory based on what they obtain from various sources of data. The research topics of the current study were related to human behaviour and perception, which was complex and distinct among individuals. I believed that a better understanding on the complicated multifaceted issues like oral English communication anxiety in a new learning context like online learning could be obtained from more than one research method.

In the field of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), the majority of studies have used quantitative methods to examine several aspects related to FLA or speaking anxiety in a specific population. Their research objectives were to identify the relationships amongst FLA, participants' perceptions and beliefs, as well as teaching and learning strategies. (e.g., Al-Saraj, 2014; Lee, 2010; Mak, 2011; Martin & Alvarez Valdivia, 2017; Toghraee & Shahrokhi, 2014; Yang, 2012; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). The primary data collection method

utilised in all these studies was questionnaires. Specifically, either the original FLCAS or a modified version of it was used in conjunction with other surveys such as the Beliefs about Foreign Language Inventory questionnaire (Toghraee & Shahrokhi, 2014), the Corrective Feedback Belief Scale (Martin & Alvarez Valdivia, 2017; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014), and self-report questionnaires (Lee, 2010; Yang, 2012). According to these studies, the limitation of relying solely on questionnaires to gather data was the difficulty in obtaining and exploring participants' perceptions of FLA and the roles of FLA in language learning in depth. They all stated that it would be beneficial for future research to complement the use of questionnaires with structured observations, interviews, in-person interactions, and oral interactions recordings in order to gain more nuanced understandings of participants' perceptions and beliefs. Valuable insights into how FLA was created and sustained in the classroom setting could be explored thoroughly with the qualitative methods as well.

The use of qualitative or mixed methods has also been proposed in order to validate and provide stronger support for the statistical findings. Yan & Horwitz (2008) used semi-structured interviews to support earlier quantitative studies that demonstrated a negative association between anxiety and second language attainment. This research along with few more studies (e.g., Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Wardhani et al. (2019), Coryell & Clark, 2009) were rare cases that employed only qualitative methods to investigate the FLA matter. In these studies, semi-structured interviews and/or observations were applied to explore how language learners perceived the sources and effects of anxiety in their language learning and what helped them

overcome their anxiety. However, it was suggested that future studies should provide more evidence and valid findings using diverse research approaches because FLA was a complicated and intricate issue that required investigation from various perspectives.

When it comes to mixed methods, they have been a useful research approach for studying FLA for over twenty years (e.g., Hurd, 2007; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013; Sadeghi et al., 2013; Tran & Moni, 2015; Ushida, 2005; Woodrow, 2006; Yeşilçınar & Erdemir, 2022). These studies combined FLCAS or other types of questionnaire with interviews and class observations in order to gain a broad and in-depth understandings on FLA. By utilising mixed methods, researchers were able to gather, examine, and blend both quantitative and qualitative data at some point during their investigation, which provided a more comprehensive perspective of the research problem. Nevertheless, most of the studies mentioned above were carried out in traditional classroom settings. Only few were implemented in online learning context with the primary topic of general FLA (Coryell & Clark, 2009; Hurd, 2007; Ushida, 2005). Therefore, the current study combined both quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a thorough understanding of oral communication anxiety, a specific aspect of FLA, in online learning environment.

Additionally, different research questions need to be answered using suitable research methods (Walliman, 2016). Mixed methods seem to be considered more appropriate than either qualitative or quantitative in some studies because they can “provide answers to both “what” and “why” questions” (Ivankova & Cresswell, 2009, p.145). By integrating the two research

approaches, researchers can gain a more thorough understanding of the research problem than use either qualitative or quantitative (Dornyei, 2007).

Mixed methods were selected to be the key approach for this study since they could give detailed answers to the research questions and aims of the study. When using mixed methods, the possible weaknesses of each research method might be compensated for by the strengths of the others since each research tool has its own strengths and drawbacks (Dornyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2016).

A quantitative approach was utilised to measure the participants' EOCA level and their potential changes during the course based on empirical data collected from questionnaires. This method can efficiently obtain empirical data from a large sample size ($n = 166$ for the present study), offering an overall understanding and generalising ability of the population. However, there is a lack of phenomenon insights from individual's viewpoints when using this approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

This is where the qualitative methods, particularly interviews, played a fundamental role. The qualitative approach was employed to describe and analyse participants' EOCA and their opinions about the online TBLT course via data gathered from interviews. These qualitative methods provided a rich, contextual understanding of the phenomenon, an aspect that purely quantitative methods might overlook. However, since the number of interviewees in the present study were small ($n = 10$), the ability to generalise the result related to EOCA experienced by the students was limited (Cohen et al., 2018).

By integrating these methods, the study aimed to create a balanced and comprehensive investigation. The quantitative data from questionnaires could be contextualised and enriched through the qualitative data from interviews. Also, the questionnaire results could be compared and confirmed via interviews and vice versa. This mix allowed for a more complete understanding of EOCA in the online TBLT course and ensured that the findings were both broadly representative and deeply insightful. Thus, by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in this study, I aimed to reinforce the research findings and contribute a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomenon of oral communication anxiety, particularly in the context of an online TBLT course.

3.4 Research design

3.4.1 Quasi-experimental design within a mixed-method approach

In a mixed method approach, there are various research designs and each study will have its own design, based on what need to be done to answer the research questions (Cohen et al., 2018). As discussed above, my philosophical stance was pragmatism (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Riazi & Candlin, 2014), which meant I focused on what worked to seek for substantial and meaningful findings. To answer the research questions, qualitative and quantitative instruments were used concurrently. In this case, the triangulation design was applied. This design is used when a research question requires both quantitative and qualitative methods for a thoroughly validated answer (Ivankova & Cresswell, 2009). A rationale for adopting research methods will be discussed in later sections. The findings from both types of data collection

were compared and integrated to provide comprehensive results for the research questions.

In line with this research approach, a quasi-experimental design (Cohen et al., 2018) was adopted as the primary methodological approach to investigate a causal relationship between the online task-based language teaching (TBLT) intervention and the reduction of English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) in Vietnamese university learners. The design involved manipulating the independent variable (IV), which was the online TBLT intervention, with the experimental group receiving the treatment, i.e. participating in the online TBLT course, and the control group not receiving the treatment (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018). The dependent variable was the levels of EOCA, which was defined based on the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) ratings (Horwitz et al., 1986). With the focus on manipulating the independent variable, this design offered an efficient framework for assessing the effectiveness of the online TBLT intervention (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). It provided greater confidence in attributing any changes in students' EOCA levels to the intervention itself, rather than to extraneous factors (ibid.)

Based on the research questions, the study was separated into two interconnected components, each of which focused on different aspects of English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) amongst Vietnamese learners. In the first component, namely Study 1, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986) and the Trait Anxiety (T-Anxiety) Scale from The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (Spielberger et al., 1983) were employed to assess the levels and contributing factors of EOCA. This part of

the study involved 166 students who completed the Study 1 questionnaire, supplemented by thematic analysis of interviews with a subset of the participants who participated in an online task-based language teaching (TBLT) course in Study 2 (i.e., online course group). The second component, namely Study 2, focused on the online TBLT course. The course's effectiveness in reducing EOCA was assessed through pre-course (i.e., Study 1 questionnaire), post-course, and 2-month follow-up FLCAS evaluations amongst 20 students, divided into an online course group and a non-TBLT comparison group. Additionally, post-course interviews with the participants of the TBLT course were conducted to identify the key factors that influenced changes in their EOCA levels. Although each study was different in its methodology and focus, they both contributed to a comprehensive understanding of EOCA and its reduction via an online TBLT course in the context of English language learning amongst Vietnamese students.

Due to practical constraints and ethical considerations, participants of the study were invited to self-select into either the experimental or control group based on their willingness to participate in the online course. They were informed briefly about the purpose and content of the online TBLT course when they participated in Study 1. It was the students' own choice to participate in the online course or not to participate. Anyone who did not wish to participate in the online TBLT course was automatically considered a participant of the control group i.e. students who had consented to and completed the Study 1 questionnaire. This self-selection method and the absence of random assignment of participants to treatment conditions characterise the current research design as quasi-experimental (Cohen et al., 2018; Mackey & Gass,

2016). This type of experiment is used when it is impractical and feasible to randomly assign participants to treatment conditions (Andrade, 2021; Denscombe, 2014). Since school and classroom environments are not a laboratory where a “true” experiment can be ensured, many empirical studies in educational settings opt for quasi-experimental designs over experimental ones (Cohen et al., 2018). Quasi-experiment allows researchers to examine cause-and-effect relationships but may also engender biases due to the lack of randomisation (Andrade, 2021; Mackey & Gass, 2016). However, quasi-experiment is helpful for studying real-world phenomena (rather than the laboratory) (Cohen et al., 2018). It can provide valuable insights when a “true” experiment with random assignment is challenging to achieve (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

The quasi-experimental design employed in this study fits into the mixed-method approach because it provided quantitative data to supplement the qualitative findings. The insights into participants’ experiences and perceptions on EOCA and the online TBLT course were obtained through the qualitative method (follow-up interviews) whereas the quasi-experimental design allows for the examination of causal relationships between variables (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018) to evaluate the effectiveness of the online TBLT intervention in reducing students’ EOCA. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, the study could achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.4.2 Selection of treatment and control groups

Participants for both treatment and control groups were recruited from the same population of students who had previously completed the Study 1

questionnaire to ensure consistency and comparability in participant characteristics. In the current study, the treatment for the experimental group (referred to in this thesis as “the online course group”) involved their participation in the online TBLT course, which comprised task-solving activities designed to reduce EOCA. The participants worked in pairs or groups to discuss and perform the task.

The selection of the control group in quasi-experimental design is crucial for ensuring the validity of the comparisons with the experimental group while minimising biases and confounding variables (Clark et al., 2021). Ideally, the control group should be selected to closely resemble the experimental group in all aspects except for the intervention being studied (Indrayadi & Helty, 2020).

In this study, the control group (i.e. comparison (non-TBLT) group) reflected the characteristics of the experimental group, i.e. the online course group, particularly in terms of their English language learning context and curriculum. The comparison (non-TBLT) group did not participate in the online intervention but continued with their regular university English module studies, following IELTS speaking test format. The online course participants also continued the same English module with the comparison (non-TBLT) students at the university. This ensured that both groups received similar educational experiences, apart from the intervention. By keeping the curriculum and learning environment between the two groups consistent, the study aimed to isolate the effects of the intervention on reducing EOCA. Hence, the two groups were comparable apart from the TBLT input.

As mentioned in the previous sub-section, participants in the study were allowed to self-select into either the online course group or the comparison (non TBLT) group based on their willingness to participate in the intervention, with those not wishing to join automatically assigned to the comparison (non TBLT) group. This decision was made after participants were informed about the purposes and contents of the course during the Study 1. Although this self-selection method might introduce potential biases (Andrade, 2021; Johnson & Christensen, 2014) such as participants in the online course group being naturally more motivated to reduce anxiety, it addressed ethical considerations by respecting participants' autonomy and preferences. Ideally, once I knew the intervention was successful, it would have been good to offer the opportunity again to the comparison (non TBLT) group. However, as is common in this type of doctoral work, this was not possible as those students have now moved on in their studies. In addition, the students who chose to be in the comparison (non TBLT) group had made it clear they did not want to participate in the intervention. Therefore, I did not offer them that later opportunity. As they had the opportunity to be part of the online course group, students were unlikely to feel they were missing out. Although it is acknowledged that random allocation was not employed due to practical constraints, my approach ensured inclusivity and practicality in participant recruitment, allowing all interested participants the opportunity to contribute to the study while respecting their individual circumstances. It also enabled the study to proceed with a feasible sample size within the available timeframe.

3.4.3 Limitations of this design

One primary limitation of quasi-experimental is the lack of random assignment, which may introduce biases into the study (Andrade, 2021; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). In this research, participants in both experimental and control groups were informed of the study's general purpose since this was part of the ethics process, but due to the nature of the intervention, they were aware of their group assignment. This lack of blinding may have influenced participant responses (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). It may be therefore possible that they responded in line with the purpose of the study, i.e. to give more desirable responses showing a decrease in their anxiety after the online TBLT course. However, qualitative data collection methods were employed to ascertain the reasons behind any observed changes in the participants' anxiety levels. Furthermore, as discussed above, the control groups' characteristics and experience outside of the intervention were considered to ensure consistency and comparability between the two groups.

Figure 3.1 below summarises the research design of this project.

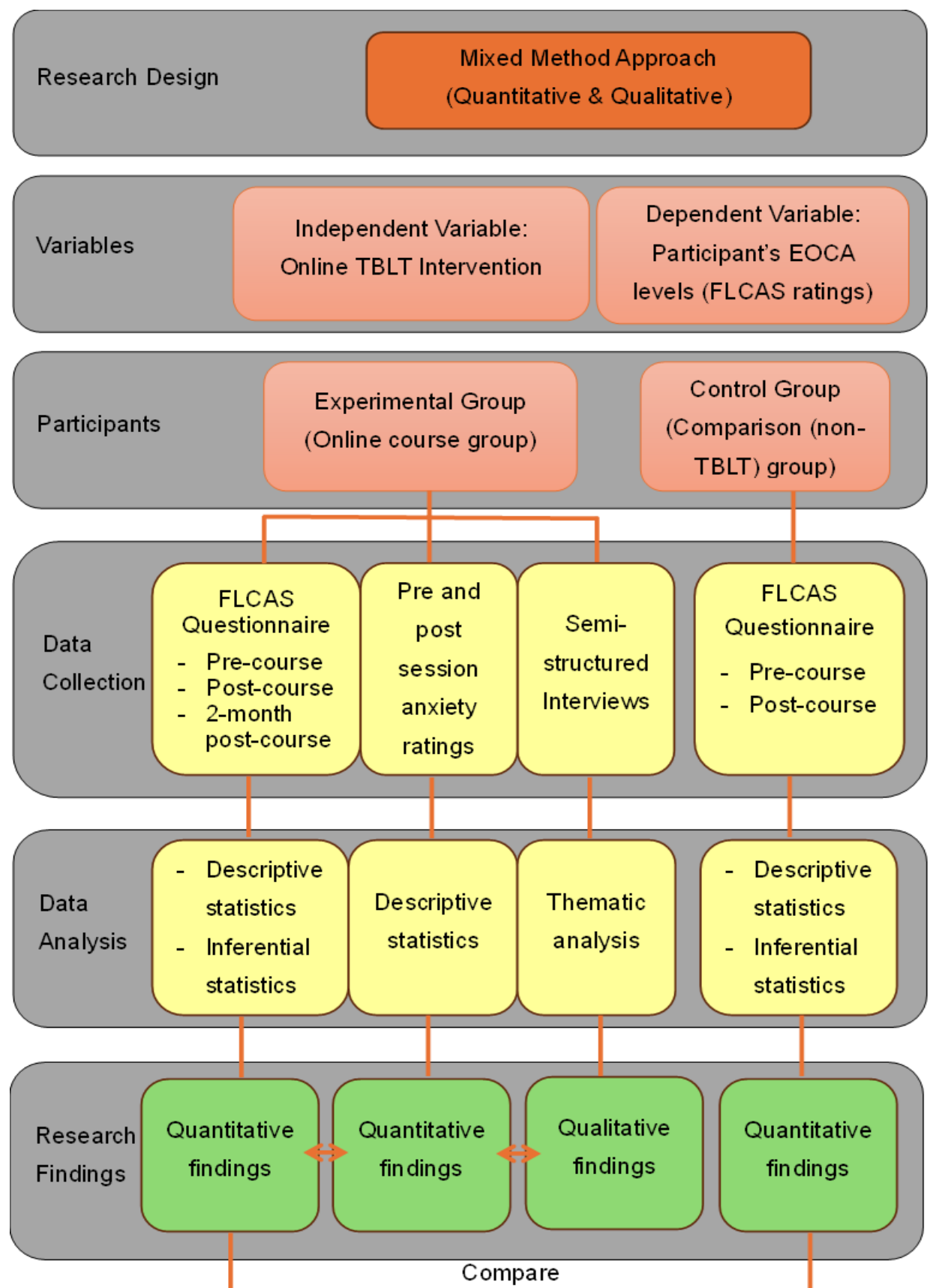


Figure 3.1

Research Design

Before going to details of the study procedure and data collection, the overview of the current study is presented in the

Table 3.1 below

Study	Research Question	Aim/Sub-questions	Method(s)	Data Analysed	
				(to address RQ/aim)	Participants
Study 1: Large-scale study of EOCA	1. To what extent		Study 1 questionnaire -	FCLAS total	166
	do a small number		Section 3A: Foreign	score	students
	of Vietnamese		language classroom		
	learners of English		anxiety scale (FLCAS)		
	(n = 166)		(Horwitz et al., 1986)		
	experience anxiety		Study 1 questionnaire -	Item analysis (%)	166
	when		Section 3A: FLCAS	group reporting	students
	communicating			for each item)	
	orally in English		Post-course interviews	Thematic coding	10 online
	language classes			for themes	course
	(EOCA)?				students

2. What are the underlying factors contributing to EOCA among students in English language classes?	Does EOCA (as measured on the FLCAS) relate to students' general trait anxiety?	Study 1 questionnaire -	T-Anxiety total	166
		Section 2: Trait Anxiety (T-Anxiety) Scale in The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (Spielberger et al., 1983)	score	students
		Study 1 questionnaire -	FCLAS total	
		Section 3A: FLCAS	score	
	Which factors contribute to students' experience of EOCA?	Study 1 questionnaire -	Item analysis (%)	166
		Section 3A: FLCAS	group reporting for each item)	students
		Study 1 questionnaire -	Item analysis (%)	166
		Section 3B: EOCA closed questions/ Likert scale (asking about reasons causing EOCA	group reporting for each item)	students

		related to a lack of			
		grammar, vocabulary and			
		ideas for certain topics)			
		Study 1 questionnaire -	Themes (% of	166	
		Section 4: EOCA Short-	each theme)	students	
		answer questions			
		Post-course interviews	Thematic coding	10 online	
			for themes	course	
				students	
Study 2 – online TBLT course	3.	Is an	Pre-course FLCAS (T1)	• FLCAS	10 online
		extracurricular	Post-course FLCAS (T2)	total score	course
		online TBLT course	2mo post-course FLCAS	• Measure	students &
		effective in	(T3)	of central	10
		reducing the		tendency –	comparison
		students’ EOCA		Median	(non TBLT)
	level?		• Friedman	students	
			& Wilcoxon		
			test for		
			significance		

	Pre and post session anxiety ratings	• Total score • Measure of central tendency – Median • Wilcoxon test for significance	10 online course students
4. If so, what factors of such an online TBLT course might help reduce students' EOCA?	Post-course Interviews	Thematic coding for themes	10 online course students

Table 3.1

Overview of the current study

A more detailed discussion of the research methods and analysis will be presented in section **3.6.4** and **3.8**.

3.5 Research sample

3.5.1 Research site

Participants of this project were students from a university of economics in Vietnam where the researcher has had experience in teaching English. The university is recognised as the largest training and educating centre of economic science and management in the central area of Vietnam. It supplies a large intellectual labour workforce for the whole country, especially for multinational companies investing in Vietnam. Therefore, equipping the students with good English skills, especially oral communication skills, has become one of the priorities of the university.

The study programme at this university follows an academic credit system. Each student has his or her own study route. If they can manage to take more modules in a school term than the standard requirement, they will be able to shorten their study. Hence, there are students from different years of study in the same module. For the English modules, students are allocated to the class that is suitable for their English level, based on a placement test. The English programme includes General English modules, contents of which follow the IELTS test format, and English for Specific Purposes modules. These latter modules are designed to be suitable for each major such as English for Law, English for Business, English for Tourism and English for Economics. The English for Specific Purposes modules, unlike the General English ones, adopt a distinct format for testing that separates from the IELTS test format. **Figure 3.2** below summarises the English programme of the university. Although the English programme of the university equally

emphasizes both written and oral English skills, and students are required to pass exams that include speaking and listening tests, many students still show reluctance and face difficulties in communicating in English. This issue is

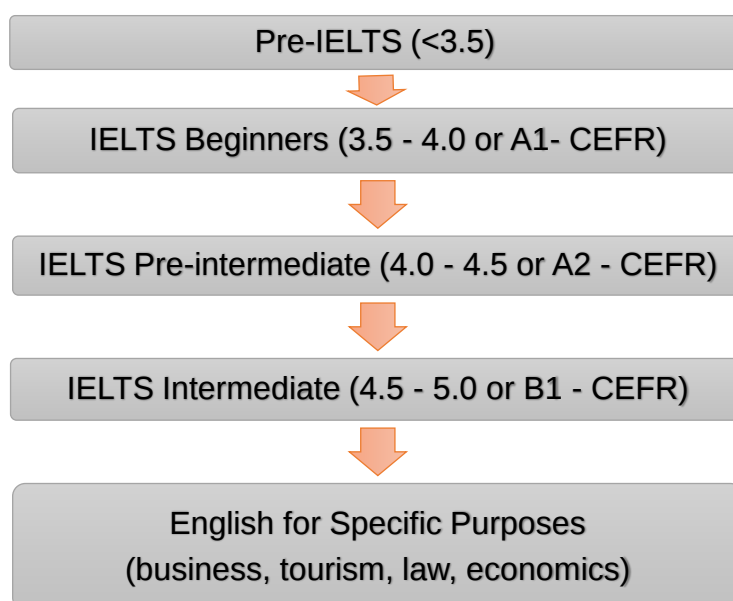


Figure 3.2

English programme at the university studied

evident in their performance in English language classes, spoken English exams and overall academic results.

3.5.2 Participant recruitment

I obtained consent from the Department of English for Specific Purposes of the university and also the English lecturers who were in charge of the classes I visited to collect questionnaire data. I met them in person at the university before the recruitment started and asked them directly for permission to collect questionnaire data. They agreed for the study to be conducted with their students.

3.5.2.1 Participant recruitment for the pilot study

Doing a pilot before carrying out a real data collection is important (Robson, 2002). By conducting a pilot, the research design and instruments

can be tested and revised before the main study is conducted (Mackey & Gass, 2016). Moreover, there may be unpredictable problems occurring during the data collection. Thanks to piloting, the researcher can uncover and minimise the troubles which may happen in the main study. In the current study, since a translated questionnaire was used to collect data, it was necessary to pilot the questionnaire to check whether the students could understand it thoroughly. In addition, an online English speaking course was conducted in the project. At the time of data collection (pre-pandemic), online learning was new to me and the participants. Piloting the course implementation helped me identify technical problems related to the online platform, lesson delivery and lesson contents and instructions revisions. Moreover, there were some interviews conducted online at the final stage of the study. Piloting the interviews helped identify problems with the online procedure and check whether participants could understand the translated interview questions. Also, during the pilot phase, any revisions to the questions to gain more specific data could be done before they were used in the main study. A more detailed discussion of any revisions will be presented in section **3.7.1.5** and **3.7.2**. To recruit participants for the pilot study, a project invitation was sent to a class of students who attended the same English module at the university with the participants of the main study via their teacher. Ten students agreed to participate in the pilot study. These students were asked to complete the Study 1 questionnaire which would be used at different time points in the main study (see section **3.7.1.3** for more details on the questionnaire administration). Then, four of them were randomly chosen to participate in the pilot online course by simply “drawing from a hat”. These four participants also took part in semi-structured interviews with me.

3.5.2.2 Participant recruitment for Study 1 – large-scale study of EOCA and Study 2 – the online TBLT course

To recruit participants for the Study 1, I asked for permission from the lecturers who were teaching the IELTS Pre-intermediate module at the university to deliver the Study 1 questionnaire to their students. The questionnaire was first given to roughly 200 students (see section **3.7.1.3** for more details on the questionnaire administration). There were 170 questionnaires returned from 48 male and 122 female students. However, there was some missing data so only 166 questionnaires remained at the end. My contact detail and the research purposes were stated in the Participant Information Sheet attached to the questionnaires so that students who wanted to participate in Study 2 could contact me. Students were asked to create a specific ID code that they could use as their identity instead of their real name to contact me. This code could then be used to trace the participants' questionnaires in case anyone would like to opt out in the next two weeks. Also, identifying the questionnaire completed by participants who joined Study 2 could be beneficial in avoiding the need for them to retake the pre-course questionnaire.

From the list of students interested in the study, twelve students were invited to participate in Study 2 – the online TBLT course. This online course which focused on English speaking skills, employed a task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach and was designed to assist in reducing students' EOCA in English language lessons. It was called the “online TBLT course” in the study. More details of the course will be discussed in section **3.6**.

My online TBLT course was not a part of the university's English curriculum. It was an extracurricular class. In Vietnam, it is common for

students to participate in extra classes outside their university study time. Also, the students voluntarily chose to participate in this additional online course. Moreover, the course was not similar to the validated university language course. At the time data were collected, the students were studying the general English module, following an IELTS format at the university. This module focused on IELTS preparation with monologue speaking, whereas my online course emphasised pair and group discussions to solve communication tasks. These tasks were not relevant to IELTS but to daily communication. Thus, it was unlikely that there were direct influences from the university language course on the design or implementation of my online course. For all these reasons, I did not need to get consent from the university department to run the course.

The selection of 12 participants was influenced by the time limits of the project and the fact that I was the sole instructor for the course which was supposed to be conducted three times a week. The limited capacity for instruction and management made a small, more manageable number of online course participants the most feasible option. To arbitrarily choose the participants, I assigned each individual a sequential number starting with one and used an online random number generator to randomly pick 12 participants. The original envisaged sample size was eight students so that they could be split in classes of four. With four students in a session, it would be easy to divide students to work in pairs or in a group. However, an additional four students were added to the sample size to avoid participant attrition and potential resulting data shortages. The increased sample size not only served to add resiliency to the sample size but also allowed for greater variance in interaction partners. However, during the online course, two participants

decided to leave the study since they were too busy with their study at the university and could not arrange time for this project. Therefore, the sample size for this stage was 10. The students who participated in the online course were called the “online course participants”.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the online TBLT course, it was necessary to make a comparison in EOCA levels between the online course students and the students who did not take part in the online course but studied the same English module at the university. The latter were recruited to serve as the control group of the online intervention. They were called the “comparison (non TBLT) students” in this study. These students were recruited from the group of students participated in the Study 1. These students were asked to answer the Study 1 questionnaire one more time when the intervention finished. To collect the second questionnaire from the university students, an online link of the questionnaire was sent to them through their teachers. They were asked to re-generate their ID code, following the same ID creating method in the first questionnaire, so that I could find their first questionnaire for the comparison purpose.

3.5.3 Participants’ background and learning context

This section provides the study participants’ background and learning context. Some information was obtained from the data collected through the demographic section in the Study 1 anxiety questionnaire. The detailed content of this questionnaire will be discussed in section **3.7.1.1**.

All the participants of the Study 1 were studying in their general English classes at pre-intermediate level. As can be seen in the

Table 3.2 below, the ages ranged from 19 to 22 years. Due to the university policy, students in different study years can take the same modules, depending

on their preference and priority. Therefore, there was a mix of second year (90/166; accounting for 54.2%), third year (51/166; accounting for 30.8%) and final year students (25/166; accounting for 15%) participating in the study. Similarly, the participants' ages of the online TBLT course stage also ranged from 19 to 22 years. However, there were more final year students participating in this phase (5/10; accounting for 50%) than other ages.

Study	Participants' attributes		Number of participants	Percentage (%)
Study 1 – large-scale study of EOCA	Total		166	100
	Gender	Male	46	27.7
		Female	120	72.3
	Age	19	90	54.2
		20	51	30.8
		21	17	10.2
		22	8	4.8
	Total		10	100
Study 2 – the online TBLT course	Gender	Male	1	10
		Female	9	90
	Age	19	3	30
		20	2	20
		21	3	30
		22	2	20

Table 3.2

Participants' general information

The participants of the main study were from different majors, including Law, E-commerce, Accounting, Banking, Business Administration, Economics and Tourism. They had learnt English at school for more than seven years before attending university. At the university, some specialised business modules were completely taught in English, accounting for 20% of the course

programme. In these English-medium classes, they had to share their ideas, answer lecturers' questions, and give presentations in English only. Therefore, good spoken English skills and being not anxious when speaking English in these classes were essential to these students. Additionally, in order to graduate from the university, the students had to submit an international English certificate such as IELTS, TOEFL, or TOEIC with a result equivalent to level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) or above. Alternatively, they could take a locally developed language proficiency test named VSTEP (Vietnam Standardised Test of English Proficiency), but still needed to achieve an equivalent result to level B1-CEFR. This is a general requirement for all non-English major students in the whole country (Dunlea et al., 2018).

The participants' level of English chosen for this project was pre-intermediate in order to minimise the impact of learners' anxiety due to the change of study environment and learning style, from high school to university. At the beginning of their university life, many of the students had to deal with homesickness and other challenges while trying to adapt to a new living environment since most of them had to move away from home for university enrolment (Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019). These problems could affect their study concentration and academic performance at university in the first year (Bruffaerts et al., 2018). In high school, the students just followed a fixed programme and teachers' instructions and requirements. They were likely to depend on their teachers for knowledge input and learning materials (Ha & Lam, 2010). Moreover, they studied with the same classmates for three years, which enabled them to establish good rapport with their friends. In contrast, despite having a study guide and assistance from their academic adviser,

university students had to decide themselves which module they should take first or later. They had to manage their own timetable, be in a class with different students for each module and find themselves learning materials and methods which could help them finish their assignments. In this case, first-year students might face difficulties in adjusting themselves to a more autonomous learning system like the university context (Humphreys & Wyatt, 2014). When the students attended the pre-intermediate English module, they already had a year to address the problems mentioned above and had got used to the university learning environment. Therefore, the influence of their anxiety related to a new learning style and context was diminished to some extent. In addition, the students had finished at least the first English modules so they might have some experiences with FLA in their English classes.

To further explore the students' background and context, some demographic data results from the Study 1 questionnaire were used. Students' viewpoints on the importance of English oral communication (EOC) skills and the environments in which they typically used English were asked in the first section of the Study 1 questionnaire (Section **3.7.1.1**). It was found that a vast majority (97.6%) acknowledged the significance of EOC skills at varying levels, ranging from 'very important' to 'somewhat important'. This perception was likely influenced by the increasing use of English as a lingua franca in Vietnam, particularly in professional settings. Many companies in the country now conduct job interviews in English and engage in business with international organisations, making English proficiency, especially in speaking, a vital job skill (Doan & Hamid, 2019; Nghia & Vu, 2023). This trend likely contributes to the students' recognition of the importance of EOC skills.

When considering where students practised English speaking, private English classes was the most common environment (45.3%), with university settings following at 27.6%. This information suggests that students might have had more opportunities to speak English in private classes due to smaller class sizes compared to university English classes, which typically had about 40 students each. Additionally, it implies that the emphasis on speaking skills might not be the primary focus in the university's English programme. Interestingly, a small percentage of students (2.4%) reported not using English at all, even in their English classes at the university.

The students of the pilot study had a similar background to the participants of the main study. They were from various majors including Law, Tourism and Accounting. However, these students were not in the group of 170 participants answering the Study 1 questionnaire and also did not participate in the real online TBLT course.

3.6 The online English course using task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach

3.6.1 Rationale for the TBLT approach

As the current study focused on students' anxiety in English oral communication, the teaching approach used in the online course needed to be communicative and provide students chances to interact in the target language. Also, the content of the lessons had to be close to real life situations such as sharing opinions, planning an event, making a decision and solving a problem so that the students could feel like they were not only practising the target language in class but also speaking English for a real purpose. From such a natural learning method, the students could intuitively acquire the language knowledge and develop their confidence in using the language. Apart from

improving the students' confidence, the teaching approach applied had also to create a safe and comfortable learning environment for the students since the aim of the online course was to reduce the students' EOCA. With the conditions above, TBLT seemed to be an appropriate teaching approach for this study.

In the TBLT approach, communicative tasks are an essential part in the learning curriculum (Lai et al., 2011). This approach is designed to promote learners' language oral fluency along with accuracy (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). Students often work in pairs or groups to solve a task assigned by their teacher before focusing on form (e.g., grammar). They can find the teacher's assistance when needed but they will mostly work with their classmates. The students can freely experiment and come up with any solutions and language that they think will work for the task without having to follow any fixed language exponents and requirements. This may create an informal and friendly environment for them to share their ideas and learn from others (Jones, 2007; Subekti, 2020). Moreover, the students are often allotted some time to prepare and rehearse the task outcome report before speaking in front of the whole class, which may help them feel more confident when speaking the target language publicly (Willis & Willis, 2007). In addition, since the task requirements are specific, the students can self-evaluate if they succeed in solving the task. If they themselves see that they can complete a task, their satisfaction in learning will be achieved and therefore their learning motivation will be boosted (Dwijuliani et al., 2021). All these features may contribute to the students' EOCA anxiety reduction. Thus, TBLT fits the purposes of this project. A more detailed discussion on this teaching approach can be found in section **2.4** of the Literature Review chapter.

As also discussed in the Literature Review chapter (chapter 2), there are three TBLT models conceptualised by Ellis (2003), Nunan (2004) and Willis (1996, 2021). These models have some differences in implementation scope but share the similar purpose of motivating teachers to consider various methodological options while designing and using tasks to enhance and improve their students' learning and performance. Willis (1996, 2012) introduces a TBLT framework including three phases. The pre-task phase is when a topic schema can be established. During the task cycle phase, students collaborate in pairs or groups to complete the task, prepare their presentation of the task results, and then present their findings to the entire class. A final optional phase is language focus, in which teacher guides students to examine the task form (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) features. While involving the same phases as the Willis' model, Ellis' (2003) model suggests that language focus can be introduced in any phase. Nunan's (2004) model involves more steps than the previous two, including schema building, controlled practice, authentic listening practice, focus on linguistic elements, providing freer practice, and introducing the pedagogical task, where students are asked to do a fully communicative task by integrating and applying the language skills they have developed throughout the earlier stages.

Of all the three TBLT models above, Willis' model is acknowledged as a strong version of TBLT. This is attributed to its emphasis on prioritising meaning over form (Baralt & Gómez, 2017). However, this framework does not entirely neglect the significance of form in TBLT. Instead of focusing solely on specific language structures, it prioritises a comprehensive language experience. In this approach, learners use the language they have learned to carry out a communicative task. Next, they identify and generalise particular

linguistic features independently, targeting a communicative objective to achieve a specific outcome. Willis' model offers a predictable learning environment which allows students to adjust and prepare. This factor is crucial in creating a supporting learning atmosphere to reduce anxiety (Subekti, 2020; Wang, 2018 & Liu, 2006). In addition, the ability to promote a safer learning environment to contribute to the EOCA reduction is a significant advantage of this framework (Bao & Du, 2015; Jones, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Subekti, 2020). It does this by emphasising tasks designed for small groups, which might be especially beneficial in online settings where technical challenges might impede whole-class activities (Agung et al., 2020). The Pre-task phase boosts student confidence for upcoming tasks by offering foundational understanding, task samples and preparation (Kawashima, 2019). The Task Cycle phase, involving pair or group work with teacher support, further enhances this confidence (ibid.). This phase also includes planning and rehearsal before presentations the task findings to the entire class, assisting in the development of speaking skills and further diminishing EOCA (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Liu, 2006).

While Ellis' model (2003) is similar to Willis' framework in terms of the foundational phases, it introduces a level of flexibility of the language focus. It allows the introduction of linguistic focus at any stage, rather than being bound to a specific phase. Although Ellis (2003) suggests that grammar instructions can occur at any time during the lesson, he also recommends saving the grammar teaching for the post-task phase. Nunan's model offers a multi-step approach and emphasis on comprehensiveness. In my opinion, the complexity and the multitude of steps involved in Nunan's model can be overwhelming for some learners, potentially increasing anxiety levels. This approach also might

divert focus from reducing anxiety to navigating through the numerous phases and activities.

With a careful consideration, Willis' framework was employed to design lesson plans for the current study.

3.6.2 Designing the online TBLT course

In order to examine whether TBLT online was an effective approach that could help students overcome their EOCA, an online TBLT course was designed from scratch. In designing the online course, several key principles of course design (Christison & Murray, 2015; Graves, 2000; Richards, 2001) were considered to ensure its effectiveness in addressing the research problem.

3.6.2.1 Course goals and objectives

Firstly, the goals and objectives of the course were determined.

The overarching aim of the study was to reduce Vietnamese university students' EOCA.

Specific objectives:

- To increase students' confidence in English oral communication
- To develop students' proficiency in basic conversational skills and enhance functional language abilities
- To alleviate the fear of negative evaluation, peer pressure and fear of making mistakes in online English speaking classes.

In terms of language outcomes, by the end of the eight short online sessions, students would be able to give reasons, communicate, present and discuss their opinions in English.

3.6.2.2 Selection of learners and their learning needs

As discussed in section 3.5.3, the participants chosen for this project were from an Economics university with different academic majors such as Law, E-commerce, Banking, Business Administration, Accounting and Tourism. This university was where I had experience teaching English for several years before pursuing the PhD. All of the participants had learned English for at least seven years since secondary school. Their university curriculum included specialised business modules which were taught entirely in English, accounting for 20% of their coursework. Moreover, in order to graduate, they were required to submit an international English certificate, such as IELTS or TOEIC or to pass a national exam (VSTEP) equivalent to level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Therefore, proficiency in spoken English was crucial for their participation in English classes where they had to interact with peers and instructors as well as deliver presentation solely in English. Also, they had to be proficient in English speaking skills since speaking assessments were an essential part in all English exams mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, many of the students were still struggling with speaking English confidently in their English classes due to their speaking anxiety (see section 1.1 and 1.2 for a more detailed discussion on participants' English communication anxiety and contextual background).

To reduce the stress associated with adapting to new learning environments post-high school (Ngoc Truong & Wang, 2019), which might affect their EOCA level, participants were selected at the pre-intermediate English level. By the time they began the pre-intermediate English module (normally in the second year), participants had undergone a year of adjustment to university life. Hence, the anxiety related to novel learning contexts was

minimised. Additionally, as they had completed at least one year of university English modules, students likely had prior experience with foreign language anxiety, making them suitable for this study.

3.6.2.3 Selection of materials for the course

Selecting a suitable textbook for the course was an important factor as it influenced the course structure and teaching methodology (McGrath, 2002). The selected book needed to meet learners' needs, facilitate effective language use, and consider contextual factors (Byrd, 2001; Cunningsworth, 1995). In this study, the selection of the primary learning material, Cutting Edge Pre-Intermediate (Cunningham et al., 2014), was based on several factors.

Firstly, this course was TBLT which aligned with the course methodology. While other textbooks, such as Headway, Matters, and English File, were considered, they primarily followed the traditional Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) approach. They lacked the task-centred focus sought for my online TBLT course. Although Cutting Edge, like many course books, gave attention to systems (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) and skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), what made this book different was the inclusion of a task-based lesson focusing on a task which was clearly based on TBLT approach at the end of each unit. These communicative tasks encouraged active participation and interaction amongst learners. The tasks were also suitable for pair work and group work. These activities aligned well with the communicative focus of TBLT approach. This ensured that learners engage meaningfully with the language in real-world contexts to help students improve language acquisition and fluency.

In terms of relevance to learners' needs, Cutting Edge offered topics and tasks that were familiar with students' daily communication and academic

pursuits. Given that the participants were from diverse economic majors, the book provided a range of relevant themes which were related to students' academic and professional contexts, including interviews (unit 1), business ideas (unit 9 and 12), giving directions (unit 8) and describing events (unit 4). As the course aimed to target learners at the pre-intermediate level, it was essential to choose a book that could provide contents and tasks appropriate for this proficiency level. The chosen course book offered a comprehensive syllabus that was suitable to learners' English proficiency level.

In addition, the accessibility and adaptability to online teaching of the book were crucial considerations. The pre-task samples could be easily shared and shown via screen-sharing and audio-sharing functions. The communicative tasks in the book allow for collaborative learning experiences despite the virtual setting. The tasks were designed to foster interaction and communication amongst learners, making them suitable for synchronous online sessions in which students could participate in pair and group work via video conferencing platform like Zoom. Furthermore, permission obtained from the publisher (Appendix 2) to use this book for the online course could ensure the copyright regulations and facilitate the integration of materials into the online learning environment.

3.6.2.4 Adaptation and implementation of course materials

While Cutting Edge was a valuable resource for the course, some adaptations were made to ensure the course suited participants' specific needs and interests, English level, and study majors. Out of 14 topics introduced in the book, I deliberately chose eight topics that were relevant to my participants' real-life situations and academic interests. The eight topics I selected are listed in **Table 3.3**.

The level of difficulty in topics, language complexity, and vocabulary usage were considered carefully to make sure the lessons progressed from simpler to more challenging tasks. The revised Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) was used as a reference to ensure a progressive increase in lesson complexity throughout the course. Initially, the first few topics focused on lower order thinking skills such as recalling and understanding, as students were given tasks with basic language structures and vocabulary. For example, as can be seen in **Table 3.3** (Course Schedule), in the first few topics, such as interviewing for basic personal information in session 1 and giving directions in session 2, tasks required students to recall personal information and give or follow simple directions, primarily following the "remember" and "understand" levels of the revised Bloom's taxonomy and using the present simple tense. As the course progressed, tasks became more cognitively demanding which required higher order thinking skills such as "applying", "analysing" and "evaluating" as well as more complex language such as modal verbs and conditional structures. For instance, in lessons involving expressing and defending personal opinions on holiday destinations (session 4) or presenting business ideas (session 7 and 8), students were encouraged to apply more complicated language skills in more complex contexts to analyse information and evaluate arguments.

To structure the online sessions, I employed the "Task" part at the end of each unit in the book as the foundation for designing lesson plans. These tasks often followed the TBLT framework suggested by Willis (1996, 2012), including activities for pre-task phase, task cycle phase and language focus phase. However, to enhance students' engagement to the lesson, I designed a "warm-up" activity at the beginning of each session with my own materials.

These warm-up activities served to arouse students' attention and interest to the lesson topics. For instance, for the topic of deciding on the best job, I designed a game in which the students were told to describe various job pictures for the whole class to guess the job. Then I asked them which jobs in the game they liked or disliked and the reasons for their answer. Through this activity, the lesson topic was introduced and students' interest to the topic was stimulated.

After the "warm-up" activity, I fully adapted the activities outlined in the book to facilitate pre-task phase, task cycle phase and language focus phase. These tasks provided students opportunities for authentic communication and collaboration in pair or group discussions. This practice allowed students to apply language skills in meaningful contexts. In addition, to follow Willis' framework, I added a quick reporting activity at the end of the task cycle phase. This activity encouraged students to share their task outcomes with the whole class to promote reflection and more peer interaction.

In the subsequent language focus phase, I provided feedback on the students' task performance and used resources from the book, such as the sample audio recordings and useful language boxes to introduce or review grammar points and language use relevant to each topic. I also utilised the grammar exercises in each unit as homework so that students could reinforce their understanding of grammar.

3.6.2.5 Evaluation of the online TBLT course

Evaluation of the online TBLT course was conducted through a combination of questionnaires, follow-up interviews, and a pilot study to assess its effectiveness and feasibility. Questionnaires were administered to the participants immediately after the course finished and again two months later

to measure any changes in their EOCA levels. Comparisons with responses from the comparison (non TBLT) group provided a further insight into the effectiveness of the online TBLT course in reducing students' EOCA. Additionally, interviews were conducted at the end of the course to collect qualitative feedback on the participants' experience with the online course and identify factors that contributed to any changes in their EOCA levels.

Furthermore, a pilot study of the whole eight online sessions was carried out to evaluate the feasibility of the course delivery format and assess the suitability of the lesson contents. Throughout the pilot study and the main course, I took notes on aspects that worked well and areas for improvement. These observations helped me adjust the lesson plans and instructional strategies to enhance the overall learning experience.

3.6.3 Piloting the online TBLT course

The purpose of piloting the TBLT course was to reveal and solve any technical problems related to the online platform and lesson implementation so that the real course could take place more smoothly and effectively. Since online learning was completely new to both the participants and me at the time of data collection (pre-pandemic), piloting the lesson implementation was considerably important. The way an online language class operates might not be the same with a face-to-face class. The application of TBLT approach in online teaching might face some troubles that have not occurred in a traditional classroom. There might be some tasks which work effectively in the traditional classroom but not in online context (Baralt, 2014). Thus, piloting the course helped me gain some experience with online teaching, get familiar with the online platform and anticipate some possible problems happening during the online sessions. The full eight sessions designed for the online course were

piloted to explore any troubles with each lesson design and content. Also, the pilot enabled me to examine the feasibility of the application of TBLT approach in online teaching.

The pilot was conducted in four weeks with four students from the pilot group. They participated in two online sessions per week. It was noticed that two sessions per week took too much time of the participants. Since they had to deal with university assignments, one session per week was preferable. Therefore, the schedule for the main study was adjusted to one session per week and lasted for eight weeks.

Zoom was chosen as the online platform for the course. At the time of data collection, there were not many options and most of the platforms only offered some simple functions such as video or audio call, screen sharing and chat box. To carry out the lessons as I designed, a platform could at least provide breakout rooms, blackboard, screen and audio sharing. Some options I could find were Skype, Google Hangouts, CourseSites, WizIQ and Zoom. However, CourseSites did not support video conference. Skype and Google Hangouts did not offer the breakout rooms functions. So, I decided to try with WizIQ first. There were some problems with the platform entry and connection as the students could not hear me as well as see my screen share clearly. So, WizIQ was not an appropriate platform for my project.

After the unsuccessful attempt with WizIQ, I tried Zoom. The trial went well and the platform could provide me all the functions needed. Zoom offered me an ideal virtual classroom in which I could use interactive white board and live screen share to show my students the lesson notes. Also, I could manage and share audio and video materials related to the lesson topics with the students through Zoom's screen and audio sharing functions. This approach

simulated the interactive experience of a face-to-face classroom. I had the flexibility to pause the audio or video at any moment to ask the students some questions or to provide explanations on parts that might be challenging for them to understand. Furthermore, the students could work with their classmates in pairs or groups in their own breakout rooms without being disturbed by others. Moreover, the students and I could use the chat box to exchange ideas and information besides the oral communication. For example, I used chat box to provide assistance if they needed without interrupting their discussions. When a student was presenting their speech in front of the class, I could also use chat box to explain new vocabulary, which might be unfamiliar to some other students, without disrupting the person presenting. The students could ask me any questions via private chat on Zoom to avoid feeling ashamed in front of the whole class. When the students were discussing a task in their group or pair, I turned my video and microphone off. I noticed that they discussed more actively and they seemed to be more comfortable and confident to share their ideas than when they could see me. The only problem with the online platform was the Internet connection. Sometimes, my students encountered connectivity issues and were disconnected from the Zoom classroom. More information related to pilot teaching and Zoom organisation can be found in Appendix 1.

In conclusion, the pilot course was successful since the sessions were conducted according to the lesson plans most of the time. At the end of each discussion, the students could solve the task given with their partners and practised the target language. They were observed to speak more as the course progressed although the task difficulty was increasingly higher. Through the pilot, it could be confirmed that conducting an online TBLT lesson

was feasible. However, depending on the topic complexity and difficulty, it might take more than one hour to complete a whole task-based lesson. It also required more efforts from the instructor in both lesson designing and implementing, compared to teaching in the traditional classroom, so that the lesson could go efficiently.

3.6.4 Contents and procedure of the online TBLT course

Before going into details, the course schedule is presented below.

Sessions	Main topics	Tasks
1	Interview	Doing an interview about interviewee's basic personal information, interests, family and future
2	Directions	Asking and giving directions
3	Jobs	Deciding on the best job and giving reasons for your decision
4	Travel	Planning a long weekend away with friends
5	Ambitions	Talking about your top five achievements or ambitions and giving reasons for them. Exploring common themes or differences in achievements or ambitions with partners
6	Special events	Describing your special events and sharing thoughts on or asking about partners' special ones
7	Business Ideas 1	- Planning a café makeover - Persuading others that your ideas are the best

8	Business	• Presenting a new product
	Ideas 2	• Persuading investors to invest in your idea/product

Table 3.3

Course Schedule

In this course, each online lesson followed the TBLT framework proposed by Willis (1996, 2012), which emphasized the central role of tasks in second language learning. The students practised English in different topics and situations by performing tasks given. At this stage of the study, I played the role of an instructor. I acted as a supporter, adviser and facilitator during the sessions.

In the pre-task phase, the participants engaged with a listening, reading or video sample and did some small subsequent tasks to familiarise themselves with the topic and brainstormed or reviewed suitable language use for the main task. This phase corresponds to Willis' suggestion of "pre-task planning" (see **Figure 2.1** in Literature Review chapter). For example, as can be seen in the sample lesson plan about choosing a holiday destination with friends below (**Table 3.4**), after the warm-up activity, students were asked to listen to an audio recording featuring two friends discussing where they want to go for a holiday. Following this, the students answered some relevant questions to check for their comprehension of the task sample. The task sample provided the students with an overview of the main task they would do in the next phase. Subsequently, the students had another opportunity to listen to the sample again to identify useful language elements. Through this activity, they could review or acquire some new language use for the upcoming task.

Then, the class proceeded to the second phase, task cycle. According to Willis' TBLT framework, this phase involves learners working together in pairs or groups to complete a task. Next, learners are allotted some time to plan the outcomes, which they then report to the whole class either orally or in writing. In my sample lesson plan (**Table 3.4**), the students were assigned the task of discussing potential weekend destinations with friends. They had to solve the task in pairs or in group of three, depending on how many students were in the session (four or six students). Each student had to suggest a place and give reasons for their choice. They were also required to defend their ideas if they disagreed with others' suggestions. At the end of the discussion, the pair or group had to reach a final decision on the destination, supported by rational arguments. Prior to working with their peers, students were given two to three minutes to think about the task and prepare ideas individually. They then had approximately 10 to 15 minutes to discuss and complete the task with their pair or group. Next, they were allotted three to five minutes to plan how they would report their group's decision to the whole class. The last 10 minutes were dedicated to the students presenting their outcomes to the entire class. Throughout the session, the students were required to exclusively communicate in English with everyone. I was not involved in the discussions amongst students but assisted them as needed and observed students' attitudes and behaviours.

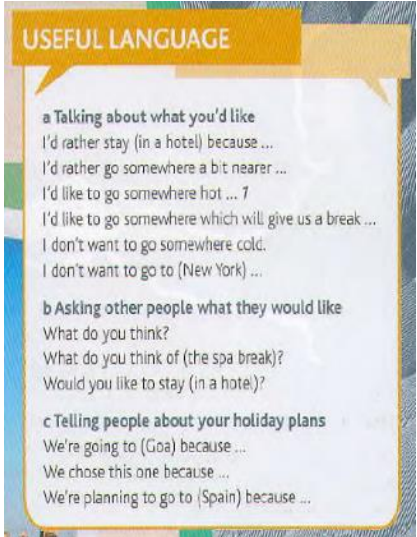
After the students' presentation of task outcomes, the class transitioned to the final phase, language focus. Willis suggests that attention in this phase is given to language form and structure arising from the task performance. In addition, particular aspects of language used in the text or transcript of the task samples are analysed and discussed during this phase. Finally, vocabulary

and grammar exercises are provided to further reinforce language acquisition. In my lesson plan (**Table 3.4**), I began this phase by providing positive feedback on the students' strengths, followed by addressing common language mistakes in a supportive manner to ensure that each participant did not feel embarrassed about their errors. The focus during this phase was on language forms. From the students' performances and study samples shown in the pre-task phase, grammatical structures and vocabulary were reviewed and expanded. Some common mistakes with pronunciation were also reviewed and corrected. To reinforce learning, some grammar exercises were assigned to the students as homework. Furthermore, the students were encouraged to do a similar task with their friends, discussing a trip to visit a country for a week as homework.

A sample of lesson plan (session 4) is presented below. The other lesson plans can be found in Appendix 6.

Teacher's Name: Phuong Nguyen	
Topic: Planning a holiday	Date: Session 4 Time: 60 minutes
Level: pre-intermediate	
General aims	To plan a holiday with friends
Specific learning outcomes for the session:	• To be able to talk about what learners would like • To be able to ask others what they would like • To tell people about learners' holiday plans using appropriate tenses
Class Profile	4 students at pre-intermediate level. Even though they have learnt English for more than 7 years, they are still anxious of speaking English with other people. They need to be equipped useful language to improve their oral fluency as well as given more chances to practise English so that they can overcome their anxiety in speaking English
Materials	Cunningham, S., Moor, P., & Crace, A. (2014). Cutting Edge Pre-intermediate. Students' book (3rd ed). Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
5 mins	Introduce the lesson topic (warm-up)	T-Ls	• Ask learners to discuss in group the question: What are the most important things that you need to consider before you go on a holiday with friends? • Introduce the topic: planning a holiday	Discuss in group Share ideas in turn	

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
15 mins	Review/ Introduce language use for planning a holiday (pre-task phase)	LS-Ls T-Ls	- Ask learners to listen to the audio record of 2 friends discussing where they want to go and answer the questions below: - Where do they decide to go? - Why do they decide on that place? - Ask learners to listen to the audio record again and number the phrases in part a and b of the Useful language box given in the order they hear - Check learners' answers for the 2 exercises above	Listen to the record and answer the questions then discuss the answer in pairs Listen to the record and do the exercise then compare their answers in pairs Give answers to teacher	Recording U6_R3  Cunningham, S., Moor, P., & Crace, A. (2014). Cutting Edge Pre-intermediate. Students' book (3rd ed). Harlow: Pearson Longman

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
15 mins	Review language focus (language focus phase)	T-Ls	• Give feedback. Acknowledge learners' positive points. Correct some common mistakes that learners have made in their reports • Review the language use/tenses and vocabulary for planning a holiday from the script of the audio recording learners listened to in the previous task. • Ask learners to do some short grammar exercises (can be homework if no time left) • Homework: ask learners to do the similar task with their friends. Discuss a trip to visit a country for a week	Listen to feedback Listen Practise saying the language use (if needed) Take note Do exercises	Script Appendix

Lesson Plan Appendix

REMEMBER THESE WORDS

GOING ON HOLIDAY

a camera	suncream
credit cards	sunglasses
foreign currency	a swimsuit
a guidebook	a toothbrush
a passport	toothpaste
a phrasebook	a towel
plane tickets	travel sickness pills

DESCRIBING HOLIDAYS

beautiful scenery	a long queue
comfortable accommodation	a luxurious dining car
a crowded airport lounge	a peaceful lake
a delayed flight	a perfect holiday
an interesting excursion	

OTHER

average temperature	to order a taxi
to check in online	an organised person
first class	a reservation
to get a visa	a self-catering apartment
to get foreign currency	a suitcase
to go camping	to sunbathe
to go canoeing	a time zone
a holidaymaker	a train journey
a last-minute person	

Cunningham, S., Moor, P., & Crace, A. (2014). Cutting Edge Pre-intermediate. Students' book (3rd ed). Harlow: Pearson Longman

Plans and intentions

1 going to, planning to

	I'm going to / planning to buy a car.
+	You/We/They're going to / planning to buy a car. He/She's going to / planning to buy a car.
	I'm not going to / planning to buy a car.
-	You/We/They're not going to / planning to buy a car. He/She's not going to / planning to buy a car.
	Am I going to / planning to buy a car?
?	Are you/we/they going to / planning to buy a car? Is he/she going to / planning to buy a car?

- We use *going to* to talk about what we intend to do in the future. It can be the near future or the more distant future.
I'm going to be a famous actor.
Are you going to see him again?
- We normally use *planning to* when we have thought carefully about the plan and decided how to do it.
What are you planning to say at the meeting?
I'm planning to leave this company next year.

2 would like to, would rather

+	I/You/He/She/We/They'd (= would) like to / rather stay at home.
	I/You/He/She/We/They wouldn't (= would not) like to stay at home.
-	I/You/He/She/We/They'd (= would) rather not stay at home.
?	Would I/you/he/she/we/they like to / rather stay at home?

- We use *would like to* to say what we want to do.
I'd like to travel round the world one day.
It is less direct than *want to* and we often use it to be polite, especially in questions.
Would you like to see the menu?
- We use *would rather* to say we prefer one thing to another thing. We don't have to state the other preference; it can just be implied. After this form, we always use the infinitive without *to*.
I'd rather go on a walking holiday. Beach holidays are boring.
Would you rather sit inside (or outside)?

REMEMBER!

We do **not** usually use *would rather* in the negative form.
I would rather go on a walking holiday.
I would rather not go on a beach holiday.
NOT *I wouldn't rather go on a beach holiday.*

1 Put the words in bold into the correct form in these sentences.

- 1 I would like to **visiting** India one day.
- 2 Actually, we'd rather **to take** the early train.
- 3 I'm not **go** to take a holiday this year.
- 4 Are you **plan** to stay at home this evening?
- 5 **Did** you rather go to a different restaurant?
- 6 We are planning **invite** about 50 people.
- 7 Are you **going come** out with us this evening?
- 8 I **had** like to say something, please.

2 Complete the conversations with the correct form of the words in brackets.

- 1 A: What ¹ _____ (you / plan / do) after university?
B: I ² _____ (like / go) to the UK to study English. My sister, Sharon, wants to come, too.
A: Where ³ _____ (you / like / go)?
B: Sharon wants to go to London, but I ⁴ _____ (rather / go) to Cambridge. What about you?
A: I ⁵ _____ (go / have) a long holiday and just relax!
- 2 A: I've got some news. We ⁶ _____ (plan / move) to New Zealand.
B: No! Really? Why?
A: Well, Susan's got a new job. She ⁷ _____ (go / work) in the National Museum.
B: And what about you?
A: Well, I ⁸ _____ (like / start) my own online company.
B: Wow! And when ⁹ _____ (you / plan / leave)?
A: Probably in the summer but we ¹⁰ _____ (rather / leave) earlier, next month if possible.
B: Well, the best of luck for your future!
A: Thanks.

2 Put the words in the correct order to make questions.

- 1 will / long / the / take / How / bus ?
- 2 I / be / able / online / Will / to / book ?
- 3 will / flight / How / the / cost / much ?
- 4 expensive / accommodation / be / Will / Tokyo / in ?
- 5 need / Will / I / bring / to / sunscreen ?
- 6 Will / busy / beaches / be / the / in / March ?
- 7 flight / be / Will / it / a / direct ?
- 8 the / be / Will / exam / difficult ?
- 9 the / be / the / open / in / museums / Will / summer / holidays ?
- 10 Madrid / the / like / food / in / Will / I ?

3 Match questions 1–10 from exercise 2 with answers a–j below.

- a I think it'll be about \$2,400.
- b Yes, it'll be very sunny.
- c Yes – it won't be cheap in the city centre.
- d I think the journey will be about four hours.
- e Yes, you will. You can also book by phone.
- f No, they won't. Everyone will be at school or work.
- g Yes, you'll love it – it's delicious.
- h Yes, they will, but some might be closed on Mondays.
- i No, it won't – you have studied very hard.
- j No, you'll probably stop in Bangkok on the way.

Cunningham, S., Moor, P., & Crace, A. (2014). Cutting Edge Pre-intermediate. Students' book (3rd ed). Harlow: Pearson Longman

Table 3.4

Lesson Plan (Session 4)

The lesson structure was designed to provide learners with exposure to spontaneous spoken English and opportunities for meaningful language practice in real-world contexts. For the purposes of my thesis, a task is defined as an activity that requires learners to use authentic language to achieve a specific goal or outcome (Willis, 1996). Tasks in TBLT approach are related to learners' needs in real-life communication situations such as sharing opinions, making decisions and solving problems (Wesche & Skehan, 2002; Willis & Willis, 2007). Throughout this online course, students were given opportunities to discuss and perform tasks in pairs or groups in every online session without the instructor's interference. They were required to speak only English during their discussions in which they had to respond to their partners' suggestions or questions and defend their ideas. Hence, they could gain extensive exposure to spontaneous spoken English.

The sequence of tasks within each online lesson plan followed the structured approach of Willis's TBLT framework (1996, 2012), consisting of pre-task, task cycle, and language focus phases. This sequential progression allowed for a gradual build-up of skills and language proficiency. Pre-task activities introduced learners to the topic and prepared them for the main task by presenting them task samples and useful language expressions, while the task cycle phase encouraged students to interact with each other using authentic language. Finally, the language focus phase provided students opportunities for reflection, feedback and language form focus (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation).

In the reporting stage of the lesson plans, activities were designed to facilitate language development through reflection, feedback, and peer interaction. After completing the main task with partners, students were asked

to orally report their task outcomes to the whole class. This activity provided an opportunity for them to share their ideas and receive feedback from their peers and the instructor. Additionally, the reporting stage allowed students to practise summarising and expressing their ideas in English, which further fostered their language skills. In the last session (session 8, Appendix 6, page 422), which was the most challenging one, students were required to report their business ideas or products to the entire class and persuade other groups to invest in them. This activity not only facilitated language development but also promoted students' persuasive communication skills.

To ensure students had exposure to real language use and authentic communication experiences, interactive activities such as pair and group discussions were employed. These activities encouraged students to engage in meaningful conversations and collaborate with their peers, promoting natural language use and communication based on their personal life-experience (Wang, 2018). For instances, students were assigned the roles of both interviewee and interviewer in session 1 (Appendix 6, page 374) in which they asked and answered about personal information. Similarly, they were instructed to imagine themselves as tourists to practise asking for and giving directions based on a map in session 2 (Appendix 6, page 380). These activities allowed students to practise spontaneous and planned spoken interaction in a controlled virtual classroom setting.

Consciousness-raising activities were employed in the lesson plans to help students become more aware of language forms, structures, and usage (Hendricks, 2010). In the language focus phase, students had the chance to analyse and discuss specific language aspects found in the task samples with their peers and the instructor. They were given transcripts of the conversations

from the task samples to read and explore the relevant language used. In addition to this activity, explicit instruction on grammar points and vocabulary were integrated, drawn from task samples and practice exercises designed for the specific tasks. For example, in session 2 regarding practice on asking for and giving directions, the language focus included imperative sentences for giving directions, prepositions of place, and phrases for asking and responding to questions about locations. Similarly, in session 4 where students discussed their holiday plans, language focus activities included the use of future tenses and vocabulary related to travel. By actively engaging in using English to accomplish meaningful tasks and receiving explicit grammar instructions, students could be able to see the practical application of the language rules and better understand how to use them in real-life communication.

TBLT aligns with principles of SLA by giving learners opportunities for meaningful language use and interaction to facilitate the acquisition of communicative competence. For socio-cultural point, TBLT emphasizes the importance of authentic communication and social interaction through pair or group discussions to perform tasks. Regarding interactionist language development, TBLT acknowledges on the role of interaction in language development through the focus on collaborative learning activities.

In designing the lesson plans for the online TBLT course, I took a careful consideration to the task types included and their corresponding levels of complexity. Task complexity was evaluated based on the cognitive demands placed on learners to ensure tasks progressed from simpler to more challenging activities (see section **3.6.2.4** above for a more detailed discussion on task complexity). The tasks designed covered a variety of communication

scenarios from basic interpersonal conversations to more complicated problem-solving and decision-making activities.

The task types in the online course could be broadly categorised into low, moderate, and high complexity levels. The low complexity tasks, such as interview practice (session 1 – Appendix 6, page 374) and asking for directions (session 2 – Appendix 6, page 380), focused primarily on basic language functions and interpersonal communication skills. Students had opportunities to participate in simple language exchanges and develop foundational language abilities.

The next four topics, including job selection and justification (session 3 - Appendix 6, page 385), weekend destination discussion (session 4 – page 124), sharing ambitions and dreams (session 5 - Appendix 6, page 392), personal special event presentation and discussion on the best event (session 6 - Appendix 6, page 400), required learners to demonstrate higher order thinking skills such as critical analysis, decision-making, and negotiation. These tasks involved more complicated language production and encouraged learners to express their own opinions, justifications and actively participate in collaborative problem-solving with peers.

The final two topics about café improvement proposal (session 7 – Appendix 6, page 408) and new idea or product presentation and investment decision (session 8 - Appendix 6, page 422) introduced students to more complex real-life and major-relevant scenarios that demanded them to have strategic planning, critical evaluation, and persuasive communication skills. The students were required to synthesize information, evaluate options and present reasonable arguments to achieve specific objects.

In order to ensure the tasks designed would help reduce students' EOCA, scaffolding strategies were employed in the course design (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). By involving scaffolding, learners were guided through the learning process and gradually gained independence and confidence (Ediger, 2001; Rezaee et al., 2018). Tasks in the online course were carefully structured to include clear instructions, models, and examples to help students understand task expectations and navigate the activity effectively. For instance, before participating in discussions or decision-making tasks, students were provided with relevant background information, useful language support, and samples in the pre-task phase to scaffold their understanding and language production.

Furthermore, all the lesson designs ensured that learners received initial support through guided practice in the pre-task phase and gradually gained more autonomy in the task cycle phase. In the task cycle phase, learners were allocated some time to individually prepare ideas before joining pair or group discussions. This individual preparation step served as a form of scaffolding to offer students an opportunity to organise their thoughts and formulate responses and ideas before interacting with peers.

In terms of anxiety reduction, tasks were designed in accordance with features of TBLT approach in helping alleviate students' EOCA. Firstly, the tasks designed aimed to promote collaboration and peer interaction. By working together towards a common goal, students were encouraged to support each other, thereby diminishing the peer pressure and fear of negative evaluation from classmates (Bao & Du, 2015; Liu, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Subekti, 2020). Moreover, tasks complexity was carefully considered to suit learners' English proficiency levels and avoid overwhelming them with

overly difficult tasks. According to Mora et al. (2024), task complexity has a negative effect on foreign language speaking anxiety, meaning that as tasks become more complicated, learners experienced higher levels of anxiety during oral performance. This finding suggests that by gradually increasing the complexity of tasks over the course, students might be able to develop confidence and competence in their language skills without feeling discouraged. In addition, feedback and error correction were given after students' task performances, which helped avoid disrupting their speech and reduce the fear of making mistakes while speaking (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). Feedback was delivered in a supportive manner and focused on areas for improvement while also acknowledged students' strengths (Tran & Moni, 2015). Therefore, students were reassured that mistakes were a natural part of the learning process, which contributed to reduce their EOCA. Also, importantly, the students were given opportunities to practise speaking and achieve a real-world task through speaking which was inherently motivating. As they witnessed their ability to complete a task, their satisfaction in learning was achieved and therefore their learning motivation was enhanced (Dwijuliani et al., 2021).

In this study, the participants attended a TBLT course delivered online once a week for 8 weeks. Each class lasted from one to one and a half hours, depending on the topic. According to some studies (e.g., Effiong, 2016; Sadighi & Dastpak, 2017), students in a group are likely to speak comfortably with the members they already know. In other words, the more familiar with classmates, the more comfortable the students are. Therefore, to avoid the comfort stemming from familiarity with other students in the same group, which might affect the participants' anxiety self-assessment, I ensured a varied mix of

participants by allocating different participants for each online session and discussion group. The purpose was to ensure the number of times a student worked with the same classmates was minimised as much as possible. The initial plan was having three sessions per week with three groups of four students. However, since two students dropped out of the course after the first two sessions, a new allocation was made. The students were assigned into a class of four and a class of six. It means I had two sessions per week with two groups of participants. To protect participants' identity, each student used a nickname throughout the course. A more detailed discussion on the ethical considerations will be presented in section **3.9.1**.

3.7 Data collection methods and procedure

3.7.1 Questionnaires

The first research aim of this study was to investigate whether Vietnamese learners of English experience anxiety when communicating orally in English language classes. A questionnaire is commonly used in research that needs large-scale data of participants' opinions and attitudes (Mackey & Gass, 2016). One of the key benefits of using a questionnaire is its cost-effectiveness and efficiency since researchers can collect a large quantity of information in a short time (Cohen et al., 2018). In this study, a sample size of 175 participants were required to gain acceptable sample precision (error margin of 6%) and statistical power of the study (90%) (Conroy, 2018). With this large number of participants, a questionnaire survey was an appropriate data collection method. Additionally, data collected from questionnaires is considered less biased and more objective than interview data since the participants may be willing to provide more insightful and sensitive information if they are assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses

(Bryman, 2015). Since the topic to examine was EOCA, which is a personal and sensitive issue (Horwitz, 2001), a questionnaire was beneficial in collecting sensitive data that the participants might feel reluctant to share in person. In addition, to measure the level of EOCA, it was insufficient if only data from interview was collected since any expression in words could not inform the specific levels of anxiety. In contrast, a scale with numbers could solve the problem by providing a corresponding meaning to the interview data.

Nonetheless, Dornyei (2007) claims that an ill-constructed questionnaire may lead to the decrease in data validity and reliability. If the items in a questionnaire are not simple and easy to understand or they make respondents feel uncomfortable, the respondents will be likely to give dishonest and inconsiderate answers. To minimise these potential troubles, researchers can adapt previously developed questionnaires which have been confirmed to be valid and reliable (Tóth, 2010). The current study aimed to investigate anxiety, which is a fairly abstract construct. It is a subjective experience that cannot be directly observed or measured in the same way as physical symptoms since it may manifest in different ways for different people. It is also challenging to define and measure anxiety because it can differ in intensity, duration and specific symptoms (Rixon & Papp, 2018). If the wording of the questionnaire causes participants misunderstanding, it may lead to an invalid result. It would be better to employ available and reliable scales. Therefore, the two main scales of the questionnaire used in this study were adopted from two standardised questionnaires, which had high reliability coefficient and the validity was tested in a number of previous studies. These two standardised questionnaires are Trait Anxiety (T-Anxiety) (Spielberger et

al., 1983) and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986).

3.7.1.1 Questionnaire content

In this study, the questionnaire was used in different phases to achieve different objectives. Hence, it was named after the stage in which the questionnaire was employed. The names included:

- “Study 1 questionnaire” (i.e., pre-course questionnaire) for Study 1 – large-scale study of EOCA, before the online TBLT course started.
- “Post-course questionnaire” for the survey conducted immediately after the online TBLT course finished.
- “2mo post-course questionnaire” for the survey administered two months following the completion of the online TBLT course.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section included questions about participants' general information such as their age and study major. Some questions to explore students' perceptions of the significance of English oral communication (EOC) skills, the environments in which they typically used English, their self-assessment of their English speaking abilities, and their official English speaking results of the last final term were also added (Appendix 3). All the questions related to students' English interest and ability were formulated using five-point rating scale, which comprised of two extreme sides and neutral option linked to the middle answer options. This design allows for a range of responses from strongly negative to strongly positive, with a middle option indicating neutrality. An example of a question is presented in **Figure 3.3** below.

5. How important are English oral communication skills to you? Please circle ONLY ONE CHOICE below.

1	2	3	4	5
Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all

Figure 3.3

Example of a five-pointing rating scale question

The demographic information provided a description of the sampling group (section **3.5.3**). In addition, asking these questions was essential as it helped in understanding the context in which students used their English skills and their subjective evaluation of their competence. This information can provide valuable insights into their motivations, confidence levels, and real-world application of their English speaking skills, all of which were critical for adapting the study to address their specific needs and challenges in English oral communication.

The second section of the questionnaire contained a measure of a general (non-linguistic) trait anxiety adopted from the Trait Anxiety (T-Anxiety) subscale of The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (Spielberger et al., 1983). The STAI comprises a State Anxiety subscale (S-Anxiety) and a Trait Anxiety subscale (T-Anxiety). There are 20 statements in each subscale for participants to express what they generally feel (T-Anxiety) and what they are feeling at the point of doing the questionnaire (S-Anxiety). The participants select the level of their feeling to each item based on a scale from 1 to 4, including (1) "Not at all", (2) "Somewhat", (3) "Moderately so", and (4) "Very much so". To calculate scores for each subscale, the weighted scores were summed for the items included in each subscale. Some items indicating the absence of anxiety were reversed before adding up the total score. The resulting anxiety scores can range from 20 to 80, where a higher score

indicates a higher level of anxiety. The STAI is considered reliable because it achieved a high alpha coefficients of above .90 for both the T-Anxiety and S-Anxiety (Spielberger et al., 1983). It has been referenced in more than 14,000 studies and adapted in 60 languages and dialects (Spielberger & Reheiser, 2009).

In this study, the State Anxiety subscale was not employed since the study aimed to investigate the relationship between participants' general trait anxiety and their EOCA. As discussed in the Literature Review chapter, there are two approaches to define FLA, the "anxiety transfer" and the "unique anxiety" (section **2.3.2**). The former suggests that anyone who has trait anxiety will certainly experience FLA as well. On the other hand, the latter indicates that FLA is a situation-specific anxiety, which only occurs in a particular language learning situation and does not relate to individual personality. Since EOCA is an aspect of FLA, any association between T-Anxiety and EOCA found in this study would shed light on the definition and sources of EOCA. If not, the definition of FLA or EOCA as a situation-specific anxiety would be verified.

The third section was designed based on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). The FLCAS consisted of 33 items. A detailed description of this scale can be found in section **2.3.4** of the Literature Review chapter. This study emphasized English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) within English language classrooms and its contributors. Given the established significant relationship between test anxiety and FLA in a study of Horwitt (1986), identifying other FLA sources becomes complicated. To address this, the influence of exam-related anxiety within the classroom setting was minimised. As a result, three

items related to test-related anxiety were excluded from the FLCAS. In order to measure the level of EOCA in English language classrooms and investigate factors causing or influencing EOCA, the FLCAS of the current study incorporated specific items from the original FLCAS. These items relate to speech anxiety and uncomfortableness when speaking with first language speakers (L1 speakers), which were identified by factor analysis from studies of Mak (2011) & Aida (1994). The items to measure fear of negative evaluation were included since the content of these statements were related to oral communication anxiety. These two concepts, the speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, were also confirmed to be linked to each other (Mak, 2011). Mak's study found that negative self-evaluation played a significant role in causing speaking-in-class anxiety. In other words, they experienced anxiety while speaking English in class due to the fear of being judged by their teacher and peers based on the mistakes they made during communication. Mak (2011) also found that the factor of "negative attitudes towards the English language class" was a contributor to anxiety when speaking a foreign language in class. The negative attitudes could have an adverse impact on oral performance especially when it was mandatory for students to participate in role-plays and discussions with a positive attitude. In addition, the item related to fear of making mistakes were kept as well. The fear of making mistakes directly relates to communication apprehension, a significant contributor to EOCA, because individuals often experience anxiety when they are afraid of making errors during spoken communication (Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzaro, 2014; Goñi-Osácar & Lafuente-Millán, 2021; Liu & Jackson, 2008). Hence, there were 30 items of the FLCAS used in the current study. The participants selected the level of agreement to each item based on a five-point Likert Scale

from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”. To suit the research topic, the phrase “foreign language class” was replaced by “English language class”.

The FLCAS was a reliable scale since it achieved a high reliability, as evidenced by an alpha coefficient of 0.93 in the study of Horwitz et al. (1986). This coefficient indicates strong internal consistency, meaning that the items on the scale are closely related to each other and collectively contribute to measuring foreign language classroom anxiety. Additionally, each item within the scale showed significant correlations with the overall scale score when corrections were made for each item's contribution (Horwitz et al., 1986). This further reinforces the reliability of individual items in contributing to the total anxiety measure. Moreover, the scale's test-retest reliability over an eight-week period was also significant, which was evidenced by a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.83, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) (ibid.). This high correlation coefficient suggests that the scale's results were consistent over time, further affirming its reliability as a measure of FLA in classrooms. The statistical significance of $p < 0.001$ implies that the likelihood of these findings being due to chance is extremely low, adding further credibility to the scale's reliability. This scale was also validated by many subsequent studies such as Aida (1994), Awan et al. (2010), Horwitz (2010), Kruk (2018), Liu (2006), Liu & Jackson (2008), Macintyre (2007), Macintyre et al. (1998), Tran et al. (2013b) and Young (1991). The alpha coefficient index of the FLCAS reported in these studies ranged from .67 to .95, indicating acceptable or high reliabilities of the scale. Since the primary concern of the FLCAS was the FLA in speaking, it fitted the current study purposes. Moreover, the FLCAS provided a specific method to calculate the FLA level, which will be discussed in section **3.8.1.1**. Therefore, it was chosen to be the key measurement to determine the

participants' EOCA levels. The reliability and validity of the T-Anxiety scale and FLCAS used in the current study will be discussed in section **3.7.1.6**.

In order to investigate participants' sources of EOCA, three items related to reasons for students' EOCA in their English language classrooms were added to the questionnaire (items 3B-1, 3B-2 and 3B-3 of section 3B in Appendix 3). The reasons included students' lack of vocabulary, grammar and topic ideas. These were five-point Likert Scale statements from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". To make them easier to refer to, I labelled them as the "Three EOCA source items."

In the last section of the Study 1 questionnaire, three EOCA short-answer questions were added to obtain more information about student's EOCA. With short-answer questions, participants' responses tended to be more complex and detailed than simply selecting a given choice (Mack et al., 2005). These short-answer questions were aimed to give both descriptive and qualitative data to identify some factors that might not be covered in the previous sections of the questionnaire. The first question asked the participants why they experienced anxiety in their English classes, aside from the three reasons previously provided (items 3B-1, 3B-2 and 3B-3 of section 3B). The final two questions inquired about specific class activities that either made them feel nervous or engaged.

3.7.1.2 Translating the questionnaire

It is necessary to translate a questionnaire into participants' first language if they are not fluent in the language available in the original questionnaire (Beauford et al., 2011). Since the participants' English level was low, all questions needed to be translated into Vietnamese so that they could clearly understand the questionnaire. At the time the data collection was

conducted, there was no Vietnamese version of the T-Anxiety scale that could be found. There was one version of the FLCAS in Vietnamese, which was used in a study by Tran et. al (2013b). However, it was impossible for me to access the translated version. Therefore, the questionnaire used in the current study was translated by me. To ensure the exact meaning of the translated version, the “back translation” method was used. This translation method had been used in a number of studies to translate the original FLCAS to different languages such as Turkish, Malay, Serbian, Arabic, and Hungarian (e.g., Al-Saraj, 2014; Aydin et al., 2016; Safranjan et al., 2020; Sham & Azmi, 2018; Tóth, 2008). All the studies achieved highly acceptable internal consistency with Cronbach’s alpha ranging from .83 to .93. Through these previous studies, the stability, consistency, and comparability of the FLCAS had been demonstrated by exploratory factor analysis. Additionally, this indicated that the psychometric properties of the scale were retained after translation. Hence, its appropriateness for adaptation in my own study can be affirmed. In sum, the consistent results across various translations of the FLCAS underscore its reliability and validate the decision to translate the questionnaire for use in the current research context.

The questionnaire was firstly translated into Vietnamese by me, who has the awareness of the potential cross-cultural differences between Vietnamese and English. Then the Vietnamese translated version was sent to a colleague at the university where this project was carried out via email so that she could translate it back to English. She was not exposed to the original version of the questionnaire while doing the back translation. The two versions were then reviewed by another colleague at the university. Both of the colleagues involving in this back translation process were lecturers of English

at the university. They both had experience with English and Vietnamese language and culture.

The reviewer identified some differences in wording between the original version and the back-translate version. The word choice for item 2 of the T-Anxiety scale in the back-translate version was slightly different from the original version. Instead of using the word “restless” like in the original version, my colleague used “anxious” since these words are similar in meaning in Vietnamese. In item 1 of the FLCAS, I provided two options of meaning in the Vietnamese version of the phrase “feel quite sure of myself” to facilitate comprehension for the students. Thus, my colleague also gave two alternative translations for the statement which were “feel quite certain/confident”. However, the discrepancies in the original version and the back-translate version were considered small and did not affect the meaning of the items. Hence, the two translating versions were confirmed to be similar in meaning. At the end of the reviewing process, the reviewer suggested some minor modifications in wording a few items so that the questionnaire made sense in Vietnamese but still kept the meaning of the original version, to which I agreed with. Sentence structure of item 4 in the FLCAS was changed from “it frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English” to “I feel frightened when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English” when translated into Vietnamese since there is no equivalent structure of empty subject in Vietnamese. Similarly, item 5 in the FLCAS was changed from “it wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes” to “I wouldn't feel bothered at all to take more English language classes”. Item 11 in the FLCAS was changed from “It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English language class” to “I feel embarrassed to volunteer answers in my

English language class”. With the exception of these minor modifications, all other translated items were ensured to maintain their original meaning while remaining understandable in Vietnamese.

3.7.1.3 Questionnaire administration

The first objective of the study was to gather data to address the first research question regarding Vietnamese students' EOCA in their English language class. Specifically, it involved measuring the participants' levels of EOCA as well as investigating contributors of EOCA and possible relationship between their EOCA and trait anxiety through data collected from the Study 1 questionnaire. In addition, some data from this Study 1 questionnaire was also used to compare with post-course questionnaires in order to assess the online TBLT course effectiveness in reducing the students' EOCA and its possible long-term effect. The Study 1 questionnaire was delivered to approximately 200 students at the university in paper-based copies. I had asked for permission from the lecturers who were teaching the IELTS Pre-intermediate module at the university to deliver paper-based questionnaires to their students at the end of a lesson. This was all in line with Sheffield Hallam University ethical approval (more details in section **3.9.1**).

For 10 online course students, their Study 1 questionnaire was also used to identify their level of EOCA before they participated in the online TBLT course. After the last session of the TBLT course finished, these students were asked to do the questionnaire again: post-course questionnaire. This was used to measure the online course participants' EOCA level after they finished the course, which then was compared to their pre-course EOCA level.

In addition, the study measured the differences between the pre-course and post-course questionnaire data from the comparison (non TBLT) students.

These students served as the control group of the intervention. This was done to assess any changes in the levels of EOCA among these students as measured by the FLCAS items during the same period as the online course participants. By comparing the differences in EOCA levels at two time points between the online course students and their university peers, the study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the online TBLT course. To collect the post-course questionnaire from the university students, an online Google Forms link of the questionnaire was sent to them through their teachers. There were 21 responses from the university students, but some did not have the same ID code with the Study 1 questionnaire. Thus, only the questionnaires which had the same code with their Study 1 questionnaire were counted. 10 of these were randomly chosen by “drawing from a hat” method for data analysis to serve the purpose of comparison with the online course students’ data.

Finally, the Study 1 questionnaire was employed one more time to measure the participants’ EOCA level after two months (eight weeks): 2mo post-course questionnaire. The test-retest reliability over eight weeks of the FLCAS were .83 ($p < .001$) (Horwitz et al., 1986) and the test-retest reliability of the T-Anxiety scale over 20 days and 104 days for college students ranged from .73 to .86 (Spielberger et al., 1983). It can be seen that both scales achieved high test-retest reliability. Hence, in this study, it was judged appropriate to re-administer the questionnaire after eight weeks. The purpose of this was to compare the participants’ anxiety level when they were attending the online course and when they were not at all. This would show whether the effects of the online course on EOCA level were short-lived. When the time came, the researcher sent a reminder email with the attached link to the questionnaire to each online course participant.

3.7.1.4 Pre and post session anxiety ratings

Apart from the main questionnaire, a quick response scale was used for the students' anxiety self-assessment in the online English course. Its purpose was to examine any variations in their anxiety level in each online session. The online course participants' anxiety level was recorded before an online lesson started and after the lesson finished. Fifteen minutes before each online session, the researcher sent each student a link to the pre and post session anxiety ratings so that they could rate their anxiety level before the lesson began. At the end of each session, the students were asked to rate their anxiety level after the lesson within fifteen minutes. The questions were: "Rate your anxiety level BEFORE the lesson starts. Please select ONE level ONLY" and "Rate your anxiety level AFTER the lesson finishes. Please select ONE level ONLY." The rating scale of the pre and post session anxiety ratings included five levels: (1) "Not present", (2) "Mild", (3) "Moderate", (4) "Severe", and (5) "Very severe". The five levels of anxiety were adapted from Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) (Hamilton, 1959). The HAM-A has been used widely in variety of research settings (e.g., Kobak et al., 1993; Leentjens et al., 2011; Ramdan, 2019; Zimmerman et al., 2017) and its inter-rater reliability was in the acceptable range from .60 to .73. Moreover, the five levels of anxiety of HAM-A are clear to understand, so the participants could rate their feeling easily. Therefore, the researcher decided to use the five levels of anxiety for the pre and post session anxiety ratings.

3.7.1.5 Piloting the questionnaires

The Study 1 questionnaire was piloted with ten participants studying at the university. The students' background was similar with the participants of the main study. These students were not in the group of 166 participants

answering the Study 1 questionnaire and also did not participate in the real online TBLT course (see section **3.5.2.1** for information on how I recruited participants for the pilot). Since the questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese, it was necessary to check whether students had any difficulties in understanding the questionnaire instructions and items. The pilot questionnaire was sent to the students via email. After finishing the questionnaire, they had a quick online meeting with the researcher and gave comments on the questionnaire. Overall, the questionnaire was straightforward and comprehensible. The participants did not face any challenges while completing it. However, they requested clearer instructions for each section and an example of the correct way to create their own ID. Moreover, the item “I wouldn’t feel bothered at all to take more English language classes” appeared to be not distinctly Vietnamese, although the students could still understand its meaning. Before any amendment was made, all the students’ comments were discussed with my colleagues who were involved in the translation process. They both agreed with the changes suggested since they had no effect on the original meaning of the questionnaire items. From the pilot, some minor changes in wording had been made so that the questionnaire made sense in Vietnamese but still kept the meaning of the original version. The item “I wouldn’t feel bothered at all to take more English language classes” was changed to “I wouldn’t mind at all taking more English language classes.” The introduction was made clearer so that the students could understand what they were required to do in each section of the questionnaire. Also, when collecting data for the real study, I needed to provide the participants an example of how to create the ID code properly. I thought that giving a verbal illustration was more effective than expecting the

participants to understand it by reading alone. Apart from these minor changes, the students in the pilot had no obstacles in understanding and answering the questions. Hence, it was reasoned that the participants in the main study might not face any troubles with the questionnaires. Since there were only 10 students answering the pilot questionnaire, it was not possible to test the questionnaire reliability. However, the questionnaire was adopted from two reliable scales. The translation process was carried out carefully and the meaning of the questionnaire items was kept as original. Thus, I believed the questionnaire was reliable to use for the main study.

The pre and post session anxiety ratings was piloted with four students who participated in the pilot online TBLT course. They answered the questions within fifteen minutes before and after each online session. Results from the data analysis showed that three out of four students shared a similar pattern in their anxiety level changes. They felt quite anxious (at moderate or severe level) before the first two sessions but less anxious (at mild or not anxious level) at the end of each session. From the third session, their anxiety levels were always low (at mild or not anxious level). Sometimes, their anxiety levels before and after the session remained at the same level. At other times, their levels went up one level before a session or after a session, compared to the previous session. The result of the last student in the group showed no changes in his anxiety level. The level remained the same from session one to session eight, at level two (mild). All the results from the pilot pre and post session anxiety ratings led to some related questions for the interviews since the researcher would like to know the reasons for the students' rating on their anxiety levels during the pilot course.

3.7.1.6 Reliability and validity of the translated questionnaire

Although the main questionnaire used in the study were adapted from the two reliable scales which were the T-Anxiety scale (Spielberger et al., 1983) and the FLCAS (Horwitz et al. 1986), its reliability needed to be re-examined since it was translated from English to Vietnamese. Also, three items related to text anxiety in the original FLCAS were omitted. Through the Cronbach's alpha coefficient test, the internal consistency of the T-Anxiety and FLCAS used in the present study was .87 and .92, respectively, without any item discarded. These results were high enough to consider the translated questionnaire satisfactorily reliable. Furthermore, the reliability and validity of the FLCAS scale were not adversely affected by the reduction in the number of items, as evidenced by studies conducted by Botes et al. (2022) and Chuan (2015). Botes et al. used only eight items from the FLCAS in their study, while Chuan used 24 items. Despite the reduced number of items, both studies reported high levels of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.891$ and $\alpha = 0.97$, respectively) for the revised scales. Botes et al.'s study also provided evidence of convergent (the degree to which two theoretically related measures are actually related) and divergent validity (the extent to which a measure is not related to different, theoretically unrelated variables). It found moderate correlations between FLA and other related variables including trait anxiety ($r = 0.322$, $p < 0.001$) and foreign language enjoyment ($r = -0.264$, $p < 0.001$). Chuan (2015) demonstrated both content validity and predictive validity of the revised FLCAS. Both studies concluded that the revised FLCAS with some items omitted was still a reliable tool to measure anxiety among foreign language learners.

In terms of validity, the content validity and internal validity of the translated questionnaire were focused. The concept of content validity focuses on the extent to which the information obtained through a measurement accurately represents the phenomenon that is intended to investigate (Mackey & Gass, 2016). In this study, the phenomenon to examine was the anxiety of English oral communication and its relationship with general trait anxiety. Apart from the omission of three items related to exam-related anxiety in the original FLCAS, all items focusing on communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation and the full content of T-Anxiety scale were employed in the questionnaire. Both T-Anxiety scale and FLCAS had been found to have good content and construct validity (Horwitz et al., 1986; Spielberger et al., 1983). Furthermore, as discussed in section **3.7.1.1**, the two concepts of communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation were discovered to be interconnected meanwhile the test anxiety was considered to be a temporary response to academic or evaluative situations (Mak, 2011). Hence, even though exam-related anxiety items in the original FLCAS were excluded, the content validity of the FLCAS used in the current study could still be considered well-supported. In addition, the questionnaire was translated from English to Vietnamese. To ensure the accuracy of the translation, it was back translated and crosschecked by two Vietnamese university lecturers of English. This back translation method helped to achieve the validity of the questionnaire in the context of translation.

To minimise threats to the internal validity (factors that could affect the accuracy of the study's results) associated with the design of the questionnaire, two measures were taken. Firstly, the questionnaire administered to participants was in Vietnamese to avoid any potential misinterpretation due to

language barriers. Secondly, the format and content of the questionnaire was thoughtfully planned to make it reader-friendly, taking into consideration the feedback obtained from the pilot study (section **3.7.1.5**).

3.7.2 Semi-structured interviews

The previous section discussed the advantages of using a questionnaire for the study, but it is not without limitations. One of the drawbacks of a questionnaire is that respondents might provide answers in the way they think they should respond but not what they think or do in real life (Mackey & Gass, 2016). Due to the length of the questionnaire with two standardised anxiety scales used in this study, it was not possible to cover all the details of various aspects of EOCA. It was also not feasible to obtain data related to the participants' opinions on the online TBLT course through the questionnaire. Additionally, the use of the pre and post session anxiety ratings to examine changes in participants' anxiety levels in each online session led to the need to understand the reasons for their self-rating decisions. Hence, interviews can overcome the limitations of the questionnaire used in the study by providing valuable insights into participants' opinions and experiences, which can help to reduce the occurrence of false responses from the questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2018) and explain the students' responses in the questionnaire (Ivankova & Cresswell, 2009). Also, with interviews, the participants would have sufficient time to explain in detail what they thought (Polkinghorne, 2005). For all these reasons, interviews were chosen to collect more in-depth understandings of the participants' EOCA in the traditional classroom and online learning context as well as their experiences of the online TBLT course.

There are three main types of interview: the structured interview, the semi-structured interview and the open interview or unstructured interview (Dornyei, 2007; Ivankova & Cresswell, 2009). The structured interview is the most controlled form of interview, in which researchers try to strictly follow a list of pre-determined questions and avoid variations in asking questions as much as possible. This type of interview can help the researchers stay on track of the researched topic and produce comparable data across distinct respondents. However, it has a similar disadvantage with questionnaires, which is the limitation in generating in-depth data, since researchers cannot be flexible in asking questions if a new situation occurs during the interview. In contrast, the open interview gives researchers the full flexibility in obtaining data during the interview. The researchers do not have a question list in advance but questions emerge from the context. Unstructured interviews can create a comfortable atmosphere for the interviewees to express themselves, providing more insightful data from participants' opinions and experiences. Since there is no guiding structure for the researchers, every interview with each participant may present a unique narrative and yield varying data, which can make it challenging to analyse and generalise the data (ibid.).

As an approach that balances the characteristics of the two aforementioned types of interviews, the semi-structured interview consists of predetermined guiding questions and questions that are raised based on issue emergence during an interview (Dornyei, 2007). In the current study, this type of interview was selected owing to its advantages as follows. The predetermined interview protocol helps collect comparable data across the cases while the flexibility in interviewing assures not missing any details in each participant's story (Knox & Burkard, 2009). Thus, I could follow the pre-

planned question list but also could extend the interview scope when any interesting issues arose during the interview. Students might initially feel hesitant or shy to share their perceptions on EOCA, as the topic could be considered sensitive or personal. As a result, they might not share much when being asked about their feelings regarding their English class. In this situation, I would need to be flexible in probing some further specific questions to dig deeper into the participants' thoughts to explore more detailed aspects related to their experiences of anxiety. In addition, since I was also the instructor of the online TBLT course, it might be difficult to elicit what the students really thought about the course. The students might think that they would upset me if they had negative comments on the course. If I just followed the predefined question list, it might not be possible to collect the data that truly reflected the participants' opinions on the online course. Therefore, it was necessary for me to be flexible in asking appropriate questions which had not been predetermined during the interviews.

Nevertheless, this type of interview also has some drawbacks. Interviews can be time-consuming (e.g., arranging, setting up, conducting) (Chandra & Hareendran, 2018). However, this was not a major problem with the current study since there were only ten participants. All the interviews were carried out online at any time which was convenient for both parties and we could stay at our own location. Because a rapport between the participants and me had been established throughout the online course, it was not problematic for me to both follow the guiding question list and probe some further aspects in depth.

The interviews were carried out one-to-one with participants via Zoom after the online TBLT course had finished, each lasting approximately 15-20

minutes. Despite being online, participants and I were able to see and talk to each other comfortably. Participants joined the interviews from home, which made them feel more secure and private. However, poor internet connection sometimes caused the researcher to ask participants to repeat their answers, which could make them feel unnatural and limit the amount of information shared.

The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese so that the students could precisely express their thoughts. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission granted in advance. The data was then transcribed and translated into English by me. To mitigate the risk of misrepresentation due to different linguistic and cultural references (Filep, 2009), I involved multiple verification steps in the translation process. Firstly, I carefully transcribed the interviews and translated them into English. I recognised the importance of conceptual equivalence during the translation process. It was crucial to ensure that the translated data captured the participants' intended meanings in their interview responses (Halai, 2015). My students' answers were concise and straightforward and did not contain any idiomatic expressions or cultural nuance. Therefore, it was relatively simple and straightforward to preserve the participants' underlying ideas and thoughts. However, I was still extremely careful while interpreting the original Vietnamese texts and always tried to translate them into English in a way that could keep their intended meanings. I followed Halai's rules of dealing with interview data translation (2015), which aim to make sure that the translation is coherent, accurately conveys the interviewees' original tone and maintains a smooth and natural flow of expression. For instance, in the following example, my participant (TR0694) was sharing her experience of working in a group or

a pair, which helped reduce her EOCA. Since it was spoken Vietnamese, there were some repetitions in vocabulary and sentences in Vietnamese speech style. Therefore, I adjusted the wording slightly so that the sentences were grammatically correct and sound smoother in English.

The Vietnamese version if literally translated would be:

“When we finished discussing, I felt less anxious because when I worked in a group so I had more knowledge or ideas to talk with teacher. Working in a group or a pair was helping each other. There were some things I did not think of but others did think of so I could use their ideas.”

My translation:

“After the discussions, I felt less anxious because I could gain more knowledge or vocabulary to speak to teacher. We helped each other when we worked in groups or pairs. Sometimes, there was something I couldn’t come up with but others could, so I could use their ideas.” (TR0694)

Additionally, some general questions in the interviews were elaborated by adding some supplementary sub-questions in order to clarify specific details in the participants’ stories (see section 3.8.2, Piloting the interviews, for more discussions on what had been modified in the interview questions). This practice helped to ensure that the translated data accurately reflected the participants’ responses and provided a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and opinions regarding EOCA and the online TBLT courses.

After personally translating data from Vietnamese to English, I followed the “consultation” method (Filep, 2009) to seek validation from two independent colleagues who were fluent in both languages and had experiences with both Vietnamese and English culture. Each of them reviewed and checked five interview translation scripts to identify any discrepancies or

potential misrepresentations in the translation. For any problems due to different ways of wording while translating, we discussed together until we reached a mutual agreeable translation. However, we did not face any significant problems or disagreements with the translating contents. Below is an example of a difference between my translation and my colleague's review, as well as the final changes based on our mutual agreeable translation.

My translation and my colleague's review (in bold):

"P: I'm going to ask you some questions about your experience with the online English course? Did you have any difficulties **when => in** studying English online?

U: No, I didn't

P: Did you **experience => encounter** any difficulties when accessing the online course?

U: The only difficulty I had was that my Internet was not stable sometimes. It depended on the weather or the Internet status.

P: Ok. Was it easy to download the learning materials such as exercises or pictures that I sent to you? **Were they easy to see => clear enough, weren't they? (theo ta, tài liệu hình ảnh là có đủ rõ ràng (để đọc/xem) hay không?** (My colleague used Vietnamese here to clarify her suggestion of changing the wording. The sentence meant: "For me, I think it would be better to use the learning materials were clear enough to read/see or not") and did you have any difficulties when looking at my screen **share => shared** while studying online?

U: No, I didn't. The learning materials were clear and easy to see. The only problem was that when **the Internet was weak => the Internet connection was not good**, I couldn't see your screen clearly."

After we discussed together, we agreed on some changes in wording:

- ...when studying English online → in studying English online
- ...experience any difficulties... → encounter any difficulties
- Were they easy to see? → Were they clear enough to see/read?
- ...the Internet was weak → the Internet connection was not good.

Regarding the contents of the interviews, the participants were asked about what they thought of the learning methods used in the online TBLT course, the activities they did in the course, and the lesson contents. The participants were also asked to compare their feelings when they studied in their traditional classroom and online class. There were some more questions to check whether there was any change in the students' EOCA level after joining the online course. The list of interview questions can be found in Appendix 7. Prior to the official interviews, pilot interviews were conducted with participants from the pilot study. The details about the pilot interview will be discussed in section **3.8.2**, "Interview data analysis", because it also involves aspects of the data analysis discussion.

3.8 Data analysis

3.8.1 Questionnaire data analysis

3.8.1.1 Study 1 questionnaire

The Study 1 questionnaire was used to gain an overview of the EOCA experienced by the sampling group of the Study 1 – before the online TBLT course began. It was also used to measure the online course students' EOCA level before the course started. The first step to analyse the Study 1 questionnaire data was coding the participants' answers in numerical form. Two types of statistical analyses were employed:

- Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was computed to test the reliability of the two sub-scales used in the questionnaire, the T-Anxiety scale (Spielberger et al., 1983) and the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986).

- Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the participants' responses in more details. From the data, means, standard deviations, maximum, minimum and frequency of the variables were calculated with SPSS 26. These metrics were used to identify main tendencies of feeling anxious in English language classes and demographic correlations.

Regarding the T-Anxiety scale, the responses were designed with 4-point scale which were 1 = "not at all", 2 = "somewhat", 3 = "moderately so", 4 = "very much so". However, not all the items in this scale followed the same direction from low to high level. Hence, some items were reversed from 1 to 4, 2 to 3, 3 to 2 and 4 to 1 so that 4 indicated the highest anxiety level and 1 indicated the lowest anxiety level. This scale had nine reverse-scored items, including item number 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 13, 14, 16 and 19. After this step, the total score of each participant's answer were calculated. Based on the total scores, the relationship between the students' T-Anxiety and their EOCA was explored using Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients. The result will be discussed in the Findings chapter.

In terms of the FLCAS, all replies were on a spectrum from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree", depending on each statement such as either higher or lower level of anxiety. Responses were coded as follows: "strongly agree" = 1, "agree" = 2, "neither agree nor disagree" = 3, "disagree" = 4, "strongly disagree" = 5. The statements, however, were not consistently worded so that the same answer would always point toward either higher or

lower anxiety. To overcome this, scores of several items were reversed so that 5 suggested the highest anxiety level, and 1 was the lowest anxiety level. For example, replying “Strongly Agree” to statement 1 in the scale “*I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.*” indicated highest anxiety level, thus it was reversed to 5. In contrast, replying “Strongly Agree” to statement 2 in the scale “*I don’t worry about making mistakes in language class.*” indicated lowest anxiety, thus it was reversed to 1. Follow this process, the scores of the item numbers 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30 were reversed. After reversing the items, a total score of each participant’s anxiety level was calculated. Since there were 30 items of the FLCAS used in the current study, the total score can range from 30 to 150. In order to measure the students’ EOCA level, the number of standard deviations above or below the mean were used. This method was recommended by one of the developers of the FLCAS, Horwitz (2012), and was used in several related studies (e.g., Bollinger, 2017; Kruk, 2018; Marcos-Llinas & Garau, 2009; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). Specifically, participants whose EOCA mean scores were one or more standard deviations above the mean were considered to have a high level of anxiety. Participants whose EOCA scores were one or more standard deviations below the mean were considered to have a low level of anxiety. The rest were classified as having a moderate level of anxiety. The results of students’ EOCA levels will be discussed in the Findings chapter.

Apart from the FLCAS, the three items 3B-1, 3B-2, and 3B-3 of section 3B were added to investigate the reasons causing the students’ FLA. Frequency statistics were used to check for frequency of each item.

Finally, the EOCA short-answer questions in the final section of the questionnaire were analysed. These questions asked the participants about what caused their EOCA in their English class, what class activities that either provoked their EOCA or stimulated their interest in the activity. All the answers were inputted into Excel then categorised into different themes and subthemes. These themes and sub-themes were identified based on the codes collected from the students' answers. All the synonyms and phrases with similar meanings were analysed carefully so that no data would be missed. The themes were name in line with the related findings from the questionnaire and the interviews. Then, all the themes and sub-themes were double checked to ensure that all the codes fit in the suitable ones. After that, the frequency of each theme was calculated. From the data, reasons causing FLA, students' class activities provoking EOCA and their favourite class activities were revealed. **Table 3.5** below presents an example of data display for the question about sources of EOCA.

Themes	Subthemes	Codes	Frequency (n/166)	%
Linguistic Difficulties	Poor speaking skills	can't express myself	10	6%
		don't know how to arrange ideas		
		speak inarticulately		
	Poor listening skills	others don't understand my expression	20	12%
		can't understand teacher and friends		
		feel left behind		
Teacher and classroom-related factors	Poor pronunciation	can't keep up with class	48	28.9%
		bad pronunciation		
		others don't understand my pronunciation		
	Teacher-related factors	don't know how to pronounce a word	10	6%
		pressure from teacher		
		boring teacher		
	Learning method/ environment	strict teacher	10	6%
		teacher speaks too fast		
		don't understand teacher		
		boring speaking topics	10	6%
		no time to prepare for speaking		
		formal atmosphere		

Students' negative self-perceptions	Personal problems	short-term memory	16	9.6%
		afraid of strangers		
		lazy		
		don't focus on study		
	Lack confidence	unconfident to speak	71	42.8%
		shy		
		unconfident with my ability		
		afraid of crowd		
		afraid of making mistakes		
		ashamed of making mistakes		
		being laughed at		

Table 3.5

Example of short-answer data display

3.8.1.2 Pre and post session anxiety ratings data analysis

The pre and post session anxiety ratings was used for the participants to self-rate their EOCA levels in each session of the online TBLT course. The students were asked to rate their anxiety level before a session began and after the session finished. The scale was from (1) “Not present”, (2) “Mild”, (3) “Moderate”, (4) “Severe”, and (5) “Very severe”. The data collected was inputted in Excel. From here, a line graph showing each participants’ changes in EOCA level during the course was created. The participants were asked about the reasons why they rated their EOCA in each session in the interview. An example of quick self-rating anxiety scale data is presented below.

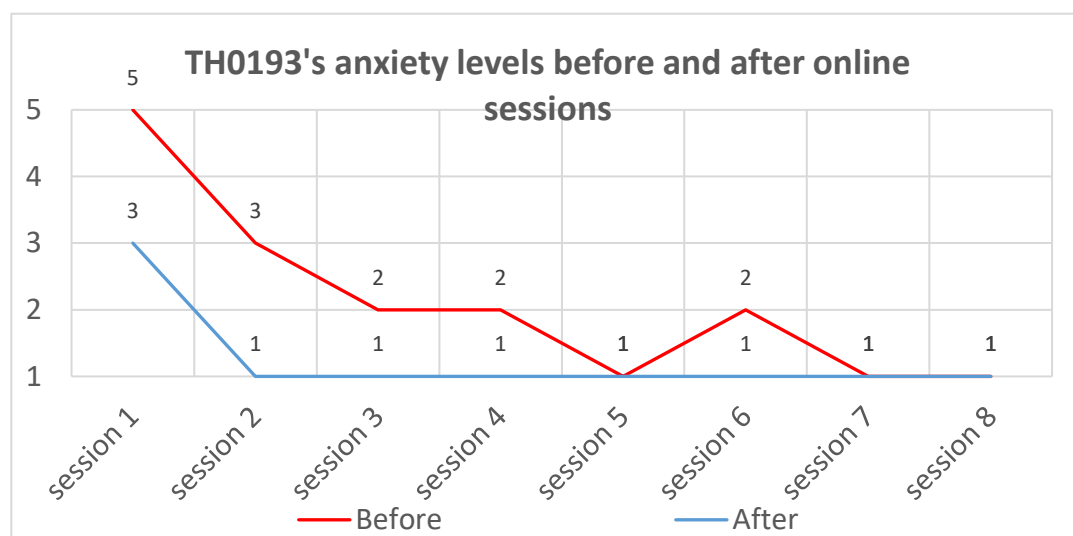


Figure 3.4

Example of mini questionnaire data

3.8.1.3 Study 2 - post-course questionnaire and study 2 - 2mo post-course questionnaire data analysis

The 10 online course participants’ total score on FLCAS in the Study 1 questionnaire (i.e., pre-course questionnaire) data (timepoint 1 – T1) was used to define their EOCA level before the online course. It then was compared with their post-course questionnaire (T2) and 2mo post-course questionnaire

FLCAS data (T3). The purpose was to examine any differences in FLCAS scores before and after the course. By doing this, the effectiveness of the online TBLT course was examined and its long-term effect was also tested. The Friedman test was employed to test for the differences among the data across the three timepoints, where the independent variable was the timepoint at which FLCAS data was collected (T1 vs T2 vs T3) and the dependent variable was the FLCAS scores. The Wilcoxon test was used to test for differences between the data of T1 and T2, T1 and T3 as well as T2 and T3. Friedman test and Wilcoxon test are nonparametric tests. The reason for using nonparametric tests was because the sampling size was small and the data was not normally distributed through the data distribution tests (Appendix 14). The .05 significance level (p), which is widely accepted as a borderline significance in social science research (Woodrow, 2014), was used to determine whether the differences in the data were significant. If $p < .05$, the data is determined to be significantly different.

In the process of analysing the effectiveness of the online TBLT course on students' EOCA, the choice between utilising one-tailed and two-tailed Wilcoxon tests was guided by theoretical expectations as discussed in the Literature Review chapter and the nature of the research questions. The comparisons between T1 (pre-course) and T2 (post-course), as well as between T1 and T3 (two months post-course), were analysed using one-tailed tests because the hypothesis was directionally specific. Based on pedagogical theory and previous empirical studies (section **2.4.2**, Literature Review chapter), it was anticipated that engagement in the TBLT course would facilitate a reduction in EOCA, thereby establishing a clear directional expectation of the outcomes. Conversely, for the comparison between T2 and

T3, a two-tailed test was employed. The rationale behind this decision was the lack of a distinct theoretical or empirical basis to presume the direction of EOCA change post-course completion. Since this stage did not involve any intervention, it was important to stay open to any changes in EOCA, following a neutral hypothesis. This strategic application of one-tailed and two-tailed tests guaranteed that the statistical analysis was not only supported with theoretical expectations but also ensured that the findings obtained are both valid and reliable.

Similarly, the data of the 10 comparison (non TBLT) students' Study 1 questionnaires (pre-course) and post-course questionnaires were compared using the Wilcoxon test. By comparing to the anxiety scores of the comparison group, any change in the online course participants' EOCA level can be more clearly attributed to the effectiveness of the online TBLT. Due to the non-parametric nature of the data and the small sample size (Appendix 14), it was not feasible to analyse the data from both groups together in a single analysis, as could be done with ANOVA. Consequently, the data from the TBLT and control groups were analysed independently and then comparatively described. A more comprehensive discussion about the selection of statistical tests will be presented in chapter four, the Findings chapter.

3.8.2 Interview data analysis

The interview data were analysed with the aim to explore each online course students' perception and opinion on the learning method and environment, the EOCA and the changes in their EOCA level. All the data collected from students' interviews were summarised and categorised using thematic analysis. This method is useful in identifying emerging patterns of themes and summarising key features in participants' opinions (Braun &

Clarke, 2013). A theme is a crucial factor that links similar pieces of data together to help researchers understand a phenomenon (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). In this study, the purposes of using thematic coding were to investigate fundamental information related to EOCA, TBLT approach and online learning, group similar ideas and categorise different ideas to explore themes to answer the research questions. This study followed the six-step approach of Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87) to analyse data, including (1) familiarising with data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing a report. As there were only ten interview transcripts, the data analysis was conducted on hard copy (example in Appendix 9) with the support of a mind mapping application named Coggle with the aim to make the data organisation and examination convenient. This platform offered a clear visual layout which allowed for deliberate grouping and positioning of categories for precise thematic organisation. Visual mapping enabled me to have an overview on what I had obtained from the student's interviews. Another benefit of visual mapping is to help examining the relationships between themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In Coggle, distinct colours are assigned to each theme, supporting in differentiating them from one another. The ability to modify a branch's colour offers a way to suggest potential connections to other themes. Though the colour differentiation helps with visual clarity, it is important to emphasize that the process of thematic analysis is complicated and demanding, with colour coding only serving as a visual tool, not a solution to the complexities of the analysis.

Regarding the procedure, the interviews were firstly listened to carefully and transcribed verbatim by me. After that, I translated all the interviews into

English and sent them to my colleagues via email for verification. The transcribing and translating process provided me a chance to get familiar with the data and gain an overview of what I had obtained from the process. After getting feedback from my colleagues and doing some revisions with the translating versions, I printed all the transcriptions out and read through them carefully and repeatedly in order to familiarise myself with data more thoroughly. During this process, I used highlight pens with different colours to mark the lines which were corresponding with the topics investigated. Specifically, I used green for the lines related to EOCA, blue for TBLT approach and pink for online learning experience. I also took notes next to the lines to have them coded later. The purpose of coding is to make the data simpler to highlight key features that would be categorised in broader themes (Dornyei, 2007). An example of my initial coding can be found in Appendix 9.

Starting my analysis, I approached each interview code as its own category at the beginning, using a “matching game” method. I systematically entered these codes into Coggle. While doing this, I looked for commonalities, and tried to group similar codes together. If a code did not seem to fit with any existing group, I set it aside for the time being to see if it matched with any future codes. It was clear that some codes could fit multiple categories since they related to more than one theme. For example, the code related to new/difficult topics could be put in the categories “Sources of EOCA” and “Topics” as a factor of TBLT to reduce EOCA. In such cases, I put the code into all relevant categories. I also recorded both the number of interviewees who expressed similar ideas and their ID codes next to each code. This allowed me to easily reference their specific comments for potential quotations in my report. The research questions were a guide throughout this process,

helping me decide what to focus on. As I examined deeper, I occasionally found new categories. During this review, I ensured each code was rightly placed and made changes if needed.

In Coggle, codes were grouped into branches, and each branch was labelled to reflect the common thread connecting the codes within (the visual mapping can be found in Appendix 10). While the codes were organised into various categories, these categories essentially functioned as subthemes. These subthemes could then be categorised further into overarching themes that captured the essence of participants' experiences, especially related to EOCA, the online course and TBLT approach. From the coding and analysis, there were three overarching themes explored, which were “perceived causes and levels of EOCA”, “online learning experience and challenges”, and “perceptions of the TBLT approach”. **Table 3.6** below presents an example of an overarching theme, a subtheme, codes and example lines from data found in the analysis process. The full detailed table of all the overarching themes, subthemes and codes can be found in Appendix 11. By the end of the process, I double-checked that the themes I had identified were accurately addressing the core of the research questions.

Overarching themes	Subthemes	Codes	Example lines from data
Perceived causes and levels of EOCA	Sources of EOCA	Presence of physical interactions in traditional classroom (TC)	I always feel more anxious if I have to talk face-to-face with somebody in real life. (CA1885) I felt less anxious in the online course. Because I didn't have to face other classmates in person. (TH0193)

		I saw that my friends were better than me, so I felt anxious. (CA1885) I was a bit anxious because there were some classmates
Sense of inferiority	of	who were better than me. I felt anxious when I studied with people whose level was higher than mine. (TR0694) I was afraid that I couldn't speak as well as they did and would affect them. (TR1210)
Encounter with difficult/new topics		I feel anxious if the topic is too strange. (TH0193) When the topic was too difficult, we couldn't speak much since we didn't have ideas. (CA1512) I was anxious because of the difficult and unpredicted topic. I think it would be difficult to talk about this topic in Vietnamese, let alone English. (TH0301)
Absence of task preparation time	of	In traditional class, I feel more stressed because I have to answer the teacher's questions immediately without any preparation. (TH2008) I normally do not have a chance to prepare the talk in the traditional classroom. I have to speak out immediately and I always forget what I have said. It makes me feel anxious. (PH3110)

Fear of negative evaluation	I feel anxious when studying at school. Because I am in a big group with many students. There are many friends around me, they may judge me, so I feel stressed. (VA1663)
Limited speaking opportunities	In a normal class, I can't have much English interaction, so I am shy and uncomfortable to speak English. (MD2077) My first difficulty was my anxiety. I rarely spoke English before this course. (TR0694)
Negative self-perceived English proficiency	My English level was too low. I didn't dare to speak English with other people. I was afraid that I couldn't speak English. I was afraid I couldn't answer any questions from the teacher or other classmates. (TR1210)
Bad pronunciation	My pronunciation was not good (VA1663) I personally knew that my pronunciation was not good. My partner didn't understand me and vice versa. (CA1885)
Idea scarcity	For example, in the last topic about business ideas, I felt anxious because I didn't know what to say. (CA1512) I was a bit worried because I didn't have enough ideas to share (VA1663)

Vocabulary deficiency	I am anxious when I don't have enough vocabulary. (TH2008) I am a bit anxious because my vocabulary is limited. (TR0694) I had many ideas, but I didn't have enough vocabulary, so I couldn't share many opinions. (TH0301)
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Table 3.6

Example of an overarching theme, a subtheme and codes from interviews

Piloting the interviews

The interviews for the main study were planned to take place online. So, piloting the interviews helped identify problems with the online procedure and check participants' comprehension on the interview questions. In addition, during the pilot phase, any revision to the questions to gain more specific data could be done before they were used in the main study. The pilot interviews also gave me an opportunity to carefully prepare for the actual interviews and get used to managing the interview operation and analysis.

Through the pilot, there were no problems with the online procedure. Both parties could talk with each other easily. It was easy to record the interviews. Regarding the interview contents, suggestions were made about elaborating some of the questions. Also, several more sub-questions were added in order to clarify some details in the participants' stories. In particular, some questions were too general and as a result, the students only provided general answers. For example, the first question was "what difficulties did you experience when studying English online?". At first, all the students answered that they had no difficult with online study apart from the Internet connection

problem. However, I wanted to know more details about any difficulties they faced when using the online platform or accessing learning materials. So, I had to ask more specific closed questions related to these factors. For instance:

“Did you have any difficulties when accessing the online course? If yes, what are they and what did you do in that situation?”

“Was it easy to download the learning materials such as exercises or pictures that I sent to you? Were they clear to see?”

“Did you have any problems with seeing the exercises and photos via screen share?”

Only then the students started to share more experience and opinions. Apart from the guided questions, the students were also asked about their reasons for rating their EOCA level in each online session. These questions were added because the analysis for the students' pre and post session anxiety ratings showed some patterns needing their explanation. For instance, a student rated an identical anxiety level before and after the first session. I was keen to understand the rationale behind such rating. For the second session, she marked her anxiety a level lower prior to its beginning. Given that we had not interacted after the first session, I was curious about what led to her reduced anxiety at the start of the second session. A visual representation of her anxiety levels can be seen in **Figure 3.5** below.

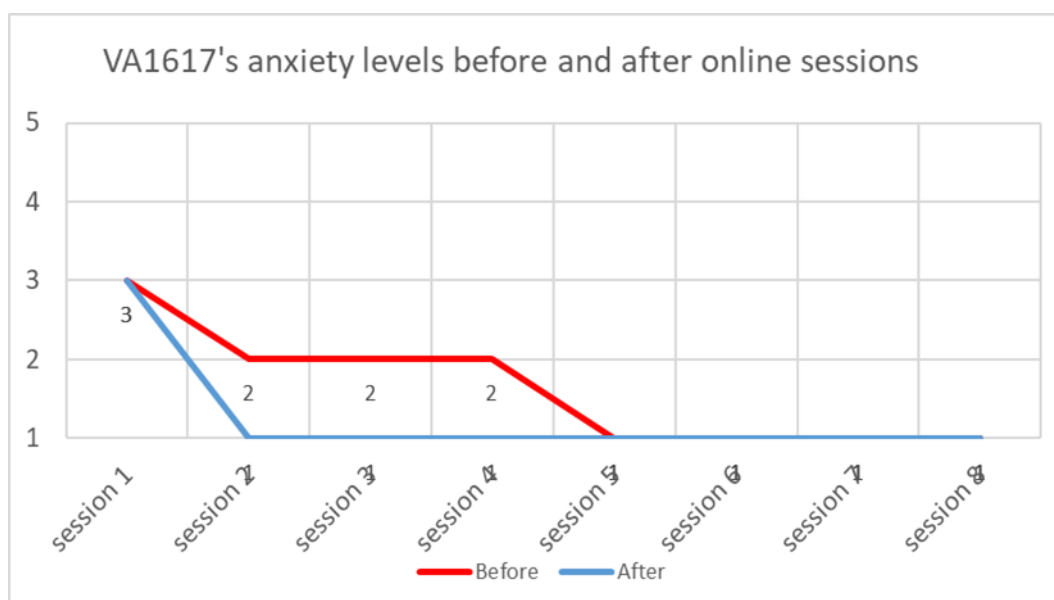


Figure 3.5

Example of pilot student's anxiety level chart before and after the pilot online

Full details of interview question revision can be found in Appendix 8.

I also conducted an analysis with the pilot interview data to gain some experience with data analysis and take into account any problems that might arise during the analysis. Firstly, the pilot interviews were transcribed verbatim then translated into English. To make sure my translation was correct and no details were missed, I asked my colleague to check the translated interview transcriptions. Then we had an online meeting to discuss what should be amended with the translated interviews. So far, it could be learnt that the transcribing and translating process would be time consuming but there would be no problem with the procedure.

Then I moved to the data analysis phase. From the analysis, three main themes were explored, which were related to the research issues such as students' experience with online learning, their perceptions of EOCA, their opinions on the TBLT approach while participating in the online TBLT course. Each of these overarching themes contained some subthemes which could be

used to answer the research questions. Hence, through the interview piloting and question revision, it was promising that the actual interviews would take place smoothly and the data collected would provide comprehensive answers to the research questions.

3.9 Ethical considerations and reflexivity

There were two phases for data collection including Study 1 questionnaire collection and the online course implementation. An ethical approval with a detailed submission before each data collection phase was applied (Appendix 12).

3.9.1 Ethical considerations

3.9.1.1 Study 1: Large-scale study of EOCA - questionnaire collection

The Study 1 questionnaire was given to approximately 200 students, as paper-based copies, to analyse their EOCA in their English language classes. Students were briefed on the study verbally, and information sheets handed out, at the end of an English session of theirs with their lecturer's permission. The participant information sheet was translated into Vietnamese and checked through the same process as the questionnaire translation. Any student opting not to be involved was able to leave the room at this point. There were about 30 students decided not to participate in the project. For students agreeing to participate, they remained to complete the questionnaire.

To protect participants' identity, each student was asked to create a unique code used as their identity for their own questionnaire by combining the first 2 letters of their middle name, the first 2 digits of their date of birth and the last 2 digits of their phone number. They returned their completed questionnaire in a blank sealed envelope, that was then mixed with other sealed envelopes, so that I could not link what they had just handed to me with

their identity. I was asking students to generate an ID code so that I could identify their questionnaire data, should they choose to participate in the next phase of my research (Study 2 - the online TBLT course) or withdraw from the study. As Study 2 also required participants to complete the same questionnaire, any participants completing the Study 1 questionnaire did not need to complete the questionnaire again before the TBLT course started. All the questionnaires were then brought back to the UK with me. All data was stored confidentially and anonymously in a locked cupboard in a secure workspace at my university. However, during the Covid-19 lockdown time, the university was closed, so I brought all the questionnaires home since I still needed to deal with data. I kept them securely in a locked cupboard.

Participants' handing over of the questionnaire was taken as their consent. They could withdraw from the study up to two weeks after taking part. If they wanted to withdraw from the study, they could contact me and give me their ID code. There were no students opting out after two weeks of data collection. The data was totally anonymised at the end of the project. Once anonymised, the data was analysed and presented. All data collected as part of this study is stored in the SHU Research Store provided by Sheffield Hallam University.

3.9.1.2 Study 2: Online TBLT course implementation

During the consent process, the participants were provided with an information sheet explaining the purpose of the study and how the data collected from them would be stored and used. As part of this, they were informed that information collected for this study may be re-used in future research, reports and publications, and that the anonymised data would be deposited to a research data archive (Elements).

Before they participated in the project, they were asked to sign a consent form. They could withdraw from the online course at any time without giving a reason. They could also request for their data to be withdrawn 2 weeks after the final online session without giving a reason and without prejudice.

The data was pseudo-anonymised in order to collect and store multiple sets of data from each participant at different stages of the project. Complete anonymisation was not possible at the different stages of data collection as I needed to keep track of all data belonging to each participant. Instead, each participant had an ID code which was created when they answered the Study 1 questionnaire, and a document specifying which code belonged to which participant was encrypted and stored in a secure location, separate from the other stored data/responses. Only I had access to encrypted ID code list and to any other data collected as part of this project (including consent forms and questionnaires).

The data were totally anonymised at the end of the project, at which point it was no longer necessary to know which data belonged to which participant. Once anonymised, the data were analysed and presented. All data collected as part of this study were stored in a university Research Store.

3.9.2 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the self-awareness of the researcher to consider their own thoughts and reflection on the context studied (Cohen et al., 2011). It requires a researcher to have a thorough understanding of his/her positions in the project and criticise his/her own biases which might affect his/her research analysis (Greene & Park, 2021).

Regarding my study, I could consider myself as an insider. According to Greene (2014), an insider researcher can be understood as an individual

who either belongs to or has intimate knowledge of a particular social group or community they are studying. Since the study was conducted in Vietnam, where I lived and worked, I understood the culture and its influence on students' learning habit and behaviour. I shared the common language and background with my students, so I appreciated their perspectives in a cultural context. This gave me a benefit in easily approaching rich data set because participants were more open in sharing (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Besides, I had grown up and been taught in a similar way with students in this community, which meant my participants and I shared the similar learning experience as well as difficulties in learning English. Therefore, I could empathise and fully appreciate students' motivations, pressure and circumstances. Finally, I was a lecturer of English at the university where this project took place, meaning that I understood thoroughly the educational systems and English programme there. This experience had given me a thorough appreciation of the core requirements, educational criteria and course contents which the participants were experiencing. I also understood teachers' motivation and priorities in students' skill development there. These three insider perspectives made me suitably position to explore and analyse the situation from multiple angles.

In my project, I played two roles, an online course instructor and a researcher. I needed to separate these two positions from each other so that the goals of one would not influence the other. Specifically, teaching practice should not alter with the intent of influencing research aims data and results. Since the participants and I had never met or known each other before the study took place, personal bias from previous interaction was not present. I did not have any influence on their academic achievement or scores so I did not

have leverage to the participants' study achievement at the university and they were not actively incentivised to achieve high scores.

Nevertheless, insider researchers face challenges in maintaining objectivity due to their close ties with the subject, leading to potential biases and assumptions (DeLyser, 2001). This proximity can limit their analysis and influence study outcomes (Merriam et al., 2001; Van Heugten, 2004). While some biases might offer insights, they can also skew research results (Greene, 2014). Therefore, I needed to be careful not to bring my biased assumptions of the context into my analysis but research the issue based on objective viewpoints. In particular, even though I knew culture and teaching style might have an influence on students' behaviours in the classroom, it did not mean every student would behave the same. There would be some students who might be reticent in their language class because of EOCA. In contrast, there would be others who might be still active and did not experience EOCA. Hence, it was important not to assume that all Vietnamese students experienced EOCA. The study results to answer the first research question about the existence of EOCA in Vietnamese students needed to be obtained from collecting students' own opinions and experience with EOCA. The Study 1 questionnaire was an appropriate data collection method since it could provide the objective data that I could not manipulate. I assumed English communication skill development was important to my participants because of their interest in participating in the study and benefiting from the additional learning opportunities and teaching it came with. However, this assumption might not be true in all cases, so it was important to bear in mind and not allow it to skew or colour my analysis. For example, some students attended

extracurricular courses with the sole purpose of improving performance in school and not actual interest in developing English skills.

In addition, with a high hope that the proposed teaching method would be effective in reducing students' EOCA, it was easy to assume that the anxiety would be reduced during the course. However, it was important not to allow this to affect the analysis and result interpretation. The course effectiveness on reducing students' EOCA needed to be assessed based on suitable methods. I believe the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods helped me avoid bias in evaluating the TBLT course effectiveness. Also, while conducting the interviews with my participants, I tried not to enforce or intentionally mislead them to share opinions in the way I expected. Although I had no prior relationship with my participants before the project, our rapport was built up during the online TBLT course. The students might understand my study objectives clearly and try to provide the data that they thought would help the project but not what they really thought and experienced. Hence, I had to make sure they understood the importance of objective data and that I would appreciate if they could be honest with me in the interviews. Furthermore, I had to be neutral when asking them questions related to their EOCA and experience with the online TBLT course. When conducting the interview transcription and translation, I had to be truthful and determined to keep all original meaning from the information that my participants provided.

In sum, there were a number of issues that needed to be taken into account throughout the duration of the study. I believe I thoroughly understood my positions in this study and was able to separate them so that no potential bias could influence the data collection and analysis. Also, I was aware that I

took sufficient measures and considerations before and during the project to address my study problems objectively and adequately.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter provided a detailed description on the methodology and procedures to conduct this study. It started with a discussion about the researchers' philosophical worldview, which was a crucial factor to define the research design and methods. Pragmatism was considered the appropriate and feasible philosophical stance to establish the methodological foundation of the research. The top priority of the study was to find out meaningful and reliable answers to solve the research problems. With this perspective in mind, the mix-method approach was adopted to explore the Vietnamese university students' EOCA and the effectiveness of the online TBLT course in reducing their EOCA. The purpose of using triangulation design, which involved both qualitative and quantitative methods, was to acquire unbiased and meaningful data for the research. The chapter also gave an account of the research design and research sample in which the research site, participants' background and participant recruitment were described. The data collection methods, procedures and analysis were discussed in depth. The chapter ended with the detailed clarifications of the ethical considerations and my reflexivity. The next chapter will discuss the research findings, according to the sequence of the research questions.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the current research on Vietnamese students' English oral communication anxiety (EOCA), an aspect of foreign language anxiety (FLA). It explores the contributors of EOCA and evaluates the effectiveness of an online task-based language teaching (TBLT) course in reducing students' EOCA. The findings have been organised in four sections, corresponding to the four research questions. The first section answers the first research question, which aims to investigate the students' EOCA level in university English language classes. The second section provides the findings of factors contributing to students' EOCA. The effectiveness of the online TBLT course in reducing the students' EOCA level is evaluated in the next section. The last section sheds light on potential factors within the online TBLT course that played a fundamental role in diminishing the participants' EOCA. The data was collected via questionnaires administered before, after and two months following the online course, along with pre and post session anxiety ratings and post-course interviews.

The research questions for the study were the following:

1. To what extent do a small sample of Vietnamese learners of English (n = 166) experience anxiety when communicating orally in English language classes (EOCA)?
2. What are the underlying factors contributing to EOCA among students in English language classes?
3. Is an extracurricular online TBLT course effective in reducing the students' EOCA level?

4. If so, what factors of such an online TBLT course might help reduce students' EOCA?

4.2 English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) experienced by Vietnamese university students

4.2.1 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) results

The aim of the first question is to examine the level of EOCA in Vietnamese university students. The Study 1 questionnaire and the post-course interviews were used to answer this question. The Study 1 questionnaire was delivered to 200 students at the university. There were 170 questionnaires returned, reaching 85% response rate. However, of all the initial 170 students who responded to the questionnaire, the analysis was based on 166 complete responses due to some missing data. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was computed to test the reliability of the two sub-scales used in the questionnaire, the T-Anxiety scale (Spielberger et al., 1983) and the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986). Both of the translated T-Anxiety scale and FLCAS used in this study had a high reliability with an alpha coefficient of .87 and .92, respectively. These scores indicate that the internal consistency of the two translated scales was satisfactorily reliable. The findings for the first research question are presented below.

Based on the anxiety level determination mentioned in the section **3.8.1.1** in chapter 3, the total scores of EOCA were computed from the FLCAS. According to Horwitz (2012), participants whose EOCA mean scores are one or more standard deviations above the mean are considered to have a high level of anxiety. Participants whose EOCA scores are one or more standard deviations below the mean are considered to have a low level of anxiety. The rest are classified as having a moderate level of anxiety. There were 30 items

of the FLCAS used in the questionnaire to measure the EOCA, so the total scores ranged from 30 to 150. In this study, the minimum score was 58 and the maximum score was 144. With the mean score at 102.55 and the standard deviation at 17.89, any student with the total score ranging from 121 to 150 was put in the high-anxiety group. The total score ranging from 86 to 120 was categorised as moderate-anxiety and the score ranging from 50 to 85 was classified as low-anxiety. The statistics of the FLCAS are presented in **Table 4.1** and the data distribution of the EOCA total scores is displayed in **Figure 4.1** below.

Total Score FLCAS		
N	Valid	166
	Missing	4
Mean		102.55
Std. Deviation		17.89
Minimum		58
Maximum		144

Table 4.1

Statistics of the FLCAS

The students' FLCAS total scores, the mean (102.55) and standard deviation (17.89) were calculated using SPSS. From the statistics, 15.7% of participants were in the high-anxiety group. It means that a notable minority of students experienced high level of EOCA. 66.9% of participants fell into the moderate anxiety group, indicating a remarkable number of students in the study experienced some level of anxiety when speaking English. 17.4% of participants were categorised as belonging to the low-anxiety group, which means that a portion of the sample experienced low level of EOCA.

The results indicate that EOCA does exist in the English language classes in the study context and that the majority experienced a certain degree of EOCA in their English language class.

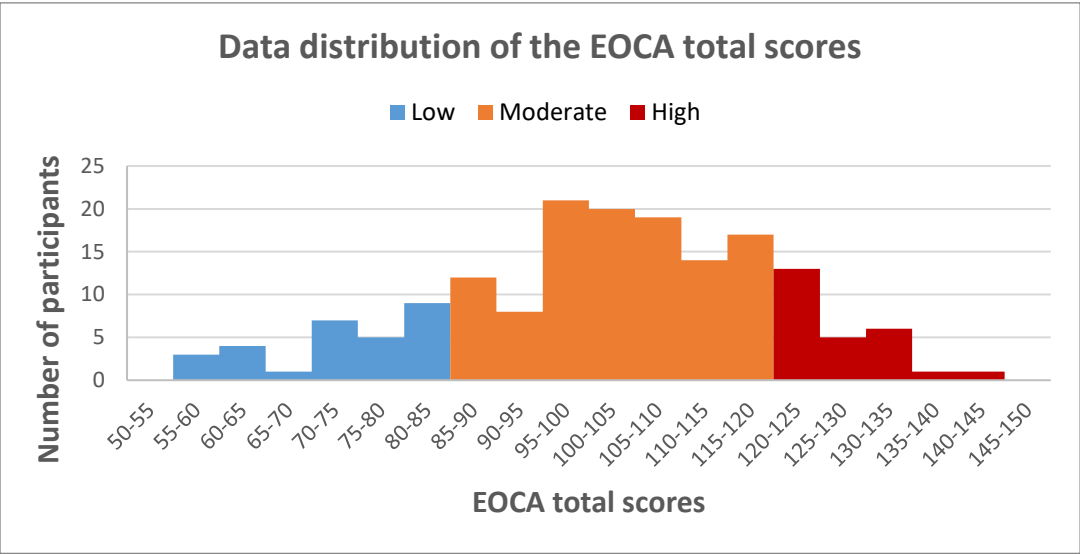


Figure 4.1

Data distribution of the EOCA total scores

When investigating the FLCAS items, it is essential to understand the specific aspects of EOCA that the participants experienced. By examining each item, the insights into different dimensions of anxiety experienced by students in their English language classes were obtained. This information allowed me to thoroughly understand the challenges they faced and suggest the targeted strategies to alleviate the anxiety and enhance their language learning experience. Based on the factor analyses from previous studies (Aida, 1994; Mak, 2011) and the discussion in Horwitz et al.’s study (1986), the items in the FLCAS were grouped by factor. Regarding the result of each FLCAS item, there were some interesting points as seen in the following table (**Table 4.2**).

No.	Item	SA + A	N	D + SD
Communication apprehension				
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class.	74.9%	14.2%	11.2%
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English language class.	66.1%	22.5%	11.8%
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	73.8%	12.4%	14.2%
8	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English language class.	77.9%	10.1%	12.4%
13	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	63.2%	20.7%	16.6%
18	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English language class.	56.6%	22.5%	21.3%
24	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.	59.7%	18.9%	21.9%
26	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English language teacher says.	72.7%	13.6%	14.2%
30	I get nervous when the English language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	75.0%	14.8%	10.1%
Comfortableness when speaking with L1 speakers				
12	I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.	26.6%	20.7%	53.3%

29	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.	29.6%	32.5%	38.5%
Negative attitudes towards English language class				
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes.	56.1%	22.5%	21.9%
6	During English language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	45.5%	30.8%	24.3%
9	I don't understand why some people get so upset over English language class.	26.6%	40.8%	33.1%
10	In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	49.0%	22.5%	29.0%
14	Even if I am well prepared for English language class, I feel anxious about it.	50.2%	29.0%	21.3%
15	I often feel like not going to my English language class.	21.3%	32.0%	46.7%
19	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English language class.	30.1%	27.2%	42.6%
25	When I'm on my way to English language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	14.8%	37.3%	47.9%
27	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	55.5%	24.9%	20.1%
23	I feel more tense and nervous in my English language class than in my other classes.	67.9%	12.4%	20.1%
Fear of negative evaluation				

2	I don't worry about making mistakes in English language class.	33.1%	17.2%	50.3%
11	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English language class.	50.8%	21.3%	28.4%
17	I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	20.1%	18.9%	61.5%
21	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	53.8%	23.7%	23.1%
28	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	46.0%	29.6%	24.9%
Negative self - evaluation				
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	72.0%	17.8%	10.7%
20	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	65.0%	21.9%	13.6%
22	English language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	54.4%	24.9%	21.3%

Table 4.2

Result of each item in FLCAS

Note. SA: Strongly Agree A: Agree N: Neutral D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

According to the result of each FLCAS item, it is found that the students experienced a quite significant communication apprehension. Specifically, they were anxious about speaking English in their English class (item 1, 74.9% agreed; item 3, 66.1% agreed; item 8, 77.9% agreed; item 24, 59.7% agreed;

and item 30, 75% agreed). 72.7% also rejected that they felt confident speaking English in their class (item 16). Moreover, items 8 and 30 indicate the fear of having to speak English without preparation in advance. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), individuals often assume that grasping every single word spoken is crucial for comprehending messages while communicating in the target language. Thus, the anxiety of not being able to understand language input, especially what their teachers said, belongs to communication apprehension category as well (item 4, 73.8% agreed; item 13, 63.2% agreed; and item 26, 72.7% agreed). When it comes to communicating with speakers whose first language is English (L1 speakers), only 29.6% suggested they might feel comfortable around L1 English speakers (item 29), and more than half of the participants disagreed with the statement “I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers” (item 12, 53.3% disagreed). These results imply that the Vietnamese students in this study experienced EOCA not only in their English class but also in real communication with L1 speakers. In addition, the participants expressed the fear of being less proficient in the target language than their peers (item 7, 72% agreed; and item 20, 65% agreed). Only 24.8% felt confident speaking English in their class without the fear of being laughed at (item 28), an aspect related to the fear of negative evaluation.

Regarding the fear of making mistakes, 50.3% of the students felt anxious when they made mistakes in their English class (item 2). However, they did not feel nervous if their teacher corrected all their mistakes as 61.5% disagreed with the statement “I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make” (item 17). It indicates that the students

were ready to get corrected by their teacher but they still felt embarrassed if they made mistakes in front of their classmates.

Despite the experience with EOCA in English language classes, the data shows that a significant portion of participants disagreed with the statement that attending English language classes was something they disliked (item 15, 46.7% disagreed, 32% stayed neutral, and 21.3% agreed). In addition, more than half of the participants expressed a willingness to take more English classes (item 5, 56.1% agreed).

These findings suggest that although EOCA was a notable challenge for the students in their English class, it was not necessarily the factor that diminished students' motivation to continue learning English. Instead, the data indicates that students were still motivated to participate in English classes. They possibly found English classes as an opportunity to overcome their anxiety and improve their English. This motivation is further supported by their receptiveness to teacher feedback in item 17. A majority of students (61.5%) disagreed with this statement that they were afraid of teacher's feedback on their mistakes. It implies that the students were ready to get corrected by their teacher to get better at speaking English.

The presentation of the frequencies for each option of every FLCAS item can be found in Appendix 5.

4.2.2 Key findings from post-course interviews

The post-course interview data collected from ten online course participants also support the findings from the FLCAS in the Study 1 questionnaire. Eight out of ten students reported in the interviews that they had experienced EOCA in their previous English classes. The other two implied that they felt less anxious when studied online than in their traditional class,

meaning they had had experience with EOCA before. Overall, these reflections reveal the challenges many students faced in traditional learning environments, particularly when it comes to speaking English confidently.

A common thread among the participants was their previous struggles with English speaking anxiety. Some admitted:

“My first difficulty was my anxiety. I rarely spoke English... Before, I couldn’t talk at all and I was so scared to talk.” (TR0694)

“Before I was too shy and anxious to speak English.” (TR1210)

“My English speaking anxiety level was high before the course. I didn’t dare to communicate.” (TH0193)

Many participants expressed heightened anxiety when studying in traditional classroom settings. For instance:

“I feel anxious when studying at school” (VA1663)

“In traditional class, I feel more stressed.” (TH2008)

The scary presence of teachers in traditional classrooms was highlighted by PH3110, who felt that:

“Teachers in traditional classroom look scarier.”

This anxiety was further exacerbated when participants had to engage in face-to-face English interactions. CA1885 admitted:

“I feel more anxious if I have to talk face-to-face with somebody in real life.”

Similarly, MD2077 felt inhibited in regular classes:

“In a normal class, I can’t have much English interaction, so I am shy and uncomfortable to speak English.”

In summary, the findings related to the first research question suggest that Vietnamese university students in the study context did experience EOCA

in their English language classes to a significant extent. The majority of them reported varying degrees of EOCA during their English language classes.

4.3 Factors contributing to English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) among students in English language classes

The aim of the second research question is to explore underlying factors causing students' EOCA in English language classes. As mentioned in section **3.7.1.1** of the Methodology chapter, examining any relationship between T-Anxiety and EOCA in this study served the purpose of providing insights into the definition and sources of EOCA. Hence, the objectives to address the research questions include two sub-questions:

- Does EOCA (as measured on FLCAS) relate to students' general trait anxiety (T-Anxiety)?
- Which factors contribute to students' experience of EOCA??

To answer these questions, the data collected from the Study 1 questionnaire of 166 students were used.

4.3.1 The relationship between students' trait anxiety and EOCA

The rationale for exploring the relationship between trait anxiety and EOCA arose from the two contrasting approaches to defining FLA, as discussed in the Literature Review chapter. The "anxiety transfer" theory suggests those with trait anxiety will also experience FLA, while the "unique anxiety" theory views FLA as situation-specific, unrelated to personality. Since EOCA is an aspect of FLA, any association between T-Anxiety and EOCA found in this study would shed light on the definition and contributors of EOCA. If not, the definition of FLA or EOCA as a situation-specific anxiety would be verified.

To measure students' general trait anxiety (T-Anxiety), the T-Anxiety scale designed by Spielberger and his colleagues (1983) was employed. The scale used in this study achieved a high reliability, achieving an alpha coefficient of .87. Firstly, the total scores of T-Anxiety were computed for this study. The minimum score recorded for T-Anxiety was 32, while the maximum score was 75. The range was calculated as 43, revealing that there was a considerable spread of T-Anxiety among the participants. The mean score for T-Anxiety across the sample was 54.42 and the median score was 54.00. The standard deviation was found to be 9.80. This implies that most of the T-Anxiety scores fell within approximately 9.80 points above or below the mean. Compared to standard norms (Spielberger et. al., 1983), which had mean scores ranging from 34.89 to 40.97, the participants in the current study had considerably higher scores for T-Anxiety. This result indicates a higher level of general trait anxiety in this group.

To compute the correlation between the students' T-Anxiety and their EOCA, the Pearson Correlation was run. The reasons for employing Pearson Correlation test were because the data were judged to be sufficiently normally distributed and there were no outliers (Appendix 13).

Based on the result, there was a significant positive correlation between students' T - Anxiety and EOCA total scores ($r = .53$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that the students' general trait anxiety and EOCA were significantly associated with each other. The positive correlation suggests that the higher the student's trait anxiety, the higher EOCA. However, the common variance shared, how much two variables tend to vary together, between these two factors was only 28% (r^2). It means around 72% of the variance were not shared between them. The data indicates that only 28% of the variation in one

factor can be predicted or explained by its relationship with the other factor. In other words, while there was some correlation between the two variables, a significant 72% of the variation in each factor was independent and not influenced by the other. It can be concluded from the results that EOCA was influenced by T-Anxiety, as evidenced by the significant positive correlation between the two variables. However, T-Anxiety did not fully account for the variations in EOCA because the two variables shared only 28% of their variance. Therefore, T-Anxiety could be a contributing factor to EOCA but it was not the sole reason, and other factors must be influencing EOCA as well.

It becomes evident that EOCA functions as a situational-specific anxiety. Although there is a significant positive correlation with trait anxiety, the 72% unshared variance emphasizes that EOCA is largely influenced by factors unique to the situation of learning a foreign language. This supports the concept of FLA, which includes EOCA, as a situational specific anxiety. Even though an individual may have general tendencies to anxiety (as indicated by trait anxiety), the unique challenges, experiences, and contexts of foreign language learning contribute significantly to the anxiety they experienced in those specific situations. Thus, it can be concluded that the specific dynamics of the foreign language learning environment predominantly shape EOCA and general anxiety traits can also affect EOCA to some extent.

4.3.2 Factors causing Vietnamese university students' EOCA

The data for this section were collected via the items in the FLCAS and in section 3B, short-answer questions in section four of the Study 1 questionnaire, and post-course interviews. According to the results, there were three main sources of the participants' EOCA, including students' personal and

interpersonal anxieties, teacher and classroom-related factors, and linguistic difficulties.

4.3.2.1 Students' personal and interpersonal anxieties

The first and most common psychological factor found across the data results was the lack of confidence. The students' responses to some FLCAS items brought this to light (**Table 4.2**). In particular, a large number of the participants felt unconfident and unsure of themselves when they spoke English in their class (item 1 and item 16). They experienced nervousness and confusion during in-class speaking activities (item 24). Furthermore, half of them expressed that they felt embarrassed if they voluntarily answered any questions (item 11). Only 14.8% agreed with the statement "When I'm on my way to English language class, I feel very sure and relaxed" (item 25). They also felt uncomfortable when being around L1 speakers (item 12 and item 29). The result from the short-answer question also supported the findings from the FCLAS. 42.8% of the participants stated that their lack of confidence was the reason for their EOCA. Many of them felt shy when required to speak English in their class. They felt ashamed with their pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. In the interviews, the statements "*I was not confident with my English speaking skills*", "*I didn't dare to speak*" or "*I was shy and couldn't speak*" were shared by most of the interviewees when asked about their feelings before joining the online TBLT class.

It appears that students who lacked confidence not only held pessimistic beliefs about their capacity to acquire the target language but also doubted their own proficiency, particularly in terms of their perceived inadequacies in oral communication skills. These doubts and limitations, in turn, played a role in causing their EOCA. While this may not necessarily

equate to poor skills, students' anxiety was triggered when they encountered situations where they could not comprehend what their English language teacher was saying. This is evident from the responses to items 4, 13 and 26 of the FLCAS (**Table 4.2**). Item 4 indicates that students experienced fear when they could not grasp the content of the teacher's speech in English (73.8% agreed). Similarly, item 26 reflects that nervousness arose when students could not understand every word spoken by their English language teacher (72.7% agreed). Item 13 demonstrates that students also experienced anxiety when they could not understand what the teacher was correcting (63.2%).

In addition, the data collected from question 8 about students' self-evaluation of their English speaking competence in the first section of the Study 1 questionnaire (part 1 – Background, Appendix 3) showed that the vast majority of participants seemed uncertain on their confidence of speaking English. 85.3% rated themselves as having low level of English oral communication (EOC) skills. In specific, 66.5% admitted that they faced difficulties when communicating in English. 18.8% even could only speak a few English words. In contrast, a small portion of the students (12.9%) were moderately confident with their EOC skills. Barely any (1.8%) considered themselves as fairly fluent in speaking English and none felt completely confident.

However, their official English speaking results of the last final term collected in the same part of the Study 1 questionnaire (question 9, part 1 - Background, Appendix 3) showed a difference. This data was collected so that their English speaking skills could be evaluated from more than their own

perception. The score range followed the university score classification policy, presented in **Table 4.3** below.

Score Range	Level
< 4.0	Poor/Weak
4.0 – 5.4	Below Average
5.5 – 6.9	Average
7.0 – 8.4	Good
8.5 – 10	Excellent

Table 4.3

University score classification

Based on these classifications, the findings revealed that 68.8% of the participants fell into the below average or poor categories in terms of English speaking skills, while 15.9% were categorised as average, and a combined 9.4% were assessed as good or excellent. When compared to the 85.3% who reported themselves as having a low level of EOC skills, it suggests that the participants might have underestimated their EOC ability. This indicates the lack of confidence in their own English competence.

In the interview, MD2077 confessed that:

“I realised that my English was too horrible so I felt anxious.”

TH0301 shared the similar thought:

“It was ok if I didn’t know my English level, but after I knew it, I felt much more anxious.”

They also felt inferior when comparing their English ability with their peers’. PH3110 explained why she did not feel confident in her English class that:

“I was afraid that I couldn’t share a lot of ideas and my speaking skills were not as good as others.”

Similarly, TR1210 said:

“Sometimes I felt anxious when I didn’t know their levels. I was afraid that I couldn’t speak as well as they did and would affect them.”

Additionally, CA1885 admitted to feeling anxious when she noticed that her friends were performing better than she was in her class:

“I saw that my friends were better than me so I felt anxious.”

TR0694 experienced nervousness when she thought she had to study with individuals whose level of proficiency was higher than hers:

“I felt anxious when I studied with people whose level was higher than mine.”

The results of the Study 1 questionnaire show the similar findings (**Table 4.2**). More than two thirds of the participants thought that their English, especially their speaking skills, were not as good as their classmates’ (item 7, 72% agreed and item 20, 65% agreed).

Another contributor of EOCA in this section was the fear of making mistakes and losing self-image. This kind of anxiety belongs to the fear of negative evaluation (FNE) category (Horwitz et al., 1983). 50.3% of the students felt nervous when they made mistakes in their English class (**Table 4.2**, item 2). They were also afraid of being laughed at when speaking English in front of the class (item 28, 46% agreed, 29.6% stayed neutral, 24.9% disagreed). This corresponds with item 21 “I felt very self-conscious about speaking English in front of my classmates”, which was agreed by 53.8% of the participants. This result indicates that the students might only feel safe when they were not required to speak English in front of the class. It potentially leads to their reticence or unwillingness to speak in class discussions. In response to the short-answer questions, numerous students confessed to

feeling embarrassed when they made mistakes in front of their peers. When they made mistakes, their classmates laughed at them, which resulted in a loss of face (being ashamed) and a decrease in their confidence to continue speaking. Interview comments supported the findings of the questionnaire. CA1512 shared her experience:

“In a traditional class, others around me just comment on my mistakes indirectly, which distracts me. I considered the teacher as a friend, helping me correct my mistakes...when I am wrong, I get corrected by my teacher and also get indirect comments from my classmates, which makes me worry.”

VA1663 expressed his anxiety when being surrounded by many friends:

“I feel anxious when studying at school. Because I am in a big group with many students. There are many friends around me, they may judge me so I feel stressed, even though I have prepared the lesson in advance”.

The pressure from peers was clearly revealed. However, students did not experience anxiety when teacher corrected their mistakes. This relates to the item 17 in the questionnaire (**Table 4.2**) “I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.” 61.5% of the students showed disagreement with this statement. It suggests that making mistakes in front of their teacher did not provoke their EOCA but their classmates’ evaluation might be a source of their anxiety in class.

In addition, some students confessed that they had the fear of public speaking. They froze and forgot what they had prepared when they were asked to speak in front of the class. In the FLCAS response (**Table 4.2**), 50.2% of the participants endorsed the statement “even if I am well prepared for English

language class, I feel anxious about it” (item 14). This source of anxiety might relate to students’ trait anxiety since a significant correlation between the students’ T-Anxiety and EOCA was found (section **4.3.1**).

4.3.2.2 Teacher and classroom-related factors

Teachers’ beliefs about language teaching can influence their classroom management and lesson delivery, potentially contributing to students’ EOCA. In this study, half of the interviewees felt less anxious with a friendly teacher. This result suggests that some had experienced anxiety due to strict teachers. Some students reporting to the short-answer question identified their English teacher as a significant source of their EOCA. They could feel the pressure that their teacher put on them while they performed their English tasks. They felt anxious when the classroom environment was stressful and uncomfortable. Although the number of students who reported their EOCA caused by teachers’ attitude was small, the severity of the impact on those students made it a factor that is worth considering in efforts to reduce EOCA. An intimidating or unfriendly teacher can create a stressful atmosphere and make students feel anxious, especially during speaking tasks.

The next teacher-related factor found was the way a teacher operates his or her class. If the students could not understand what their teacher said, they would feel anxious. More than 70% of the students experienced this fear (**Table 4.2**, item 4 and item 26). Furthermore, half of the participants had a feeling that “English language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind” (item 22). In the short-answer response, a number of students expressed overwhelming and confusing feelings when their teacher spoke too fast. They were afraid that they could not keep up with the class. In addition, teacher’s instructions sometimes were too complicated to understand. The

students also felt nervous when they could not understand their teacher's feedback (item 13, 63.2% agreed). The finding indicates that some teachers might not notice the difficulty in comprehension that their students were facing in their class. Hence, they might not be aware of the need to adjust their speech speed or provide more clarification to help their students understand their instructions or feedback better.

Another source of EOCA that the majority of the students mentioned in the survey was the lack of preparation time. When teacher forced the students to perform their oral tasks in front of the class without giving them some time to prepare, the students felt extremely anxious. This was revealed via item 8 in the FLCAS "I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English language class" (**Table 4.2**), which roughly 78% of the students agreed with. They also got frightened when they had to answer their teacher's questions immediately (item 30, 75% agreed). 21% of the students stated this factor again when answering the short-answer question. In the interviews, several students reported that they experienced EOCA when they had to perform oral tasks without preparation. When asked about what she felt when she had to speak immediately in her class, TR0694 stated:

"That was the scariest thing. It is really scary to speak immediately when I don't have any ideas, vocabulary or sentence structures. I think having time to prepare in advance is better."

TH2008 shared the same feeling:

"In traditional class, I feel more stressed because I have to answer teachers' questions immediately without any preparation. I am anxious when I don't have enough vocabulary."

In addition, most of the interviewees shared that they would feel more comfortable and less anxious if they were given time to prepare a task in advance. The alleviation of anxiety through preparation was a common share:

“When I had enough ideas and time to prepare, I didn’t feel anxious.”
(MD2077)

“I felt more confident when I had time to prepare my talk.” (TH0193)

“This (having time to prepare the talk) obviously helped me speak more fluently and I felt less anxious to speak.” (TR1210)

“I feel more confident when I can prepare the task in advance.”
(VA1663)

Unfamiliar or difficult lesson topics were stated as another contributor of the students’ anxiety. Half of the students in the interviews reported that they felt uncomfortable and confused with the topics that required them to use complicated vocabulary and grammar. Topics that were unfamiliar, unpractical, or overly abstract also caused the feeling of boredom and anxiousness. Their concern stemmed from the fear of not being able to perform the assigned task effectively due to a lack of ideas or language proficiency to discuss the topic. For example, CA1512 shared her concern that:

“When the topic was too difficult, both of us couldn’t speak much since we didn’t have ideas. I felt anxious because I didn’t know what to say.”

Similarly, TH0301 felt anxious when she had to deal with *“difficult and unpredicted topic”*. She thought it was hard for her to talk about the topic in Vietnamese, let alone English. Indeed, lacking ideas to talk about a topic was one of the sources of EOCA. In section 3B of the Study 1 questionnaire, more than 80% of the participants agreed with statement “I feel anxious in my

English language class because of my lack of knowledge of a certain lesson topic.” However, new topics did not always cause EOCA to the students. Some of them said that the new topics were interesting and encouraged them to study harder. TR0694 shared that:

“I learnt a lot of new vocabulary and the way to present my creative idea.”

The students were also interested in topics that related to their major and daily communication. They found these topics practical and useful, which could help them in their future. Some of them stated that:

“I like to study topics related to business, trading and how to introduce products to customers.” (CA1885)

“I like the topic about asking for and giving directions because I think it is useful. The topics are quite familiar to my real life.” (MD2077)

“I liked talking about my future plan. Because I can add this into the introduction about myself when I meet a foreigner. This is really good. Maybe they will give me a job or introduce me to their friends who may help me with my future plan.” (VA1663)

4.3.2.3 Linguistic difficulties

According to the results obtained from the FLCAS in the Study 1 questionnaire, it was found that most students considered the lack of English vocabulary and English grammar were amongst the sources of their EOCA. As can be seen from **Table 4.4**, more than 80% of the students endorsed the statements 3B-1 and 3B-2. In addition, more than half of the students agreed that they felt overwhelmed with various grammar rules they had to learn to speak English.

No.	Item	SA + A	N	D + SD
27	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	55.5%	24.9%	20.1%
3B-1	I feel anxious in my English language class because I do not have adequate English vocabulary.	80.2%	11.2%	8.9%
3B-2	I feel anxious in my English language class because I do not have adequate knowledge of English grammar.	80.8%	11.2%	8.3%

Table 4.4

Reasons causing EOCA

Note. SA: Strongly Agree A: Agree N: Neutral D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

In the interviews, some students seemed to express more concern on their lack of vocabulary than the lack of grammar. When asked for the reason causing EOCA, TH0301 commented that:

“I had many ideas but I didn’t have enough vocabulary, so I couldn’t share many opinions.”

Similarly, TH2008 admitted that:

“I am anxious when I don’t have enough vocabulary.”

In addition, some felt nervous when they encountered a difficult topic, which they did not have adequate vocabulary to talk about. PH3110 said:

“With the topic that required a large range of vocabulary, I found it difficult and I felt anxious.”

Difficulty with pronunciation is another reason causing the students’ EOCA. 28.9% of the students mentioned bad pronunciation in their answer for the short-answer question “Please name the reasons you feel anxious in your

English language classes other than the lack of English vocabulary, grammar and knowledge of certain lesson topics". Additionally, in the interview with VA1663, he said:

"I was worried and anxious before the first lesson started because I didn't speak English regularly, my English level wasn't high, and my pronunciation was not good."

He admitted that he experienced too much stress when he spoke English due to his poor pronunciation. CA1885 also commented that she felt anxious when she could not check the correct pronunciation before speaking.

Another important factor triggering students' EOCA is the inadequate oral communication competence. This is evident from the students' direct feedback in the short-answer questions regarding the factors contributing to students' EOCA in section four of the Study 1 questionnaire. When examining which classroom activities triggered students' anxiety the most, 40% of respondents (n = 166) identified speaking tasks. While speaking stood out as a major concern, 25% of the students also highlighted listening activities as a contributor to their EOCA. A deeper look into the feedback from the short-answer questions revealed that students felt a sense of exclusion during lessons largely because they struggled to understand peers and teachers as well as to identify appropriate vocabulary, grammar and sufficient ideas in a short time to express their viewpoints.

Students experienced uncertainty in initiating conversations and communicating effectively. TH0301, expressed this:

"I didn't know how to begin my talk. I didn't know how to speak properly so I felt more anxious."

Another student, TR0694, conveyed the challenge of mutual comprehension:

"I was afraid that they couldn't understand me or I couldn't understand them."

CA1885 shared the difficulty of expressing herself fully due to her vocabulary limitations.:

"I didn't have a great deal of vocabulary, so I couldn't fully express myself and sometimes my talk couldn't be fluent."

The concern also extended to the challenge of understanding peers or instructors, as expressed by TH2008:

"Because they spoke too fast, I didn't understand their questions. I had to ask them to repeat what they said, so I felt anxious."

Similarly, CA1885 shared:

"I personally knew that my pronunciation was not good. My partner didn't understand me and vice versa."

Such responses highlight the weight of linguistic challenges when engaging in speaking activities.

In summary, key sources of EOCA found in the study were students' personal problems, teacher and classroom-related factors, and linguistic difficulties. Students' EOCA was influenced by their linguistic component deficiency, lack of confidence, fear of peer evaluation, teacher-related factors, the pressure of immediate oral responses, and the complexity of lesson topics. This section also revealed a significant positive correlation between students' T-Anxiety and EOCA, with a 28% shared variance, meaning that T-Anxiety had an influence on students' EOCA level. However, a large portion (72%) of the EOCA remained unexplained by T-Anxiety. This finding suggests that other

situational factors principally influenced EOCA. The definition of EOCA as a situational-specific anxiety was also supported.

4.4 Effectiveness of online TBLT course in reducing students' EOCA level

The aim of the third research question is to evaluate the effectiveness of the TBLT online course in reducing the students' EOCA in English language classes. To answer this question, the data collected from the Study 1 questionnaire, post-course questionnaire and 2mo post-course questionnaire of 10 online course students and 10 comparison (non TBLT) students were used. The data of the pre and post session ratings were also employed.

4.4.1 EOCA reduction in the group of online course students

4.4.1.1 Statistical analysis of EOCA reduction over the course duration (pre-course, post-course, and 2mo post-course)

The analysis was conducted based on the data collected from the Study 1 questionnaire (pre-course), post-course questionnaire, and 2mo post-course questionnaire. The online course students were asked to answer the Study 1 questionnaire eight weeks before they participated in the online TBLT course (timepoint 1 – T1). The rationale for administering the questionnaire well in advance of the online course commencement was to avoid placing unnecessary stress on the participants just before the course started. This precaution was taken to prevent any potential impact on their state anxiety, which, in turn, could have influenced their pre-course EOCA scores. Also, the T1 was also the time the Study 1 was conducted and these online students had already provided responses for the Study 1 questionnaire. There was no need for them to fill out the questionnaire again before the course began. Avoiding repetition helped prevent students from feeling fed of the survey,

which can impact the quality and reliability of the responses. The participants then answered the post-course questionnaire right after the course finished (T2). Two months later, they were asked to answer the questionnaire one more time (T3). The data from the standardised FLCAS and the three items related to sources of EOCA in section 3B (labelled as “Three EOCA source items”) at these three timepoints were compared.

The students’ EOCA level changes were analysed. First, the FLCAS total scores of each participant were calculated. As can be seen in **Table 4.5**, most of the participants were in the moderate anxiety level group (86-120) before they participated in the course. There was one participant in high anxiety level group (121-150) and one in low anxiety level group (50-85).

Participants	Pre-course FLCAS total score	Post-course FLCAS total score	2mo Post- course FLCAS total score
TR1210	122	89	86
MD2077	103	79	101
TH2008	88	76	79
TH0193	105	64	57
CA1885	116	104	89
VA1663	118	70	89
PH3110	118	107	111
CA1512	80	97	77
TH0301	89	90	87
TR0694	90	92	68

Table 4.5

Online course students' FLCAS total scores

Since the sample size was small and the data were skewed (Appendix 14), the appropriate measure of central tendency was the median. From the data analysis results, the medians of the participants' EOCA total score after the online course (89.50) and two months after the course (86.50) were lower than the median of their EOCA total score before the course (104). The box and whisker plot (**Figure 4.2**) confirms that the medians of the two post-course conditions were lower than the median of the pre-course condition and also showed no outliers. After the course, the total EOCA scores of most of the participants declined, meaning the reduction in their EOCA levels. There were three cases whose EOCA scores increased (participants CA1512, TH0301, and TR0694). Nevertheless, two months after the online course finished, all participants maintained lower EOCA scores compared to their pre-course results. This suggests a sustained reduction in EOCA levels for the majority of the group.

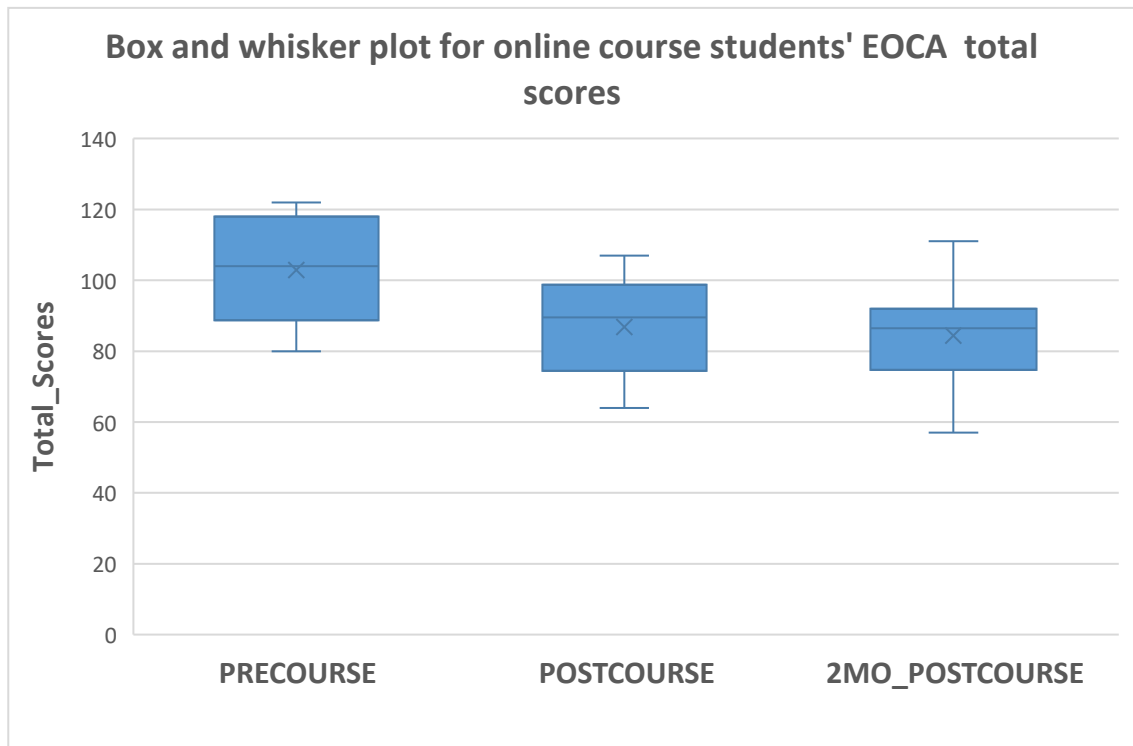


Figure 4.2

**Box and whisker plot for online course students' EOCA total scores
before and after the online course**

To examine the significance of these changes, a nonparametric equivalent of a one-way repeated measures design was used. This choice was made to be conservative, particularly due to the small sample size and the non-normal distribution of the data. There were three timepoints to compare, so the Friedman test was employed. EOCA was measured in the 10 online course participants using the FLCAS, prior to the TBLT course (T1 – Mdn = 104, range = 42), immediately after the course (T2 – Mdn = 89.5, range = 43) and at a 2-month follow-up (T3 - median = 86.5, range = 54). Friedman's test showed a significant overall difference in EOCA scores across the three timepoints ($X^2 = 8.600$, $p = 0.014$). It could be concluded that the online course participants' EOCA levels reduced after they participated in the online TBLT course.

In addition, the pairwise comparisons between the EOCA levels at T1 and T2, T1 and T3, as well as T2 and T3 were performed to explore the differences between the specific timepoints. The T-test and Wilcoxon test analyse paired data, with the T-test used for normally distributed data and the Wilcoxon test for non-normally distributed data (Dancey & Reidy, 2020). In this study, the Wilcoxon test was chosen because the data were small ($N = 10$) and skewed (Appendix 14). Parametric tests like the T-test would be inappropriate in this context (Cohen et al., 2018). The Wilcoxon test effectively compared the EOCA levels of participants before and after the TBLT course, ensuring consistency and minimising individual differences. Wilcoxon Ranks tests were conducted and the following results were: T1 vs T2 ($W = 9$, $p = 0.03$); T1 vs T3 ($W = 0$, $p = 0.003$); T2 vs T3 ($W = 22$, $p = 0.57$). This shows that EOCA reduced significantly between T1 and T2 and T1 and T3 but not between T2 and T3. The significant difference of T1 and T2 suggests that there was a reduction in students' EOCA right after taking the course. The significant difference of T1 and T3 demonstrates that the online TBLT course had a significant and lasting effect in reducing students' EOCA. The result of the non-significance test between T2 and T3 indicates that the students' EOCA level remained stable after the course completion. These findings suggest that the online sessions, when considered as a whole group experience, consistently and significantly reduced anxiety levels among the participants.

In terms of the Three EOCA source items related to the lack of grammar, pronunciation and ideas to certain topics in section 3B of the Study 1 questionnaire, their total scores at the three timepoints (T1-T2-T3) were computed. Since the sample size was small and the data were skewed (Appendix 16), the appropriate measure of central tendency was the median.

The data analysis revealed that participants showed a decrease in the median scores for the Three EOCA source items, dropping from 12.5 before the course to 12 after the course and further to 10.5 two months after its completion, It implies the reduction in their EOCA sources.

To examine the significance of these changes, a nonparametric equivalent of a one-way repeated measures design was used. This choice was made to be conservative, particularly due to the small sample size and the non-normal distribution of the data. With three timepoints for comparison, the Friedman test was utilised. The total scores of the Three EOCA source items were measured in the 10 online course participants, prior to the TBLT course (T1 – Mdn = 12.5, range = 7), immediately after the course (T2 – Mdn = 12, range = 12) and at a 2-month follow-up (T3 - median = 10.5, range = 6). Friedman's test showed a significant overall difference in the three EOCA source scores across the three timepoints ($X^2 = 12.97$, $p = 0.002$). The result suggests that TBLT course may have played a role in reducing the sources of EOCA among participants over time.

In addition, the pairwise comparisons between the total scores of the three EOCA sources at T1 and T2, T1 and T3, as well as T2 and T3 were performed to explore the differences between the specific timepoints. Since the data were small ($N = 10$) and skewed (Appendix 16), a nonparametric test was employed for the analysis. The utilisation of the same participants in both before and after conditions justified the selection of the Wilcoxon test over the t-test. Wilcoxon Ranks tests were conducted and the following results were: T1 vs T2 ($W = 32.5$, $p = 0.03$); T1 vs T3 ($W = 0$, $p = 0.007$); T2 vs T3 ($W = 7.5$, $p = 0.53$). The EOCA source scores showed a significant difference between the timepoints T1 and T2, as well as between T1 and T3, as evidenced by the

p-values less than 0.05. Specifically, the TBLT course may have influenced a change in EOCA sources from before the course (T1) to immediately after (T2) and from before the course (T1) to two months after the course (T3). However, there was no significant difference in the EOCA source scores between immediately after the course (T2) and the two-month follow-up (T3), indicating stability in the scores during this period. These findings suggest that the online TBLT course, when considered as a whole group experience, consistently and significantly reduced the three specified EOCA sources (lack of grammar, vocabulary, and ideas related to certain topics) over the duration of the study. This implies some changes in participants' experiences or perceptions related to these sources of EOCA during the course of the TBLT and in the months that followed.

The pattern of reduction observed in the EOCA sources was similar to the reduction in EOCA levels. Specifically, there was a significant reduction between T1-T2 and T1-T3, but no significant difference between T2-T3. In conclusion, the findings indicate that the reduction in EOCA levels aligns with a concurrent reduction in the specific sources of anxiety identified in the Three EOCA source items section. In short, there was a significant decline in both EOCA and the EOCA source factors between the initial assessment and the post-course period and these reductions appeared to stabilise during the two-month follow-up.

4.4.1.2 Evaluation of anxiety reduction in individual online sessions (pre-session and post-session)

The data for the analysis were collected from the pre and post session anxiety ratings and post-course interviews. The pre and post session anxiety ratings was used for students to self-rate their anxiety levels before a session

began (T1) and after the session finished (T2) (Appendix 4). Participants were asked to rate their level of anxiety from one – not present to five – very severe. The five levels of anxiety were adapted from Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) (Hamilton, 1959). In general, it can be seen that their anxiety levels varied depending on several factors such as the difficulty and similarity level of the topics, the students' familiarisation with the learning method and other personal problems. Any changes in the students' anxiety levels were discussed in the follow up interviews.

The total pre and post session anxiety scores of each participant were calculated. A nonparametric test was employed for the analysis because the data were small and skewed (Appendix 15). Wilcoxon test was chosen over the t-test because the same participants were investigated in both before and after conditions.

The pre and post session anxiety levels were measured in the 10 online course participants, immediately prior to each online session (T1 – Mdn = 22, range = 30), and immediately after each online session (T2 – Mdn = 17, range = 14). The results indicate that participants' anxiety as a group reduced after each online session. Wilcoxon Ranks tests were conducted to explore the difference in anxiety levels between T1 and T2 ($W = 0$, $p = 0.008$). According to this result, it can be concluded that the group as a whole experienced a significant reduction in their anxiety levels following the online sessions.

To provide context for the students' rating scale responses to individual sessions, some specific questions were added to the end of each interview. The questions were used to clarify students' rationales for their ratings and identify any events that led to sudden changes in their ratings for each online session. The content of these questions was based on each student's ratings.

Due to the specific purpose of the interview questions for this part, the analysis for the interview data here is not extensive. However, a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the whole interview data can be found in section 4.5, which aimed to answer the final research question on which factors of the online TBLT course contributing to the reduction of students' EOCA.

Since each participant's anxiety level pattern was unique and distinctive, each case will be presented as follows. A summary of all the findings is stated in section **4.4.3**.

Participant TR0694

According to the pre and post session anxiety ratings, this participant's EOCA levels slightly varied during the course (**Figure 4.3**). In the first session, her EOCA before and after the session remained the same at level 4 (severe). She shared in the interview (Appendix 9) that the novelty of the online learning environment, the learning method and unfamiliar classmates were the reasons causing her EOCA at the beginning even though the first topic was not too challenging. She stated in the interview:

“Because everything was too new to me. New learning method, new classmates. It was the first time I studied English online. Although the topic was familiar, I still felt anxious. I was worried about the next sessions.”

Despite the familiarity of the first topic in which she had to talk about herself, it also made her extremely anxious (level 5 – very severe) before the session 2 began because she thought she had to talk about herself again like in session 1:

“Because I was afraid that I would have to talk about myself like in the first session. I had studied this topic at school so I was familiar with it. Talking about myself made me nervous.”

In addition, she expressed in the interview that she had already experienced EOCA in her previous English classes in a traditional classroom setting. This means she felt anxious even before this course started:

“I am confident to speak English with other English teachers now. Before (the course), I couldn’t talk at all and I was so scared to talk.”

However, at the end of this session she felt less anxious (level 3 - moderate). From this session, her EOCA levels always decreased slightly (from level 3 - moderate to level 2 - mild), except session 4 and session 7. Her EOCA levels were the same before and after these two session. She explained that the topics of these two sessions was the most difficult to her and she did not have ideas to share, which led to her anxiety.

Her level of anxiety never decreased to level 1 (not worry at all) after each online session because she was still worried about her English proficiency.

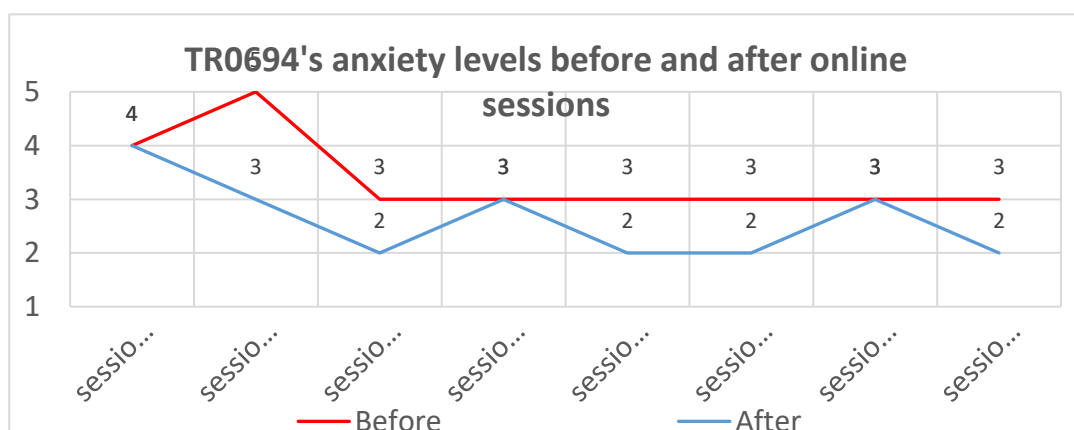


Figure 4.3

TR0694's anxiety levels before and after online sessions

Participant TR1210

TR1210's data show an obvious low anxiety level after each online session (

Figure 4.4). Her EOCA level was severe before the first session began (level 4 - severe) but it remarkably reduced in the last session to level 1. Her EOCA levels before and after a session were the same, at low level since session 3.

The lack of confidence in her English speaking ability was the reason why she felt quite anxious before the first session. She feared speaking English with others and was worried about being unable to respond to questions from teacher and peers. She shared in the interview:

“At that time, my English level was too low. I didn’t dare to speak English with other people. I was afraid that I couldn’t speak English. I was afraid I couldn’t answer any questions from you or other classmates.”

The growing familiarity with the TBLT approach and the increased confidence in her English level explained the reduced EOCA level at the end of the course. By the end of the course, she felt comfortable with the learning method and even enjoyed it.

“I got familiar with the learning method. I liked this method so I didn’t feel anxious anymore. Plus, my level was improved a bit, so I could speak what I think, I wasn’t afraid to make mistakes anymore.”

Her answer also indicates that her EOCA reduced since she was not ashamed of making mistakes anymore.

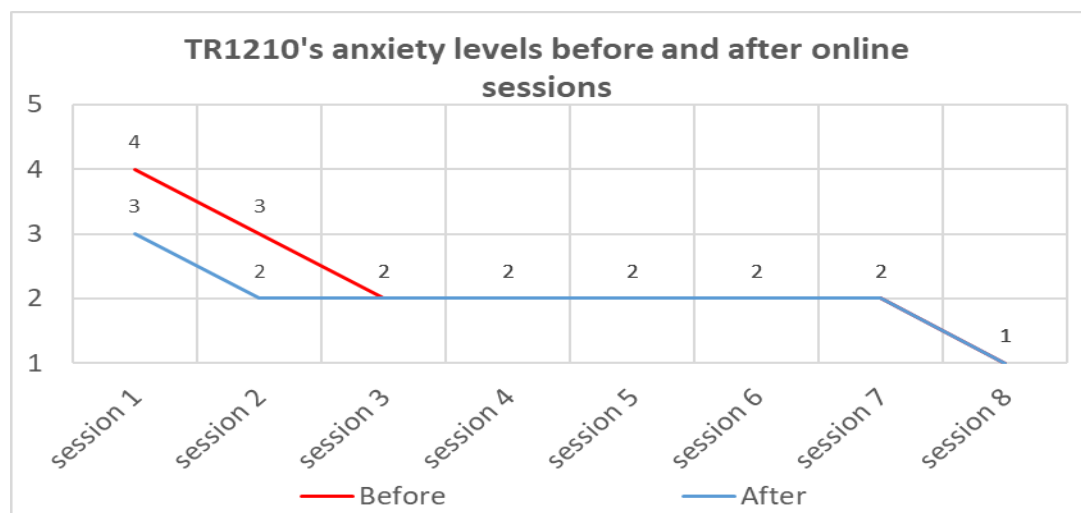


Figure 4.4

TR1210's anxiety levels before and after online sessions

Participant MD2077

Similar to TR0694, the interview data for participant MD2077 illustrate fluctuations in anxiety levels during the online TBLT course. Initially, her anxiety level increased before the second session began (**Figure 4.5**). She felt more anxious because she realised how poor her English was after the first session. Despite this, she felt less nervous right after the first session ended even though she could not explain why. She shared that:

“Because after the first session, I realised that my English was too horrible so I felt anxious before the second session.

...

*I don't know why (the anxiety level reduced after the first session).
I just felt better when the session finished.”*

However, from session 2 onward, MD2077 felt more confident to speak English because she became accustomed to the learning method. She found

that TBLT approach was effective. Thanks to the course, she could improve her pronunciation as well as acquire new vocabulary.

“Because I got used to the learning method. This method was effective. I could learn relevant vocabulary and improve my pronunciation.”

It can be concluded from her expression above that the growing familiarity with the course structure and perceived effectiveness of the learning method led to her EOCA reduction in subsequent sessions.

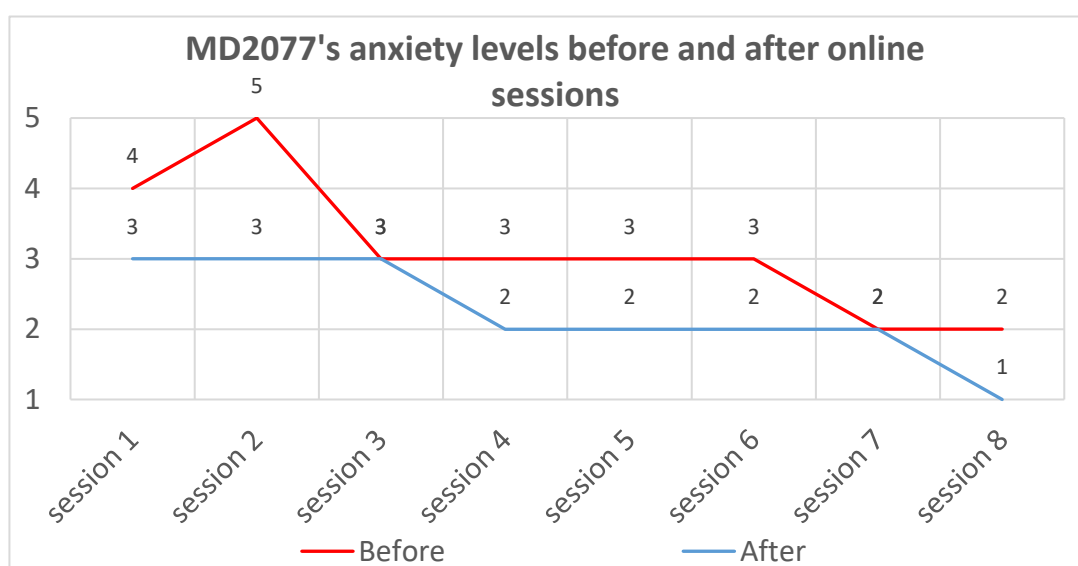


Figure 4.5

MD2077's anxiety levels before and after online sessions

Participant CA1512

CA1512's EOCA levels show a similar pattern to the above participants (**Figure 4.6**). Right before the first session started, she experienced a high level of anxiety (level 4 – severe). This anxiety level reduced to level 3 (moderate) after the first session but it increased back to level 4 before the second session started. She explained that her pre-session anxiety was high because of the need to get to know new classmates:

“Because I had to study with different classmates in the first two sessions so I had to get to know them first. Later on, I got familiar with the way the course worked so my anxiety decreased.”

CA1512 felt less and less worried over time as she got familiar with the learning method and her classmates. In the earlier part of the interview, she also shared the reasons for her anxiety reduction, which were the supportive environment provided by peers. She also valued the online class as a space where she could actively engage with peers without being distracted by indirect comments on her mistakes, as would happen in a traditional classroom:

“Because I was actually alone in real life. I counted the online class as a mirror in which I could still discuss with my friends. My friends also helped me correct my mistakes. In a traditional class, others around me just comment on my mistakes indirectly, which distracts me.”

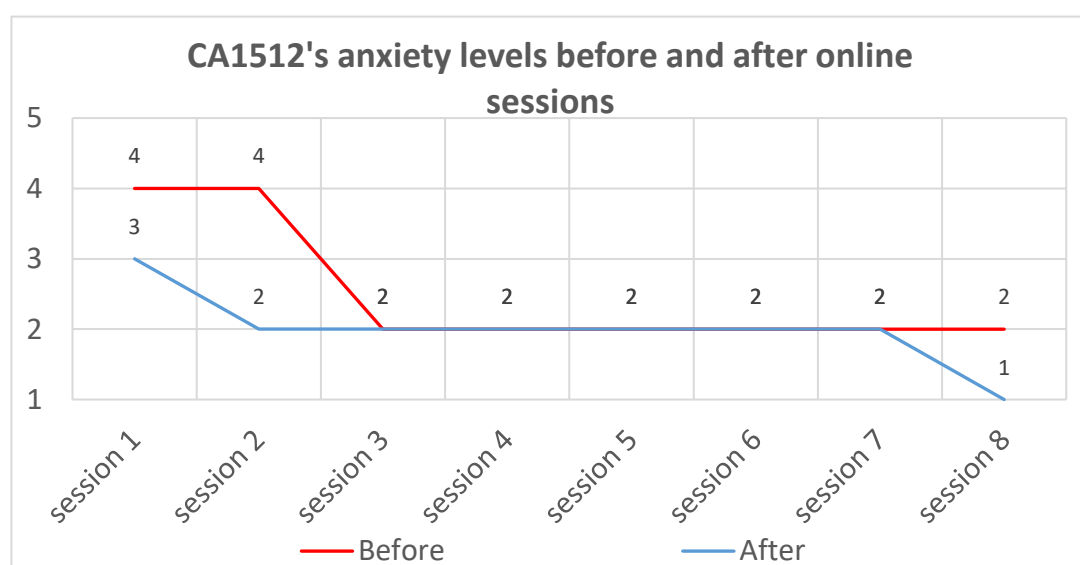


Figure 4.6

CA1512's anxiety levels before and after online sessions

Participant TH2008

There is little variation in TH2008's ratings for her anxiety level before and after each online session. In her interview, she stated that she generally

did not feel anxious before or after any online TBLT sessions. She only felt a little nervous before session 2 and 4 when she had not completed homework (Figure 4.7).

Earlier in the interview, she admitted to feeling anxious in her traditional classroom because she had to answer her teacher's questions immediately without any preparation. To her, the lack of necessary vocabulary to express her ideas was scary:

"I felt less anxious (in the online course). Because I could use dictionary right at the time I prepared the task. In my traditional class, I feel more stressed because I have to answer teacher's questions immediately without any preparation. I am anxious when I don't have enough vocabulary."

Thus, it can be deduced that she did experience mild EOCA before participating in the course but she was not anxious when studying online.

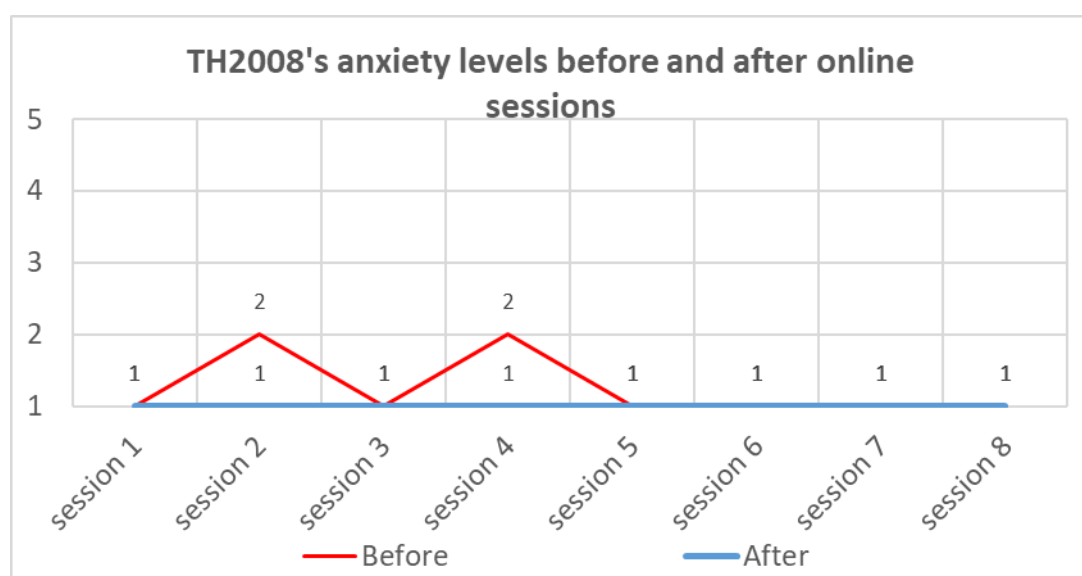


Figure 4.7

TH2008's anxiety levels before and after online sessions

Participant TH0193

As can be seen from **Figure 4.8**, TH0193's EOCA level dropped significantly during the online TBLT course. Her EOCA level was at the highest level before the first session started. This anxiety was attributed to her uncertainty about the class structure, the learning method, and the English proficiency of her classmates:

"I didn't know how the class would be. I didn't know about the learning style and other classmates' English level. So, I felt anxious."

However, her anxiety dropped to the lowest level after the session, as she enjoyed this lesson:

"Yes, it's true (that she did not feel anxious at all at the end of the session). Because I liked the lesson."

In addition, since she got familiar with the learning method as the course progressed, her EOCA reduced gradually and always stayed at the lowest (not present) after each online session. When reflecting on her overall experience on EOCA throughout the course, she noted an improvement in her confidence:

"My English speaking anxiety level was high before the course. I didn't dare to communicate. I feel more confident after the course finished."

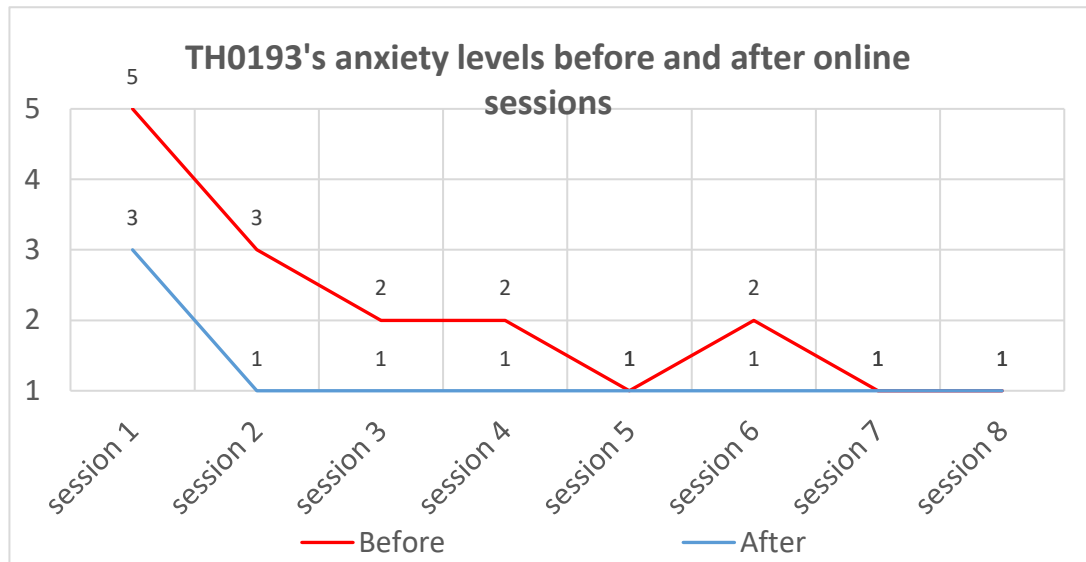


Figure 4.8

TH0193's anxiety levels before and after online sessions

Participant CA1885

CA1885's EOCA level seemed to fluctuate across the post-sessions (

Following session 5, her anxiety levels gradually decreased until the end of the course.

Figure 4.9). In the first session, her EOCA levels were severe both before and after the session (level 4). She explained this was due to her unfamiliarity with the course and anxiety about speaking English via video call for the first time:

“Because I hadn’t got familiar with the course. Before the course, I had never spoken English via video call. Even before the class started, I felt anxious already. After the session, I saw that my friends were better than me so I still felt anxious. I was worried about the next session.”

Although she said she got worried about the second session, her EOCA level before this session was lower than the first session (level 3 - moderate). She stated that her reviewing the previous lesson had boosted her confidence:

“Because I reviewed the old lesson before the class so I felt more confident.”

Since then, her EOCA level remained low until session 5. The EOCA level went up after this session finished. She attributed this spike to the surrounding environment where she attended the session. She joined this session when she was in a coffee shop, where she felt self-conscious about people staring at her when she spoke English. Furthermore, she could not look up vocabulary or check pronunciation while talking. Hence, she was not confident in her speaking:

“In that session, I studied in a coffee shop. Everyone looked at me when I was talking. Plus, it was difficult to look up vocabulary or pronunciation when studying with phone, so I felt anxious.”

Following session 5, her anxiety levels gradually decreased until the end of the course.

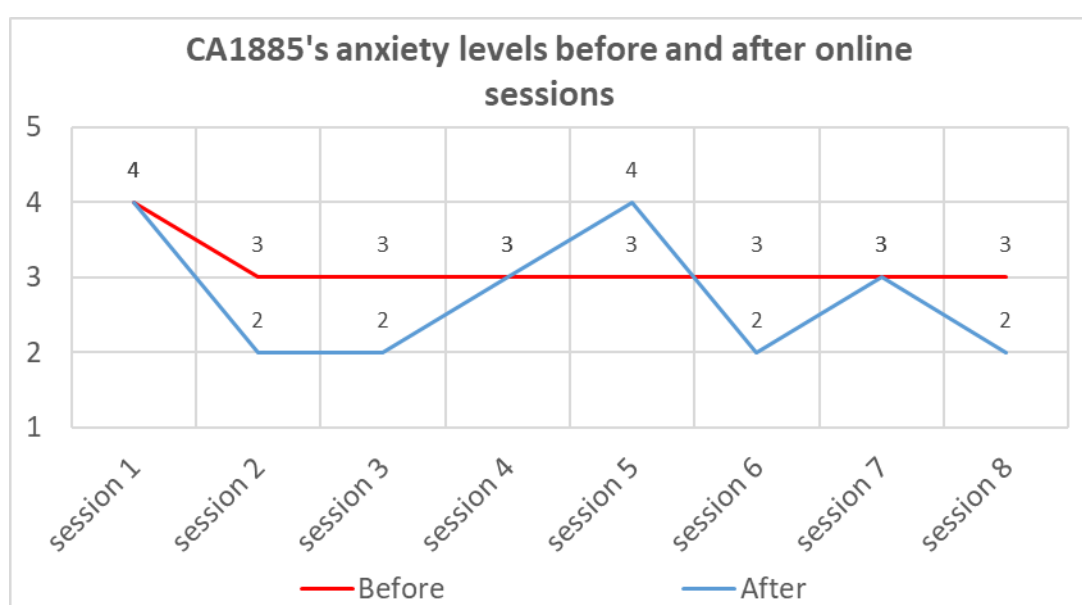


Figure 4.9

CA1885's anxiety levels before and after online sessions

Participant VA1663

After each online session, his EOCA level consistently stayed at the lowest level (**Figure 4.10**), meaning that he did not feel anxious at all post-lesson. He confirmed in the interview:

“After each session, I always felt comfortable and I wanted to talk more.”

When being asked why he still felt highly anxious before the second session, he said it was due to the infrequent sessions (once per week), which made it hard to get accustomed to at first. However, after participating in the first few lessons, he gradually became more comfortable and less anxiety. Thus, he admitted that he adapted better after three weeks and felt progressively less anxious:

“Because we only had one session per week, so at the beginning of the second session, I still felt like the first one and I hadn’t got used to the class. After 3,4 weeks, I could adapt better.”

He also attributed the reduction in his EOCA level to gaining confidence in his ability to communicate in English, becoming less stressed about making mistakes, and overcoming his initial reluctance to speak English. This positive shift was reflected in his consistently low EOCA levels after each session and his interview. He shared his experience with the first few lessons and the change in his EOCA level in the interview:

“There was a change. I remember I was worried and anxious before the first lesson started because I didn’t speak English regularly, my English level wasn’t high and my pronunciation wasn’t good. I got too much stress. However, after a few sessions, I didn’t feel anxious anymore. I didn’t feel anxious when I made mistakes in speaking and I knew I could fix my mistakes later. Later on, I realised that there was nothing to be shy and I dared to speak even when I only knew a few words.”

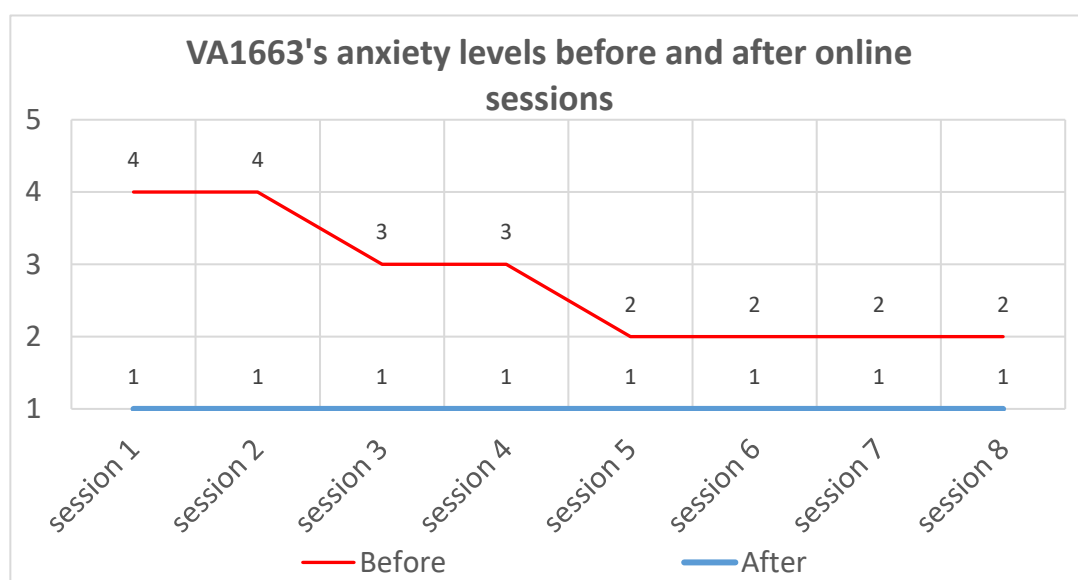


Figure 4.10

VA1663's anxiety levels before and after online sessions

Participant TH0301

As shown in **Figure 4.11**, TH0301’s EOCA level fluctuated during the online TBLT course. Unlike other participants, her EOCA level rose after the first session. In the interview, she mentioned that her anxiety stemmed from her self-consciousness about her limited English proficiency:

“At first when I signed up for the class, I didn’t think much about my English level but after the first session, I myself found out that I didn’t know many things. I didn’t know how to speak properly so I felt more anxious.”

After this session, her EOCA level went down until session 4. The EOCA level before the session began increased from level 2 - mild to level 4 - severe. She said that she feared that she could not answer teacher's questions about old vocabulary since she had not reviewed the previous lesson:

"I remember it was because I didn't review the old lesson. I was afraid that I couldn't answer your vocabulary questions."

After session 4, her EOCA levels declined again until session 7. The EOCA level after this session rose from the lowest level to the highest. She extremely anxious because she lacked the vocabulary to express her thoughts although she had many ideas to talk about the topic. Thus, she could not talk much during group work:

"Because I had many ideas but I didn't have enough vocabulary, so I couldn't share many opinions in the group."

In the last session, her pre-session anxiety level was low but it increased remarkably once she knew the topic, which she found unexpectedly difficult even to talk in her first language, Vietnamese:

"It was because of the difficult and unpredictable topic. I think it would be difficult to talk about this topic in Vietnamese, let alone English."

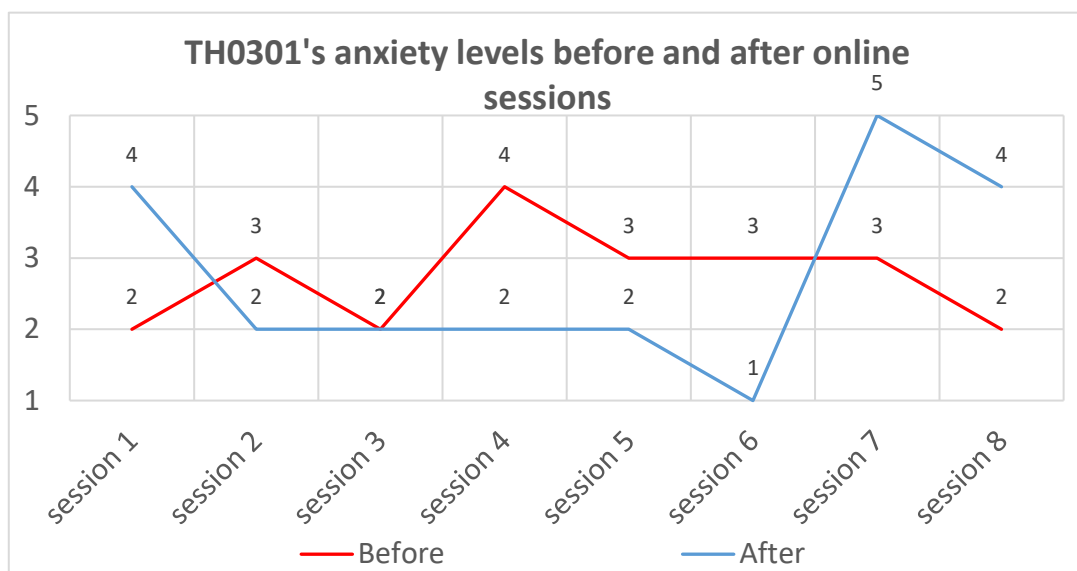


Figure 4.11

TH0301's anxiety levels before and after online sessions

Participant PH3110

As depicted in **Figure 4.12**, the most prominent feature of PH3110's EOCA level was that it was always high (level 5 – very severe) at the beginning of each session. After the first session, her EOCA level decreased slightly to level 4 - severe. However, before the next session, it returned to level 5 – very severe and then reduced to level 3 - moderate. Throughout the course, she often felt severely anxious at the beginning of each session but remarkably less anxious at the end of the lesson. The reason for her consistent pre-session anxiety was her uncertainty about the topic she would learn. She feared that she might not have adequate vocabulary to speak about the topic:

“Because I didn’t know about the topic before each session. I didn’t know whether it was too difficult for me, or it would require a lot of new vocabulary or not.”

Her answer shows that her lack of confidence in her English vocabulary and worry about facing difficult topics contributed to her anxiety prior each session. However, she also noted that some topics were not totally easy but

she did not feel too anxious. For example, she commented on the two most difficult topics of the course:

“They were not totally easy to talk about but I got used to the learning method and I got my pronunciation corrected during the course so I was not as shy as I was in the beginning.”

Despite facing more challenging topics toward the end of the course, her EOCA was reduced over time as she became familiar with the TBLT approach. She also saw improvements in her pronunciation during the course. All these factors led to her decreased shyness and increased confidence in speaking English.

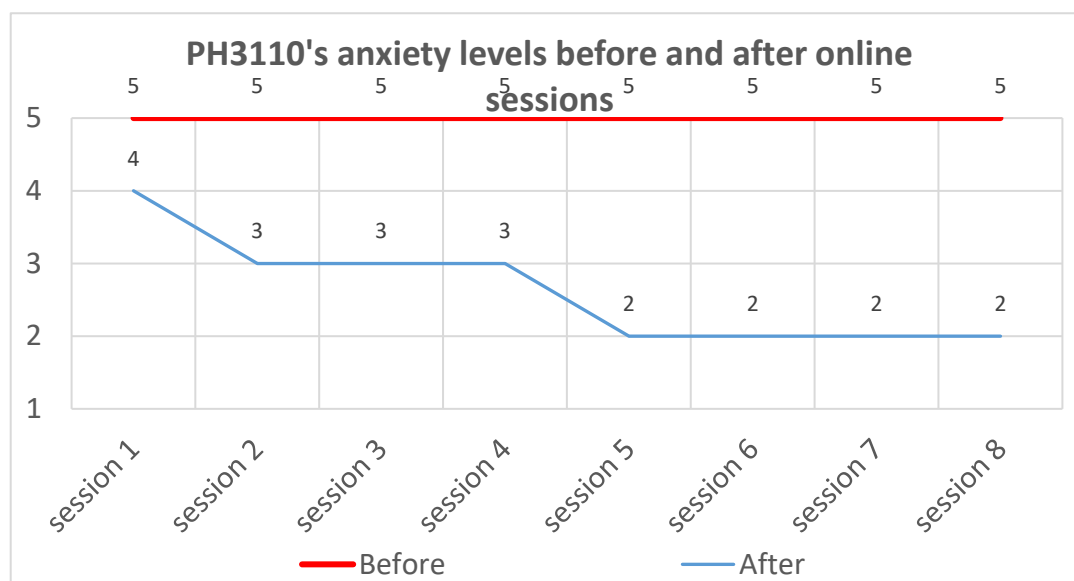


Figure 4.12

PH3110's anxiety levels before and after online sessions

4.4.2 Comparison group analysis: EOCA levels before and after the TBLT course

The comparison (non TBLT) students were asked to answer the Study 1 questionnaire (pre-course) before the TBLT course started (T1) and right after the course finished (T2). They did not participate in the online course and served as the control group for this study. They studied the same English

module with the online course students at the university while the online TBLT course was taking place. The same method with the online course student group was used to analyse data for this group. By comparing this group's data of the pre-course questionnaire and post-course questionnaire, any change in the online course participants' EOCA levels can be attributed to the effectiveness of the online TBLT course.

T-test and Wilcoxon test are both used for analysing paired data (Dancey & Reidy, 2020). Specifically, the T-test is employed when the data follows a normal distribution whereas the Wilcoxon test is used in the opposite case, i.e. data is not normally distributed (ibid.). In this study, employing the Wilcoxon test was appropriate because the data did not meet the assumptions of normal distribution and the sample size was small ($N = 10$). The non-normal distribution of the data was confirmed through statistical tests (Appendix 14). In this case, parametric tests like the T-test may provide inaccurate results (Cohen et al., 2018). Moreover, Wilcoxon test was useful to compare the EOCA levels of the same participants before and after the TBLT course. This test examined whether there was a significant difference between the two related samples of EOCA scores pre and post treatment. Using the same participants ensured consistency in the sample characteristics and minimised the impact of individual differences on the results. The appropriate measure of central tendency was the median.

From the data analysis, the median of the comparison (non TBLT) students' EOCA total score after the online course (100.50) was lower than the median of their EOCA total score before the course (103.5). It means there was a slight decrease in the comparison (non TBLT) students' EOCA level at T2. EOCA was measured in the 10 comparison (non TBLT) participants using

the FLCAS, prior to the TBLT course (T1 – Mdn = 103.5, range = 70), and immediately after the course (T2 – Mdn = 100.5, range = 67). Wilcoxon Ranks tests were conducted to explore the difference in anxiety levels between T1 and T2 ($W = 17$, $p = 0.142$). The result indicates that although there seemed to be a decrease in the median EOCA score from T1 to T2, this reduction is not statistically significant at the 5% significance level. It then can be concluded that there was not a significant reduction in the EOCA levels of the comparison (non TBLT) students based on the data collected before (T1) and after (T2) the TBLT course.

The line graph below (**Figure 4.13**) provides a comparative analysis of the pre and post-course median scores for both the online course group and the comparison (non TBLT) group. Before the course, both groups exhibited nearly identical levels of EOCA, with the online course group showing a slightly higher median score (104) compared to the comparison group (103.5). By the end of the course, the online group's median score had decreased considerably to 89.50, whereas the comparison group showed a slight decline with a post-course median of 100.50 and this reduction of the comparison group was evident as not significant. In sum, while both groups started at similar EOCA levels, the online course seemed to have had a more significant impact in reducing the EOCA levels compared to the comparison (non TBLT) group. This result suggests that the online TBLT course might have been effective in addressing and reducing EOCA among its participants.

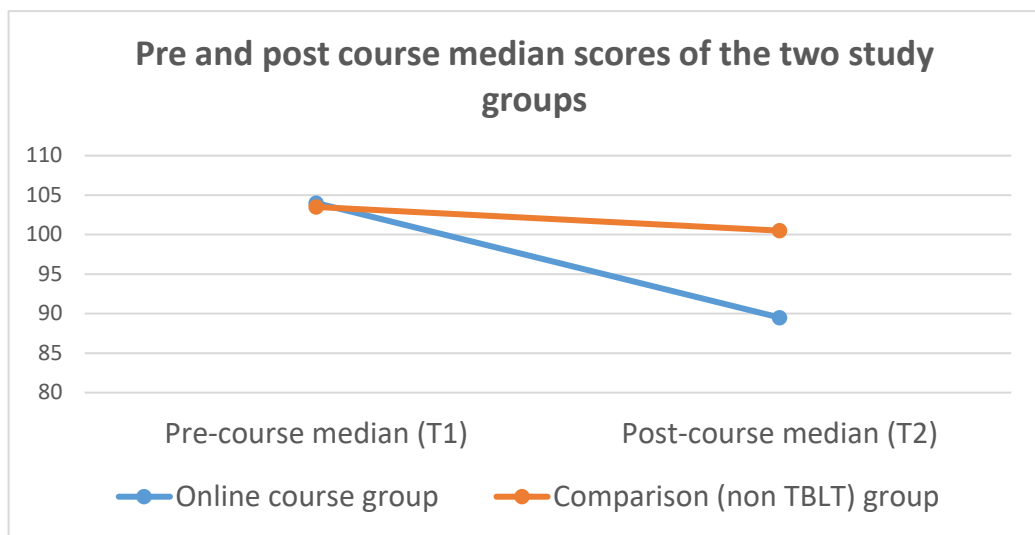


Figure 4.13

Pre and post course median scores of the two study groups

4.4.3 Combining the data to shed light on the effectiveness of the online TBLT course in reducing students' EOCA

Findings from the results of the questionnaire administered at pre and post course of the two groups above indicate that the students who participated in the online TBLT course experienced a significant decrease in their EOCA level. Meanwhile, the EOCA level of their peers who only took the course at the university did not show a significant decline during the time given. In addition, the online course students' EOCA level two months after the course finished remained lower than the level before they participated in the course. These results indicate that the online course consistently and significantly decreased anxiety levels amongst the participants, considering as a group experience. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of the online TBLT course in reducing EOCA at the individual level needs further investigation since there were still a small number of participants whose EOCA total scores were slightly higher right after the course ended, which was opposite with what they shared in the post-course interviews. In the interviews, these students stated that they

felt less anxious after they participated in the online TBLT course. They were much more confident in speaking English with their teachers and classmates and some features of the course did help them overcome their nervousness. In addition, the online TBLT course is suggested to potentially have a long-term impact on reducing students' EOCA. However, further research is needed to verify this. A more detailed discussion on limitations of the study will be presented in the chapter six, the conclusion chapter.

The analysis of the participants' pre and post session anxiety ratings showed a consistent trend of anxiety reduction within individual online sessions. In the first few sessions, most participants presented a relatively high level of anxiety, often linked to their concerns about language proficiency, the fear of making mistakes and the unfamiliarity with the learning method and online environment. However, as the course progressed, these participants experienced a gradual decrease in their anxiety levels after each session. This reduction in anxiety can be attributed to their growing familiarity with the TBLT approach and the online learning environment. Peer support, increased self-confidence, and a comfortable feeling with the learning method played fundamental roles in this anxiety reduction. While occasional increases in anxiety were noted in some participants' cases, especially when they faced challenging topics, the general pattern revealed a decrease in EOCA levels after each online session. These findings indicate the effectiveness of TBLT in reducing EOCA within the context of individual sessions and emphasize the importance of providing supportive and engaging environments for language learners on a session-by-session basis.

In conclusion, the online TBLT course appeared to have a positive impact on reducing students' EOCA at the group level in this intervention, and

this effect seemed to persist beyond the duration of the course. However, it is important to approach these findings with a degree of caution. A comparative analysis with the non-TBLT group at the two-month timepoint and follow-up interviews with online course participants at this timepoint could have provided further insights into the prolonged decrease in the participants' EOCA. These methods can help clarify whether the EOCA reduction resulted directly from the online TBLT course or was influenced by external factors. In addition, exploring individual responses to the online TBLT course in more detailed is essential, as some participants exhibited slightly higher EOCA scores immediately after the course. However, in post-course interviews, these participants reported that they felt less anxious and more confident in their English-speaking abilities, suggesting a varied response to the intervention. In the following section, the potential factors within the online TBLT course that may have contributed to the reduction in students' EOCA will be discussed.

4.5 Exploring factors in the online Task-based language teaching (TBLT) course contributing to EOCA reduction: Post-course interview analysis

The fourth research question aims to investigate the possible factors within the online TBLT course that could have contributed to reducing students' EOCA levels. The findings from the post-course interviews suggest that the learning method and online learning environment were the factors in reducing the students' EOCA.

4.5.1 Online learning environment

Two thirds of the participants confirmed that online learning helped reduce their EOCA. Since all the interactions were via computer screen and there were no physical interactions, they did not have to face their teacher and

classmates in real life, which made them feel less anxious. For example, TH0301 said:

“Talking directly with others seems to be more difficult than talking via screen”.

CA1885 agreed with that, she commented:

“I always feel more anxious if I have to talk face-to-face with somebody in real life”.

VA1663 also shared the same thought:

“I just sat in front of the screen and didn’t have to face others physically when I spoke, so I felt comfortable. Nobody could affect me even when I made mistakes.”

Moreover, within the online classroom, students had increased opportunities for direct interaction with the teacher. The teacher did not require physical movement within the class yet could still clearly hear the students. If a student had a question for the teacher, they could virtually raise their hand and turn their microphone to ask, or simply send a private chat message. Since there were various ways to interact with the teacher, they felt less stressed in the class. As CA1885 stated:

“Another benefit of studying online is that I could talk to my teacher directly more often and also ask more questions. I could also chat with the teacher via chat box so I felt less anxious while interacting with teacher. In a traditional classroom with more students, teacher has to move around, come closer to each student so I can’t ask a lot of questions. In the online class, listening to teacher answering students’ questions is better/clearer.”

Similarly, MD2077 shared that:

“When studying online, I studied with less people than in the traditional classroom and I had many chances to interact with the teacher and my friends in English, so I felt more confident, unlike when I am in a traditional classroom. In a normal class, I can’t have much English interaction, especially with the teacher, so I am shy and uncomfortable to speak English.”

In addition, when studying online, the students could find assistance from the Internet, which they could not do in a traditional classroom because the use of electrical devices and Internet in the classroom in Vietnam is still limited. They could use dictionary or other online tools to help them find a word or a phrase to express their ideas while they were talking or preparing for their talk. By doing this, they could share more and felt more confident when speaking English. TR0694 said that:

“In online class, I could both speak with the teacher and look up words so I could talk more. When I am in a traditional classroom, I have to face the teacher and I can’t use dictionary while speaking. I have to look at the teacher while talking.”

Similarly, PH0301 shared the same experience when being asked whether online learning environment made her feel less anxious:

“To low level students who don’t have adequate vocabulary and cannot speak English much like me, studying online allowed me to look for the words I wanted to use while I was speaking. Also, I could find the right pronunciation to practise and more specially it helped reduce my stress while speaking in English... Yes, less anxious because there were many things that helped me speak more confidently such as using Google or dictionary while preparing the talk.”

Another factor related to the online learning that helped reduce the students' EOCA is some typical functions of the online platform. The teacher and the students could turn their microphone and camera off when necessary. By doing this, the teacher could still observe the students' discussions without making the students to feel pressure with her presence in the discussion room. Moreover, when the students were performing their task in front of the class or when the teacher gave feedback on their performance, they could not hear other students' comments. So, they felt more confident and less worried when they made mistakes. CA1512 confirmed this in her interview:

"I counted the online class as a mirror in which I could still discuss with my friends...In a traditional class, others around me just comment on my mistakes indirectly, which distracts me...In the online class, classmates' microphones were muted while you (teacher) were correcting everyone's mistakes. In a traditional classroom, when I am wrong, I get corrected by my teacher and also get indirect comments from my classmates, which makes me worry."

Finally, the students were assigned into some small breakout rooms where they could discuss a task with their partners without being disturbed by the noise from other groups. They could focus on their speaking more and no one from other groups could judge their ideas or speaking skills. TH0193 said:

"I was assigned into smaller groups in a breakout room, so I could focus on speaking more. In a traditional class, even when I am in a small group, I am still distracted by other groups."

Similarly, CA1512 shared that:

"When studying, I could be assigned to a private virtual room to speak English with my classmates. This, firstly, helped me improve my

speaking skills. Secondly, I could discuss with my friends without being disturbed by other people's comments. We could also discuss face to face without being disrupted by other groups' noise. We could talk a lot more than in a normal group at school."

In sum, the findings suggest that when the students could speak more in English and share their opinions more without being distracted by other classmates' comments, they felt more confident and they could talk more with their friends. This indicates a reduction in EOCA, especially in their fear of making mistakes.

4.5.2 The learning method – Task-based language teaching approach

In the pre-task phase, the students often read or listened to a sample, or watched a sample video first then did some supportive tasks to understand thoroughly a task before they did it themselves. Thanks to the task samples, they got an overview of what they needed to do with their task. They could apply the structures obtained from the samples to their talk. They could also learn some related vocabulary from the samples. All these factors helped them prepare their talk better. When they saw that they could perform a task well, they felt more confident about their ability and less anxious when speaking English. Some examples of the students' comments on the effectiveness of using task samples are:

"It (the learning method) gives me a confidence to some extent. When I saw the sample, I knew what I needed to do. I could copy the good and interesting sentence structures in the sample. I felt more professional and more confident to talk to others." (VA1663)

“This learning method was effective because when I read or listened to a sample, I could have an overview of what I would talk about and outline my talk. I knew how to introduce and give reasons for my opinions.” (TH0301)

“Before watching or listening to the samples, I had had few ideas to talk and my talk hadn’t been fluent. After seeing the samples, I found it easier to speak and my speaking skills were improved.” (TR1210)

The next phase of TBLT approach is the task cycle. The students were given a task in each online session. They did the task with their classmates in pairs or small groups. The teacher could give support and assistance when the students needed but the students had to do the task themselves most of the time. After the students prepared the task, they would perform the task with their partners in their breakout room and then present the outcomes in front of the class. Then, the class moved to the last phase, language focus. In this phase, the teacher had a revision focusing on forms based on what the learners had done previously. Most of the participants shared their enthusiasm for this learning method. By doing the task first, they felt excited when they could prompt more ideas with their friends and get to know the correct pronunciation and how to use appropriate grammar themselves:

“I prefer doing the task myself first, then teacher gives me feedback because I could prompt ideas myself or with my friends and I could try to find the right grammar to talk first. If teacher presents the lecture first, I will be lazy to brainstorm and I will not try my best to do the task. I think I myself have to think of how to do the task first.” (PH3110)

"I like the learning method that I can discuss the topic first. Because when I discussed with others, I knew what I needed to say and had more ideas to speak in front of the class and teacher later...I prefer teacher giving me a task to do first, then he/she corrects my pronunciation and teach grammar after I finish my talk. Because I can remember vocabulary faster and I can remember all the grammar or pronunciation mistakes right in the class. It doesn't work if teacher gives the lecture first." (TR0694)

They also preferred having a chance to critically think about the topics themselves. They did not want to repeat a sample only:

"I think this method was good for me, because I could critically think about what I would talk about without repeating an instructed sample only. In my class at the university, my teacher often gave us a sample and asked us to practise saying out loud the sample. It was not speaking." (MD2077)

"I am not a type of person who likes repeating formulas by heart, so I prefer you (teacher) teaching grammar after my talk." (CA1885)

Since the students could do the tasks in the way they wanted, they felt excited while performing the task and they talked more. They also had more interactions with their classmates, which means they had more chances to practise speaking. When they could speak more English, they thought their group discussion skills were improved and they felt much more confident and less worried about speaking English.

In the task cycle phase, the students were given some time to prepare a task in a pair, group or alone. When they had some preparation time, they could obtain more vocabulary with the help of the Internet or their peers. Since

lacking vocabulary is one of the sources of EOCA found in this study, having an adequate vocabulary to share ideas helped the students feel less anxious. In addition, as the students had time to prepare their task, they could come up with more ideas, arrange the ideas more logically and speak more fluently. Once they thought they could speak more fluently, they felt more confident and less anxious in speaking English. MD2077 confirmed:

“When I had enough ideas and time to prepare, I didn’t feel anxious”.

VA1663 shared the same feeling:

“I feel more confident when I can prepare the task in advance”.

TH0301 added more details:

“Because I could prepare the vocabulary so I could speak fluently. I also knew what I should present first and how to present an idea. I could find supportive points for an idea before I moved to the next one. In general, I could prepare my sentences and present the ideas logically. I felt less anxious while talking.”

However, TH2008 thought that it would be better not to give students preparation time sometimes so that they could practise speaking response skills. She stated:

“I think each way has its own pros and cons. If I have to speak immediately, I can practise my speaking response. If I have time to prepare, I will have more vocabulary and ideas to present. I think we should combine the two methods.”

So, preparation time is necessary for students since they can prepare a task carefully and perform the task better. Hence, they will feel more confident when speaking the target language. However, teacher can be

flexible in giving students preparation time. Sometimes, there is no need to give the students time to prepare if the task is simple and easy.

One of the popular characteristics of the TBLT approach is that it requires group work or pair work regularly (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In this study, working in a group or pair was found to be helpful in reducing the students' EOCA. All of the participants shared that they felt more comfortable and confident to speak English after a group or pair discussion. While working with their classmates to do a task, they could obtain more ideas from others and they could talk more in front of the class later. Moreover, they felt more confident with their ideas since the ideas got tested and approved by their partners. At the end of a discussion, everyone in the group or pair could choose the best ideas to share with the teacher and other classmates, which also enhanced their confidence and reduced their EOCA. For example, TR1210 said:

“When I could discuss in a group or pair before presenting in the class, I felt more confident and had more ideas to share. Since I could discuss the task with my friends, I spoke more fluently in front of the class... Working in a groups or pairs was more comfortable. It is comfortable to work alone too but I have less ideas to talk about. I had more ideas from discussing with my friends. I was more confident.”

TR0694 also stated:

“After the discussion, I felt less anxious because I could gain more knowledge or vocabulary to speak to teacher. We helped each other when we worked in groups or pairs. Sometimes, there was something I couldn't come up with but others could, so I could use their ideas.”

VA1663 liked working in a group or pair because:

“My friends helped me when I run out ideas and my talk could be much longer and more detailed. I felt more confident.

It is not surprising that the student felt more confident when they had ideas to share in the class as lacking ideas to talk about a topic was one of the main sources of EOCA found in the study.

In addition, while working in a group or pair, students got assistance in identifying and correcting grammar or pronunciation mistakes from their peers. This collaborative process reduced their EOCA since they knew that they had addressed these mistakes during the task. Consequently, they felt less anxious while speaking in front of their teacher and classmates.

The findings suggest that the online TBLT approach employed in this online course effectively reduced participants' EOCA. Importantly, the effectiveness of the TBLT online course in reducing EOCA did not appear to be influenced by participants' familiarity with classmates. Deliberate steps were taken to minimise this factor throughout the course. Different students were assigned to each online session as frequently as possible in order to reduce the opportunity to work with the same peers. Regarding the teacher familiarity factor, when asked about studying with different teachers while the learning method remained the same, most students answered that they would not feel worried or anxious. They would feel comfortable if new teachers encouraged peer discussions, allotted time for task preparation, and allowed students to perform tasks themselves before providing feedback and language focus instruction. Even if they were not familiar with the teachers, a couple of students mentioned they might feel slightly anxious but would still actively participate in speaking activities. They were aware that if their teachers

followed the same teaching method, they would receive feedback and error correction at the end of their performance. Consequently, they did not feel anxious about making mistakes during their performance. This suggests that the TBLT approach's effectiveness in reducing EOCA remained consistent regardless of familiarity with classmates and teachers.

In summary, the findings related to the fourth research question suggest that the online learning environment and the TBLT method were the factors that contributed to reducing the students' EOCA. This reduction in anxiety was attributed to factors such as the comfort of online communication, increased direct interactions with the teacher, and some useful functions of the online platform. Additionally, the TBLT approach itself, which involved task samples, preparation, performance, and language focus, played an essential role in boosting participants' confidence and reducing their EOCA. Group and pair work also facilitated idea exchange and error correction, which helped reduce the fear of making mistakes and anxiety deriving from lack of ideas on a specific topic.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter provides a detailed investigation into EOCA experienced by students from a Vietnamese university in the English language classes, particularly in the traditional classroom, contributors of EOCA and the effectiveness of an online TBLT course in reducing the participants' EOCA. According to the findings in a large group of students (166), most were identified as experiencing moderate or even high levels of EOCA, measured on the FCLAS. From the results of the short-answer questions in Study 1 questionnaire, speaking-related activities provoked the participants' EOCA the most. From further analysis of the FLCAS and interview data, three major

categories were identified as sources contributing to the students' EOCA, including students' personal and interpersonal anxieties, teacher and classroom-related factors, and linguistic difficulties. The lack of confidence, peer evaluation anxiety, teacher-related factors, the pressure of immediate responses, and complex lesson topics were identified as key factors contributing to students' EOCA. Students' EOCA was also caused by linguistic challenges related to lack of grammar, vocabulary, poor pronunciation and their inadequate oral communication competence. Furthermore, the analysis indicated a moderate significant positive correlation between the students' trait anxiety and EOCA, meaning the influence of trait anxiety on EOCA. However, the common variance shared between these two factors was relatively small (28%). 72% of EOCA remained unexplained by T-Anxiety, highlighting the predominant role of other situational factors. This result supports the definition of EOCA as a situation-specific anxiety but also acknowledges the effect of trait anxiety on EOCA.

At the group level, the online TBLT course appeared to have a beneficial and enduring impact on reducing students' EOCA, as evidenced by a significant reduction in EOCA levels measured among participants during a series of TBLT online sessions. The online learning environment and the TBLT approach were identified as contributing factors to this alleviation of EOCA. TBLT approach offered a clear, structured framework emphasizing meaningful communication over linguistic perfection. This characteristic of the TBLT approach potentially alleviated the pressure students felt during the online class. Moreover, the TBLT approach itself, with its emphasis on task-based learning involving preparation, performance, and language focus, played a fundamental role in boosting participants' confidence and diminishing EOCA.

Collaborative group and pair work facilitated idea exchange and error correction, reducing the fear of making mistakes and anxiety related to topic comprehension. The students' EOCA reduction was also influenced by additional factors such as the comfort of online communication, increased direct interactions with teacher and classmates, assistance from the Internet and the effective features of the online platform. However, while these findings are promising, they should be interpreted with caution, and further research is needed to definitively confirm the long-term effectiveness of the online TBLT course in reducing EOCA.

The next chapter will discuss the above findings.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this discussion chapter is to highlight the most important findings and interpret them in relation to the research questions (RQs) and the literature. The findings from the various data sources, i.e., questionnaires, pre and post session anxiety ratings and post-course interviews were integrated to comprehensively answer the RQs. The aims of this study were to explore the phenomenon of English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) amongst Vietnamese university students, identify its contributors, and evaluate the effectiveness of an online task-based language teaching (TBLT) course in alleviating this anxiety. The responses to the RQs are presented in a sequential manner, from research question one to four.

5.2 RQ 1: To what extent do a small sample of Vietnamese learners of English (n = 166) experience anxiety when communicating orally in English language classes (EOCA)?

The aim of this research question was to determine the level of EOCA amongst Vietnamese university students in English language classes. This study suggests that a sizeable portion of Vietnamese university students experienced EOCA based on the EOCA total scores, calculated from the FLCAS. Specifically, the majority of the participants were found to have moderate EOCA, with smaller but notable percentages experiencing high and low EOCA. The study result is in line with two other studies on FLA experienced by Vietnamese university students in the north and central of Vietnam, where a large number of the participants reported experiencing FLA in their foreign language classrooms (Le, 2023; Tran et al., 2013).

Moreover, my study finding is also consistent with those from similar research conducted in other non-English speaking countries. When it comes to FLA in general, it has been emphasized as a major problem in traditional physical classroom settings (e.g., Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzardo, 2014; Liu, 2006; Wardhani et al., 2019; Young, 1999). In terms of EOCA, Arifin (2017) discovered the presence of English speaking anxiety amongst university students in Indonesia. Even though the FLCAS was not employed in Arifin's research, observations and interviews indicated that anxiety while performing a speech was one of the common psychological features of the population studied. Similarly, the speaking anxiety was also found to exist in Chinese university students (Mak, 2011). In this study, the author had adapted the FLCAS to a four-point Likert scale and the neutral option was omitted. Two of the most common factors that contributed to the participants' speak-in-class anxiety were the communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. These previous studies along with my findings indicate that EOCA is not just a localised challenge, which is exclusive to Vietnamese students but a broader issue in non-English speaking contexts.

A critical finding in my study refers to the substantial communication apprehension Vietnamese students experienced. Through the FLCAS and post-course interviews, many participants expressed anxiety related to spontaneous English communication in class, particularly when unprepared or when understanding every spoken word was considered crucial. This finding is consistent with what was found in previous studies (Liu, 2006; MacIntyre, 1999; Miskam & Saidalvi, 2018; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013; Price, 1991; Young 1990). All of these studies reach the same conclusion that speaking English in class consistently causes significant anxiety in students. This speaking

apprehension is even more noticeable when examining interactions with L1 English speakers. Similar findings related to the anxiety deriving from communicating with L1 speakers were reported in the work of Effiong (2013), Hashemi (2011), Hewitt and Stephenson (2012), and Mak (2011). The concern here is that seeing L1 speakers or other foreigners as superior communicators unintentionally impacted these students' already low self-confidence, causing their EOCA not only in the classroom but also in real-life communication.

In sum, the presence of FLA, or EOCA in specific, amongst foreign language students has been found in several studies conducted in the similar learning context with the present study. Although a number of different versions of FLCAS and other research methods were employed in these studies, the results are aligned with each other, and consistently highlight anxiety related to speaking English as a longstanding obstacle for foreign language learners. The findings of the current study further support this, emphasizing EOCA as a considerable challenge for Vietnamese university students, and potentially for English language learners in similar backgrounds. This consistent alignment with previous research validates the current study results and emphasizes EOCA as a continuous and widespread issue. It raises the need to find contributors of EOCA, pedagogical solutions and further investigation to better assist students in overcoming this long-term challenge.

5.3 RQ 2: What are the underlying factors contributing to EOCA amongst students in English language classes?

5.3.1 Trait anxiety as a factor influencing EOCA

Foreign language anxiety (FLA), of which English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) is an aspect, is a topic of continuing interest to researchers in the field of second language acquisition (e.g., Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzardo, 2014;

Liu, 2006; Tran et al., 2013; Wardhani et al., 2019; Young, 1999). As discussed in section **2.3.2** of the Literature review chapter, there are two primary approaches guiding the understanding of FLA: the “anxiety transfer” theory and the “unique anxiety” theory (Horwitz & Young, 1991). The former suggests that individuals with trait anxiety, a general tendency to frequent anxiety across various situations, are naturally more likely to being affected by FLA. Conversely, the latter argues for FLA's situational distinctiveness, suggesting that it emerges from the unique challenges of the language-learning context and is not necessarily dependent on an individual's general trait anxiety. In order to shed light on the definition and sources of EOCA, the current study examined the relationship between trait anxiety (T-Anxiety) and EOCA via data collected from the Study 1 questionnaire.

The study found a moderate positive significant relationship between T-Anxiety and EOCA, suggesting the impact of T-Anxiety on EOCA. However, the shared variance between these two factors was relatively small, with a significant portion of EOCA not explained by T-Anxiety alone. This emphasizes the importance of other contextual factors in influencing EOCA beyond what is attributed to T-Anxiety. These results are in accordance with findings reported by Horwitz (1986), Chiang (2010), and Botes et al. (2022). Similar trends were identified in these studies, where a positive correlation between T-Anxiety and FLA and a small variance share were noted. They all laid emphasis on the independent nature of these constructs despite their correlation.

This alignment underlines a persistent observation that one's general trait anxiety can indeed influence their anxiety levels in specific situations like oral communication in a foreign language. However, the shared variance, or the degree to which T-Anxiety can explain EOCA, in my study supports a point

highlighted by prior research: while the two constructs are statistically related, they remain largely independent in terms of their variance. This finding reinforces the perspective that EOCA functions predominantly as a situation-specific anxiety, influenced but not determined by general trait anxiety. The consistent emphasis across studies on the considerable unshared variance highlights the unique complexities and challenges in the language learning environment, beyond the field of general anxiety traits.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the present study not only aligns with previous findings but also provides an evidence of T-Anxiety's influence on EOCA. While EOCA stands out as a situation-specific anxiety, it is not unaffected by the overarching presence of T-Anxiety. The current research highlights that although the unique challenges and dynamics of learning a foreign language play a remarkable role in EOCA, the influence of trait anxiety as a contributing factor to EOCA cannot be ignored. This dual influence provides a comprehensive understanding of EOCA, aligning with prior research while offering an exploration of T-Anxiety's role as a factor affecting EOCA.

5.3.2 Underlying factors contributing to students' EOCA in English language classes

As discussed in the previous section, while T-Anxiety can be a contributor to EOCA formation, the unique dynamics within the English language learning context hold a considerable impact on EOCA. Given this, it becomes imperative to broaden the investigation and explore other factors that might be influencing EOCA to obtain a more thorough answer regarding the underlying factors contributing to EOCA amongst students.

5.3.2.1 Linguistic difficulties

Linguistic difficulties appear as one of the factors leading to EOCA, according to the findings from the Study 1 questionnaire and post-course interviews. A significant number of students reported that a lack of vocabulary and challenges with grammar rules are reasons causing their anxiety. The associated issue of not having adequate vocabulary for complicated topics reinforced this perspective. These linguistic deficits make students feel unprepared and overwhelmed when they have to learn a number of grammar rules in class, which then leads to anxiety when they are required to speak English. Horwitz (1988) emphasized this phenomenon, suggesting that students' speaking anxiety arises when they could conceptualise sophisticated ideas in their first language but struggled to convey them in a second language due to their grammar and vocabulary deficiency. The consequences of such struggles can be profound. For example, students might feel discouraged or lose interest in speaking the target language. It is reasonable to infer that a limited vocabulary might intensify students' reluctance to participate in discussions and consequently increase their anxiety.

A similar pattern of linguistic shortcomings as a source of anxiety has been obtained across various research studies conducted by different authors over the time. For example, students' awareness of their grammatical mistakes has been associated with increased anxiety (Ewald, 2007), with similar findings about grammar-related challenges which affect learners' confidence (Alnahidh & Altalhab, 2020; Gkonou, 2013). In addition to grammar, vocabulary is evidenced as another critical factor contributing to speaking anxiety (Rafada & Madini, 2017). Kruk (2018) further expands on this by including pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary as elements that influence

students' anxiety levels. The alignment of my findings and these studies highlight that linguistic difficulties, including grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, contribute to intensifying speaking anxiety among language learners.

Linked to linguistic difficulties, the broader issue of inadequate oral communication competence is found to be a contributing factor to students' EOCA in the current study. My findings reveal that students' inability to initiate and maintain conversations, combined with the challenges of mutual comprehension, increases the anxiety they experience while speaking English. Moreover, the fear of not understanding language input, especially from their teachers, substantially caused students' EOCA. This result ties well with Le's study (2023), which reported that Vietnamese students experienced FLA when they struggled to comprehend the teacher's requirements due to their limited proficiency in English.

Apart from vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation is considered another source of EOCA in this study. A considerable proportion of participants expressed apprehensions regarding their perceived imperfections in pronunciation. They feared that their poor pronunciation might lead to their listeners' confusion or misinterpretation. This anxiety increases when they are uncertain about their pronunciation accuracy. This result supports the findings of Goñi-Osácar and Lafuente-Millán (2021) and William and Andrade (2008), in which respondents considered their pronunciation inadequacies as a predominant contributor of their FLA. This anxiety is often related to their unrealistic expectations, i.e., the aspiration to achieve an accent similar to first-language speakers or speak the target language without any mistakes (Horwitz, 1988; Kitano, 2001; Young, 1991). In contrast, Arnaiz and Pérez-

Luzaro (2014) found that their participants did not associate poor pronunciation with FLA. However, they still emphasized the importance of pronunciation in developing language competence. They also asserted that true language proficiency extended beyond vocabulary and grammar, with precise pronunciation being fundamental for clear communication. The result that their participants ignoring the value of proficient English pronunciation was a problem which required a careful examination. Although their findings do not recognise pronunciation as a direct cause of FLA, their perspective on its overlooked significance as a potential anxiety source aligns with the result of the present study.

In sum, the present study suggests that linguistic challenges related to the lack of vocabulary, grammar, and poor pronunciation contribute to students' EOCA. These linguistic difficulties, as illustrated by the findings of this study and supported by existing literature, increase students' EOCA to some extent. Recognising and addressing these linguistic barriers is crucial to alleviating EOCA and fostering a more encouraging learning environment.

5.3.2.2 Students' personal and interpersonal anxieties

From the study findings, it is evident that the relationship between students' self-perception and their interpersonal interactions holds a noteworthy influence on their EOCA level. A number of students in the study reported the lack of confidence as an important source of their EOCA. The data of the study, specifically the responses to the FLCAS items, provide a description of students who are hesitant and apprehensive about speaking English. The short-answer section of the study offers further support to the overarching theme. When nearly half of the participants attributed their EOCA to their lack of confidence, it shows how connected these two issues are. The

interview responses, sharing concerns such as lack of confidence in speaking abilities, unwillingness to engage in oral discussion, or feelings of shyness, reflect the inner challenges faced by numerous students. Also, this lack of self-confidence is not merely a reflection of their linguistic competence but more about their perceived abilities related to the expectations they have set for themselves or believe are set by others. The anxiety experienced by students stems from the relationship between internal self-assessment and the external feedback they receive within the learning context.

The current study supports previous research, which has consistently identified the lack of confidence as a significant contributor to speaking anxiety (e.g., Hashemi, 2011; He, 2013; Liu, 2006; William & Andrade, 2008). He (2013) identified the lack of confidence as one of the most frequently mentioned reasons for anxiety in interview responses, suggesting its widespread nature. Similarly, Liu (2006) conducted a study amongst Chinese students to discover numerous sources of foreign language speaking anxiety including lack of practice, limited vocabulary, and notably, low confidence. William & Andrade (2008) emphasized the inverse relationship, suggesting that activities that boost a learner's confidence can result in diminished anxiety and an increased comfort level in the language learning process. Also, lack of confidence in one's linguistic skills can induce feelings of inadequacy and hesitation when interacting with skilled speakers, such as L1 speakers. (Hashemi, 2011). It might be the reason why participants in the current study experienced EOCA while interacting with L1 speakers.

Building on the established understanding that lack of confidence is a considerable contributor to EOCA, as found in the current study and earlier research, many students reported feelings of uncertainty when speaking in

English. This apprehension is increased within the classroom setting where evaluations and inevitable peer comparisons further weaken their confidence and intensify their EOCA.

In this study, peer comparisons are found to provoke students' feelings of inferiority. A significant number of students perceived their English proficiency to be inferior in comparison to their peers. Such perceptions, as supported in the interviews and the Study 1 questionnaire data, can be a major cause of students' EOCA. Furthermore, the EOCA experienced by students is a manifestation of the complex relationship between self-perception and natural competitiveness. While a significant portion of their anxiety can be traced back to their perceived linguistic inadequacies, this is further magnified by their innate tendency to compare themselves to their peers (Horwitz et al. 1986; Kitano, 2001; Price 1991; Yan & Horwitz, 2008), which is supported by the current study findings. Participants in the current study not only doubted their capacity to master the target language but also felt their oral communication skills were not at the expected standard. Such feelings became particularly intense when students encountered challenges such as struggling to understand their English teacher and classmates or perceiving their peers' speech as superior to their own. This is consistent with the findings of Yan & Horwitz (2008) and Price (1991), suggesting that although competitiveness can act as an incentive for learning motivation, it becomes problematic when it prompts individuals to underestimate their own skills and overvalue those of their classmates. Such negative self-perception and the lack of confidence only amplifies their anxieties, especially when they think that their performance is not as good as the others.

The FLCAS results reveal a deeper issue through the expressed embarrassment of students when answering questions voluntarily. It is not just about getting the answer right or wrong but also about how they perceive their peers will judge them. This creates an environment for the fear of negative evaluation (FNE) to emerge. As described by Kitano (2001), the magnitude of FNE shares a direct relationship with the level of FLA.

From this finding, the study's data further emphasizes the participants' apprehension about negative evaluations, particularly from peers. Such apprehensions and fears clearly contribute to the increased EOCA amongst the Vietnamese students studied, especially when they make mistakes while speaking English. It extends beyond mere linguistic mistakes to the anticipated perceptions of such errors by peers. These results are in accordance with findings reported by Young (1991). According to Young (1991), it is clear that learners with diminished self-esteem continuously deal with the apprehension surrounding their peers' judgment. This constant fear of evaluation, specifically in relation to making mistakes, is not an isolated phenomenon. Studies by Liu and Jackson (2008), Shabani (2012) and Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) reinforce this idea by drawing an attention to the concern over negative evaluation from peers as a substantial factor contributing to EOCA amongst learners.

In addition, it is interesting to find that while potential judgment from peers increases students' EOCA, the feedback from teachers did not. This result was achieved from some FLCAS items and interview data. This finding agrees with the conclusion of Tsiplakides & Keramida (2009) that participants were more willing to do the activities involving using the target language without their friends' presence and only the teacher was the listener. However,

this finding in the present study is opposed to the conceptualisation by Horwitz et al. (1986) that students' FLA stems from a fear of making mistakes in front of their teacher. Many of the participants in this study viewed teacher feedback and error-corrections positively. They consider teacher feedback as opportunities for linguistic improvement and confidence enhancement, subsequently diminishing their EOCA. The contrastive findings highlight the complex dynamics of classroom interactions. While students in this study embraced teacher feedback as constructive, perceiving it as a growth opportunity, they still felt apprehensive about peer judgments. This issue puts an emphasis on the distinct roles that peers and teachers play in students' EOCA and their language learning experiences.

Fear of public speaking is another reason causing EOCA found in the results of the FLCAS items. Even when students feel well-prepared, the very act of presenting in front of peers become a source of anxiety. This suggests a more generalised performance anxiety, which could be intensified in a second language setting. A common factor linking these elements could be individual's general trait anxiety. Such students might naturally be more prone to experiencing EOCA, regardless of external factors. In classroom settings, where personal and social pressures meet, this intrinsic trait becomes especially increased. The present study provides evidence supporting this relationship, exploring a moderate positive significant correlation between trait anxiety and EOCA. The variance shares of 28% indicate that EOCA experienced can be directly linked to students' general trait anxiety to some extent. This highlights the crucial role that individual differences in trait anxiety play in affecting EOCA in language learning contexts. The results align with those of Goñi-Osácar and Lafuente-Millán (2022) and Dewaele (2007), which

identified public speaking anxiety as a major contributor to EOCA. Additionally, Dewaele (2007) highlighted a relationship between public speaking anxiety and trait anxiety, a connection similarly explored in the present research. Dewaele's study suggests that trait anxiety has a positive influence on FLA. Someone who is highly anxious in speaking their first language (L1) also exhibits high anxiety in subsequent languages (L2, L3, L4, etc.). This consistent pattern of anxiety indicates that there is a foundational or inherent trait (like trait anxiety) that affects their experience across all languages.

In essence, contributors of EOCA in English language learning encompasses more than simply linguistic difficulties. They are shaped considerably by individual psychological tendencies and social interactions. In the continued exploration of EOCA, educators and researchers should acknowledge and tackle these personal and interpersonal concerns to pave the way for a supportive and empathetic learning atmosphere.

5.3.2.3 Teacher and classroom-related factors

Teachers may contribute to students' FLA since their beliefs about language teaching decide the ways they manage their class and deliver lessons (Briesmaster & Briesmaster-Paredes, 2015). Some believe that a certain level of anxiety is necessary for students to concentrate on their studies. As a result, they maintain their strictness in the classroom, which inadvertently leads to students' FLA. The attitude of a teacher often serves as an indicator for students' emotional comfort and sense of belonging in the classroom (ibid.). The present study lends support to the above finding since it reveals that a teacher's attitude can influence students' EOCA to some extent, with approachability emerging as a defining factor. A serious or strict teacher was found to be a factor that inadvertently increases participants' levels of anxiety.

Conversely, a friendly and understanding teacher could provide a foundation of stability for students and help create a feeling of security and acceptance in the class. Similar findings have also been obtained in studies focusing on FLA amongst Vietnamese students (Trang et al., 2013) as well as in other non-English speaking learning contexts, such as those detailed by Effiong (2016), Khattak et al. (2011), Tóth (2010), Lee (2010), Yan and Horwitz (2008), and Ewald (2007). While it is crucial to recognise that only a subset of students identified their strict teacher as a primary source of EOCA, the intensity of its impact on these students highlights the significance of this factor. The atmosphere created by a teacher, whether it is perceived as unintentionally frightening or supportive, has a profound impact on students' willingness to participate, particularly in tasks as sensitive as speaking.

The subsequent teacher-related factor which influences students' EOCA relates to how they manage their classes. The role of teachers in forming classroom experience is profound. It has an effect on not just content delivery but also the learning atmosphere, the pacing of lessons, and the manner of content delivery. One of the predominant concerns raised by the students in this study through the FLCAS is the pace and clarity of lesson, with more than 70% of participants reporting that their EOCA originated from challenges in comprehending their teacher's instructions and keeping up with the class. This finding reinforces Von Worde (2003) by identifying rapid speech as a potential challenge in comprehension, suggesting slowed speech and clear instructions as solutions. Furthermore, the participants in the present study also reported the anxiety deriving from teacher's unexpected speaking requests. This finding parallels in Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzaro (2014) and Kim (2009), who highlight that a number of students feel anxiety due to

unpredictable teacher actions like spontaneous speaking prompts. Khattak et al. (2011) further adds that anxiety can also stem from past educational experiences, especially if English was taught in a threatening or unclear manner. Given these consistent findings across different studies, my findings support the prevalent view that a teacher's approach to classroom management is a critical component in students' EOCA.

In relation to the finding about the anxiety deriving from being called upon by the teacher for spontaneous speaking, the study also emphasizes the key role of the lack of preparation time in causing EOCA amongst students. A sizable proportion of participants expressed heightened anxiety when being required to perform oral tasks without adequate preparation. Sufficient preparation time is considered a protection against the apprehensions linked with public speech in a foreign language since students have time to arrange their thoughts and language use prior to speaking activities. Nonetheless, when this protective factor is absent, students may perceive themselves as being pushed into challenging circumstances. As a result, their EOCA increases.

The significance of preparation time as a major factor influencing EOCA is a recurrent theme in language acquisition research (e.g., Alnahidh and Altalhab, 2020; Arnaiz and Pérez-Luzaro, 2014; He, 2013; Le, 2023; Subekti, 2019; Tóth, 2010; William & Andrade, 2008). The present study's findings concerning the importance of preparation time as a factor of EOCA align particularly well with Le (2023). Conducted in Vietnam, the same linguistic context with this study, Le's research highlights the FLA levels among Vietnamese students when required to respond immediately without sufficient

preparation. This similarity in findings further substantiates the applicability of this factor within the educational setting of Vietnam.

Nevertheless, this source of EOCA is not limited to the Vietnamese context. Studies by Alnahidh and Altalhab (2020), Arnaiz and Pérez-Luzaro (2014), He (2013), Subekti (2019), Tóth (2010), and William & Andrade (2008) have also identified the lack of preparation time as one of the primary sources of foreign language speaking anxiety in different settings. Their collective findings point out that, regardless of geographical or cultural variations, crossing Europe (Arnaiz and Pérez-Luzaro, 2014; Tóth, 2010), the Middle East (Alnahidh and Altalhab, 2020), to Asia (He, 2013; Subekti, 2019; William & Andrade, 2008), the lack of preparation time before performing in English consistently emerges as one of the main reasons of EOCA in students' language learning experiences. The similarity between these studies and the current research emphasizes the large influence of this anxiety source. In addition, the study of Kudo et al., (2017) states that students may benefit considerably from pedagogical approaches that allow more preparation time. This is not solely about comfort but about promoting an environment where learners can perform at their best with enhanced confidence.

According to the interview results, unfamiliar or difficult topics stand out as another notable factor increasing students' EOCA. Such feelings of anxiety are not just because of the complexities of the language in use but are increased by the lack of engagement these topics often bring about. The topics that require the use of complicated vocabulary and abstract thinking can push students out of their linguistic comfort zones and increase the anxieties related to students' linguistic inadequacies and gaps in prior knowledge. This finding corresponds with He (2013)'s claiming that unfamiliar topics can intensify

students' foreign language speaking anxiety by raising greater insecurity in their feelings. He suggests, and this study confirms, that initiating discussions around familiar topics can create a supportive environment, in which learners' confidence is boosted and their anxiety is reduced before tackling difficult discussions. The present study also found out that lesson content related to students' realities and aspirations can alleviate their EOCA. The finding here is in line with Samad et al. (2021), exploring that the discomfort and disengagement arise when students encounter strange or complicated topics. Such anxiety often stems from students' perceived inadequate knowledge to talk about these topics. Additionally, while Yeşilçınar & Erdemir (2022) and Alnahidh and Altalhab (2020) might not have explicitly investigated into the issue of topic difficulty or unfamiliarity as a source of FLA, they support the idea of using topics related to learners' experiences and interests to potentially reduce FLA and enhance student engagement.

To briefly summarise, the present study reveals a variety of factors causing EOCA among students. Predominantly, the students' personal and interpersonal anxieties are generally viewed as the most influential sources of EOCA. These anxieties, including issues of self-confidence, stress from peer comparisons, and fear of negative evaluation, considerably affect students' participation in the English learning environment. Apart from these personal factors, teacher and classroom-related factors also contribute remarkably to causing students' EOCA. The pressure of immediate response expectations, the challenges associated with complicated and unfamiliar lesson topics and teachers' attitudes and classroom management techniques are not to be underestimated. Their impact increases the EOCA experience, demonstrating the critical role of the pedagogical environment in either alleviating or

intensifying student anxiety levels. Last but not least, linguistic difficulties, such as the lack of grammar, vocabulary, and general oral communication competencies and poor pronunciation are also identified as the important set of EOCA sources.

It is noteworthy that while EOCA is substantially caused by situational variables, indicating its situation-specific character, there is also a noticeable influence of general trait anxiety. The significant relationship between T-Anxiety and EOCA, along with the 28% of variance share are attributable to its undeniable presence in EOCA. Consequently, while the unique challenges of acquiring a foreign language substantially contribute to EOCA, the influence of trait anxiety on EOCA is an aspect that demands acknowledgment. In sum, the current findings not only reaffirm EOCA as a specific-situational anxiety as depicted in previous research but also recognise the consequential role of trait anxiety in shaping EOCA.

5.4 RQ 3: Is an extracurricular online TBLT course effective in reducing the students' EOCA level?

Based on the detailed examination of the various sources underlying EOCA, it is vital to progress beyond a mere identification towards rational strategies to alleviate EOCA. While identifying causal factors is crucial, it is equally important to explore solutions, particularly through pedagogical interventions. Grounded in the extensive literature review, task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach as well as online learning environment, appear to be two promising factors to diminish EOCA. Therefore, this study combined these two elements together to investigate their potential effectiveness in reducing students' EOCA. In order to evaluate the online TBLT course effectiveness in reducing the participants' EOCA, the study employed

the data from the FLCAS scores in the Study 1 questionnaire, post-course questionnaire, and 2mo post-course questionnaire of 10 online course students and 10 comparison (non TBLT) students. The online course students' pre and post session anxiety ratings were also utilised.

From the findings presented in chapter four, the FLCAS results from pre and post course assessments of two groups reveal a significant decrease in EOCA levels amongst students in the online TBLT course, unlike their comparison (non TBLT) counterparts. Additionally, the online course students maintained lower EOCA levels two months post-course, indicating a lasting impact of the online TBLT course. The results suggest that the online TBLT course significantly and consistently reduce students' EOCA levels, as a group experience, and it has a potential long-term benefit in alleviating students' EOCA.

Nevertheless, the effect of the online TBLT course in each individual's EOCA level is not the same, according to their EOCA total scores at different timepoints. Two thirds of the participants experienced a decrease in their EOCA level after the course finished. In contrast, three out of ten participants showed a minor increase in their EOCA level at the end of course since their EOCA total scores obtained from the post-course questionnaire were slightly higher than those prior to the course. However, what they shared in their post-course interviews were opposite with their EOCA post-course total scores and their EOCA total scores measured two months later were still lower than the pre-course scores. There might be some factors affecting their state anxiety while doing the post-course questionnaire. For example, the high difficulty level of the topic in the last online session, as mentioned in their interviews, might have influenced their responses in the post-course questionnaire because the

post-course questionnaire was answered immediately after the last session finished. Other external factors related to the surrounding where they answered the post-course questionnaire may also have had a role to play. More probing questions regarding this issue during the post-course interviews would have been beneficial.

Furthermore, the median scores of the three EOCA source items (section 3B in the Study 1 questionnaire) showed an immediate reduction after the course. This suggests that the TBLT course effectively addresses, and potentially reduces, some of primary sources of EOCA among participants, particularly related to the lack of grammar, vocabulary, and topic ideas. The teaching methods, content, or interactions within the course might have alleviated the anxieties related to English oral communication. The further drop in median scores two months post-course suggests a lasting effect of the course on the participants. It indicates that the benefits were not just temporary and that participants continued to experience reduced EOCA sources even after the course had ended.

In addition, the analysis of pre and post session anxiety ratings shows a trend of anxiety reduction throughout the online sessions. Initially, participants reported moderate and high anxiety levels due to language proficiency concerns, fear of making mistakes and the novelty of the learning method and the online learning environment. However, a gradual anxiety decrease was noted as the course progressed, likely due to their growing familiarity with the TBLT approach and the online environment, as reported in the post-course interviews. Factors like peer support, increased self-confidence, and comfort with the learning method and the virtual platform were helpful in reducing anxiety. While some anxiety increases occurred with

challenging topics, a general decrease of EOCA levels after each session was evident. This highlights the effectiveness of online TBLT in reducing EOCA in individual sessions, emphasizing the need for supportive and engaging learning environments on a per-session basis.

When contextualised within the broader academic literature on TBLT, these findings further strengthen the growing agreement on the benefits of TBLT in reducing FLA in previous studies. The present study aligns with Boonkit (2010) and Bao and Du (2015), highlighting students' enhanced confidence and reduced EOCA in the TBLT course. Boonkit (2010) claims that the TBLT pedagogy provides opportunities for participants to express their thoughts in different contexts, which enhances their vocabulary usage and consequently builds their confidence and diminishes their FLA. The present research further reinforces the idea that a well-structured TBLT design in an online setting can positively impact learners' self-confidence and EOCA levels. According to Bao and Du (2015), the TBLT approach shows an ability to foster a comfortable and secure learning atmosphere, which not only diminishes FLA but also boosts the learners' confidence. The anxiety alleviation tendency witnessed within individual online sessions in this study can be partially attributed to the supportive learning environment of the TBLT setting, like Bao and Du (2015) interpreted.

Wang (2018) compares the efficiency in reducing EOCA of TBLT approach and the traditional Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) teaching method. He states that TBLT can effectively relieve students' anxiety. This is supported by the evidence presented in the current research, in which participants of the online TBLT course consistently demonstrated diminished

EOCA levels compared to their counterparts who studied English in more traditional learning settings only.

Subekti (2020) discusses initial challenges when shifting to TBLT from traditional approaches like the PPP method, suggesting an initial increase in students' anxiety due to their unfamiliarity with the learning method. However, this anxiety decreases over time when students get accustomed to the learning method. This present study confirms these challenges with the initial apprehension reported by the participants during the beginning of the online TBLT course. It also observed a decrease in this initial anxiety with continued exposure, demonstrating the long-term benefits of TBLT and reflecting Ellis (2017)'s viewpoint on learning through language use.

While the present study results are in line with a number of previous studies as discussed above, a major difference arises. These studies mainly focused on TBLT implementation in traditional or physical classrooms. This is where the present study creates a new area of focus, as it extends these insights to the developing field of online learning. So far, no other studies could be found that have implemented TBLT within an online learning context with the purpose to reduce students' speaking anxiety. The findings of the current research suggest that there is a notable decrease in anxiety for those who participate in the online TBLT course. This result emphasizes the cooperation between TBLT teaching methods and online learning environment in helping students overcome their EOCA.

Online learning environment has unique characteristics. There is the element of physical detachment, which can either amplify feelings of isolation and subsequent anxiety (Hurd, 2007; Majid, 2012) or, conversely, offer a more personal and controlled environment which is beneficial in reducing anxiety

(Tuyet & Khang, 2020; Yaniafari & Rihardini, 2021). The current study findings support the latter, suggesting that the online TBLT environment not only keeps the benefits observed in physical classrooms such as frequent face-to-face interactions and instant teacher and peer's feedback but possibly enhances them due to the specific features of digital platforms. A more detailed discussion on which factors of online learning that assist students in reducing their EOCA will be provided in the next section.

Furthermore, a common theme across studies is that learners often face increased anxiety at the beginning of online language courses. As pointed out by Majid (2012) and Ushida (2005), initial anxiety is frequently triggered by unfamiliarity with the digital learning setting but reduces as the course progresses. The current study findings support this claim. As found from the data, participants reported varying levels of anxiety in the initial online sessions. Their anxiety at the beginning of the course was caused by many factors, one of which was the unfamiliarity with the online platform and environment. However, the learners described a reduction in their anxiety as they advanced through the course. This suggests an adaptation to the online environment and increased comfort over time.

In sum, at the group level, the online TBLT course seems to have a positive and lasting effect on lowering students' EOCA. At the individual level, not all the participants experienced a decrease in their EOCA level immediately after the course ended. These individual differences need to be investigated further. While the findings are in accordance with established studies on the effectiveness of TBLT in reducing EOCA, they also highlight the innovation of applying this methodology in an online setting. Also, the findings indicate the positive impact of the TBLT course in decreasing EOCA sources for most

participants immediately after the course and for all of them in the longer term. It highlights the potential of targeted interventions, like the TBLT course, in addressing and reducing specific anxieties related to English oral communication. These findings contribute to and broaden the existing research in the fields of online learning and TBLT approach. A more comprehensive discussion on contributions of the present study will be stated in the next chapter.

5.5 RQ 4: If so, what factors of such an online TBLT course might help reduce students' EOCA?

Transitioning from the exploration of the effectiveness of the online TBLT course in reducing students' EOCA, the subsequent step is identifying the specific attributes of the course that contributed to this effect. A closer look at the course's structure and students' feedback via post-course interviews reveals interesting insights into the helpful role in reducing students' EOCA played by the online learning environment and the learning method – TBLT approach.

5.5.1 The online learning environment

The first factor within the online learning environment that considerably contributes to students' EOCA reduction is the protective feel of the computer screen, shared by the students in this study. Many participants mentioned that interacting through a screen made them feel safer and less anxious because it reduced the usual risks or fears associated with direct face-to-face communication. The feeling of being directly judged, which often accompanies in-person interactions, was significantly reduced in the online setting. Although the participants still had spoken interactions with other classmates, the fact that they were not in the same physical place made them feel less stressed.

These results reflect the general idea that talking through a screen can be easier and less stressful than talking in person. This finding is in line with Hidayat et al. (2022) and Yaniafari and Rihardini (2021). In Hidayat et al. (2022), participants reported lower anxiety in synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) compared to direct face-to-face interactions. This digital mediation creates a perception of distance, even with the camera on, making participants feel less pressured and more comfortable while speaking. Essentially, the facilitated setting of SCMC offers a comfort environment with the absence of direct, physical communication, allowing students to communicate without the immediate intensity and typical closeness of direct face-to-face encounters. Similarly, Yaniafari and Rihardini (2021) also highlighted the comfort zone students find in the online space. The virtual learning offers relief from the direct gaze and potential judgment of peers, facilitating a more relaxed engagement for shy students. This comfort can naturally reduce students' speaking anxiety.

In the present study findings, the online environment provided students with a number of opportunities to interact directly with their teachers via various ways on the online platform. This aspect was beneficial in lowering students' stress when interacting with their student, especially when compared to traditional classrooms, where physical constraints limit student-teacher interactions. The result lends support to Yaniafari and Rihardini (2021) and Wang and Chen (2007). These previous studies discover the anxiety relief students find in online platforms, allowing for a more relaxed engagement and potentially fostering increased teacher-student interactions. However, the finding on the advantage of online platform in increasing teacher-student interactions is in contrast with Sun (2014) and Ushida (2005), in which they

emphasized a perceived reduction in student-teacher interaction in online courses. It could be argued that the development of online platforms for language learning and tools has considerably transformed lately. With advancements in technology and increased integration of interactive tools, current online platforms may now facilitate more direct interactions compared to the past (Berry, 2019).

In addition, the capacity to simultaneously use online tools and resources while studying was an evident advantage in reducing students' EOCA in the current research. This real-time access, which is not always available in traditional classrooms, boosted their confidence by providing them with a facilitated search tool and enabling them to swiftly identify words or phrases to express their thoughts more coherently. Consequently, the ability to rapidly reference and incorporate precise linguistic structures in real-time substantially enhanced their participatory confidence, which in turn, reduce their EOCA. Interestingly, there appears to be an absence of literature specifically addressing this particular advantage of online learning environments. This gap emphasizes the novelty of the current study exploration in the aspect of EOCA reduction in online learning environment.

Furthermore, some specific features of virtual platforms are identified as a contribution to reducing students' EOCA. The ability to mute microphones and turn cameras off of the online platform emerge as an important factor in the present study findings. The teacher could monitor students' discussions without pressuring them by turning the camera off while being present in the discussion room. Additionally, during class presentations or feedback sessions, students could not hear others' comments since they muted their microphones, which could potentially reduce anxiety or distractions. Such functionalities

ensuring students feel less pressured align with observations from Cote & Gaffney (2021), where SCMC environments provide a comfortable feeling for students by distancing them from immediate judgments and reactions. This study also points out the benefits of breakout rooms to improving student confidence and reducing EOCA. When students had pair or group discussions in breakout rooms, they could concentrate more on their speaking, without judgement on their ideas or speaking skills from individuals in other groups. Such focused interactions, free from overarching judgments, are similar with findings of Alla et al. (2020) and Blake (2015). In their studies, online small group settings, similar to breakout rooms, were shown to offer students a sense of comfort and safety to reduce EOCA and increase their focus on peer interactions.

As students could focus on discussing with each other in breakout rooms, their interactions with peers are enhanced. The necessity of human interaction has been repeatedly highlighted for the successful delivery of online courses, no matter the subject (Gilbert, 2001; Sun, 2011). The findings of the present study suggest that modern online courses may be fulfilling this criterion more effectively than in the past as evident in the enhancement of interactions amongst students and between students and teacher in the online TBLT class.

5.5.2 The learning method – Task-based language teaching approach

Apart from the online learning environment, the findings of the present study also suggest that there are several key factors within the task-based language teaching (TBLT) framework that contribute to students' English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) reduction, which enables them to speak English more confidently and less anxiously.

In the pre-task phase, the use of task samples has a significant impact on learners' confidence. In addition to gaining a thorough understanding of the task expectations, students can also acquire structural and lexical knowledge that they can apply to their performance to speak better. The fact that students are familiar with the task framework appears to alleviate their EOCA, since they are adjusting their speech to a framework that they are accustomed to. This approach encourages a form of guided exploration, where learners can experiment within a comfortable structure, consequently reducing EOCA. Moreover, when students observe improved performance owing to the task samples, their confidence in their abilities is enhanced. This helps in alleviating their personal anxiety related to perceived inadequacies in English speaking.

The association between foundational understanding in the pre-task phase and reduced EOCA aligns with the finding of Subekti (2020) and Kawashima (2019). Kawashima (2019) proposed the significance of the pre-task phase in relieving anxiety since it provides students an understanding of the topic and preparation, thereby increasing students' confidence and readiness for subsequent tasks. Similarly, Subekti (2020) emphasized the intention of the pre-task phase to trigger schemata, helping learners in anticipating upcoming content as well as linking it to their prior knowledge. Although neither Kawashima nor Subekti directly discussed the use of task samples, the emphasis on topic preparation and understanding as well as schema activation in the pre-task phase indirectly links with the findings of this study regarding the impact of task samples in the pre-task phase on enhancing learners' confidence.

Another key element in reducing EOCA is the emphasis on learner autonomy in task completion before teachers provide explicit instruction in

language use. Students in the study reported a preference for engaging in the linguistic task and discovering the language in use with peers before being guided by the teacher. This approach seemed to encourage excitement and ownership because students could explore language forms and pronunciation on their own or with peers. In contrast to simply reproducing prepared samples, the participants valued the opportunity to engage with language in a meaningful and self-directed way. As well as creating excitement, this method leads to more oral interactions, enhances group discussion skills, boosts confidence, and alleviates concerns about speaking English amongst students. A similar finding was found by Cutrone & Beh (2018), who argue that by doing a task first, learners become aware of their linguistic needs. This awareness increases their interest in the language required to complete the task. Students are also motivated to participate in exchanges needed to complete tasks because of the meaningful, goal-oriented nature of tasks. Cutrone & Beh's principles are reinforced in the present study. Both findings support TBLT's pedagogical effectiveness when task performance happens before explicit instruction.

The study findings also suggest that preparation time contributes to students' EOCA reduction. Aligning with Subekti (2020) and Willis (1996, 2012), who propose that preparation helps in reducing apprehension and boosting confidence, the present research supports this by showing that the preparation process allows students to acquire vocabulary and develop ideas. Such activities enable them to make more logical and fluent presentations of ideas, which in turn reduces anxiety. However, the present study also introduces novel insights into the value of spontaneous speech practice. While emphasizing preparation like Subekti and Willis did, the current study

acknowledged the importance of enhancing immediate response skills through spontaneous interactions as well. This highlights an area that these previous studies did not explicitly explore – the balance between preparation and spontaneity. Therefore, the current findings not only support the previous conclusions that preparation is generally beneficial for reducing EOCA but also expand the discussion that adaptability in preparation time is crucial. Depending on the complexity of the task and learning objectives, a balance between prepared and spontaneous speaking opportunities might be the most effective way to reduce EOCA.

Collaborative tasks in TBLT class, particularly through group or pair work, are another key element of the TBLT approach that significantly contributes to reducing EOCA. The experience of discussing and solving problems with peers helps students generate more ideas and offers them a safe place where ideas are evaluated and approved collaboratively before being presented to the whole class. Providing peer validation for any public performance prior to a performance enhances students' confidence and reduces their fear of negative evaluation from peers. In addition, the study findings also indicate a reduction in students' EOCA while they work in pair or group thanks to the error correction led by peers. With helps from peers through pair work or group work, students have opportunities to address and learn from their linguistic mistakes in a less formal and less threatening setting. By working through errors with their partners before speaking in front of the class, students gain confidence and experience a decrease in speaking anxiety. They know that they have already addressed these challenges with the support of their classmates. This again not only provides a safe space for

practising the target language but also develops their readiness to speak publicly, thereby reducing the fear of negative evaluation.

The study findings are consistent with a number of previous studies (Bao & Du, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Subekti, 2020; Wang, 2018), which have identified the benefit of TBLT approach in providing a supportive setting that minimises anxiety by enabling learners to speak in smaller, less threatening groups. The cooperative learning in TBLT promotes a positive environment, thereby lowering students' anxiety. These findings are also in line with Liu (2006), who observed students' relaxed participation in English conversations during collaborative activities. Moreover, the advantages of applying the TBLT approach to foreign language teaching are considerable. It is a useful strategy for diminishing students' anxiety and creating an encouraging environment where they can collaboratively engage in problem-solving tasks and learn from their peers (Jones, 2007). By supporting these studies, the present research highlights the effectiveness of TBLT approach in creating a low-anxiety environment through pair work and group work, and further validates the important role of TBLT in addressing EOCA amongst learners.

Interestingly, the present study suggests that the EOCA-reducing effects of the online TBLT course are not dependent on familiarity with classmates or teachers. The consistent focus of TBLT on the task-solving, peer discussions, preparation time, and learner autonomy seems to provide a stable structure that supports confidence and reduces EOCA, independent from the specific interpersonal dynamics in the classroom. Certainly, there was some shyness and concerns in the initial online sessions, but as participants became acquainted with the course structure, they were not worried about the presence

of new classmates anymore. They also stated that they would not feel anxious if they studied with a new teacher in the same setting. These results indicate the vital role of the TBLT approach in reducing EOCA that rise above interpersonal factors. However, it is worthy to compare this with the findings of Sadighi and Dastpak (2017) and Effiong (2016) in which unfamiliarity with peers in a traditional classroom setting was determined as a major factor causing increased anxiety levels amongst students. This difference potentially demonstrates the unique EOCA-alleviating attributes of the online TBLT environment, separating from the experiences in physical classrooms as outlined by the previous studies, and reveals the need for further exploration into the relationship of familiarity and EOCA in varied learning environments.

In conclusion, the implementation of the TBLT approach, particularly within an online learning environment, is suggested to have been effective in reducing students' EOCA. According to this study, the TBLT's comprehensive strategy, which combines pre-task samples, student autonomy in task-solving activities, adequate preparation time, collaborative interactions in pairs or groups, reduces anxiety related to speaking English in a cooperative way. Through the absence of physical classroom limitations and the availability of online tools, the TBLT approach is even more adaptable and flexible in the virtual setting, which facilitates focused and interactive learning. It has been shown that the TBLT approach can be used effectively and efficiently in online environment. Together they provide students with an active platform to improve their English communicative competence without feeling anxious about it. With education undergoing a digital transformation, TBLT approach can serve as both a methodological preference and a strategic consideration to develop confident and less anxious communicators of English.

5.6 Summary of the chapter

The chapter provides a comprehensive discussion on the issues of EOCA amongst Vietnamese university students and evaluates the effectiveness of an online TBLT approach in reducing this anxiety. The key findings across four research questions were discussed. Firstly, EOCA was identified as a problem experienced by Vietnamese students, being in line with prior research that recognises it as a significant and widespread phenomenon in many non-English speaking countries. Secondly, the study determined fundamental contributors to EOCA which were students' personal and interpersonal anxieties, teacher and classroom-related factors, and linguistic difficulties. General trait anxiety was also acknowledged to have an effect on EOCA. Thirdly, the implementation of an online TBLT course was found to effectively reduce EOCA at the group level, showing the long-term benefits of this pedagogical approach. Finally, specific elements of TBLT approach, including pre-task samples, learner autonomy, and collaborative learning, were helpful in lessening EOCA, particularly in the online setting. This learning environment offered flexibility and interactive engagement beneficial to lowering EOCA.

The next chapter will summarise the key findings, discuss the study contributions, limitations and implications for language teaching and research methods, suggest some potential areas for future research and state my personal reflection on my PhD journey.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter first provides a summary of aims, research questions, and key findings of the study. Then the contributions of the study are presented. Subsequently, the broader implications of the findings for foreign language teaching practice are elaborated upon. Next, the chapter addresses the limitations and challenges of the study and suggests recommendations for further research in the future. The chapter is concluded by my personal reflection on my PhD journey.

6.2 Summary of aims, research questions, and key findings of the study

This study aimed to investigate an aspect of foreign language anxiety (FLA), English oral communication anxiety (EOCA), experienced by Vietnamese university students in English language courses. Identifying the students' EOCA levels and underlying causes of EOCA were two of the goals. The research also endeavoured to examine whether an online course, grounded in task-based language teaching (TBLT), was effective in reducing participants' EOCA. Finally, it aimed to identify the features of the online TBLT course that were effective in decreasing EOCA.

The research questions for the study were the following:

1. To what extent do a small sample of Vietnamese learners of English (n = 166) experience anxiety when communicating orally in English language classes (EOCA)?
2. What are the underlying factors contributing to EOCA among students in English language classes?
3. Is an extracurricular online TBLT course effective in reducing the students' EOCA level?

4. If so, what factors of such an online TBLT course might help reduce students' EOCA?

To address the research questions, the study was conducted via a mixed method approach with students at a university in central Vietnam. The study utilised several scales including the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986), the Trait Anxiety (T-Anxiety) subscale of The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (Spielberger et al., 1983), and pre and post session anxiety ratings with the five levels of anxiety adapted from Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) (Hamilton, 1959). They were employed to measure the EOCA levels, investigate the relationship between EOCA and T-Anxiety as well as identify the factors contributing to EOCA. Additionally, the post-course interviews were carried out to collect students' feedback and experience on the online TBLT course and explore their perceptions of EOCA.

The previous chapter provided a comprehensive discussion on EOCA experienced by Vietnamese university students, its sources and an evaluation on the effectiveness of the online TBLT course in tackling this challenge. The discussion on RQ1 highlights the persistent presence of EOCA in the context of foreign language learning in Vietnam. Consistent with previous studies, EOCA is considered a longstanding and widespread obstacle. The current study reinforces this finding, emphasizing EOCA as a significant challenge for Vietnamese learners and possibly for learners in similar contexts.

Addressing RQ2, the study identifies various factors contributing to students' EOCA. Personal and interpersonal anxieties, such as self-confidence issues, sense of inferiority from peer comparisons, and fear of negative evaluation, are prominent sources of EOCA. They considerably affect

students' engagement in English language learning. Additionally, teacher and classroom-related factors, including pressure for immediate responses, difficult and unfamiliar lesson topics, and teacher attitudes, play a substantial role in increasing EOCA. Linguistic difficulties, like grammar and vocabulary deficiencies and pronunciation challenges, are also noteworthy EOCA sources.

From the examination of the relationship between T-Anxiety and EOCA, it is inferred that EOCA is influenced by both situational variables which indicate its context-specific characteristic, and general trait anxiety. The significant relationship between T-Anxiety and EOCA, despite the small variance share, highlights the importance of acknowledging trait anxiety's impact on EOCA. Overall, this study confirms EOCA as a specific-situational anxiety but also emphasizes the role of trait anxiety in influencing EOCA, unlike other previous studies which do not recognise the influence of trait anxiety on foreign language anxiety

For RQ3, the findings reveal that the online TBLT course is effective in reducing participants' EOCA at the group level in this study. This was examined not only immediately after the course but also over a two-month period, suggesting that TBLT can provide long-lasting benefits in reducing EOCA. The potential of TBLT, particularly in an online setting, as a pedagogical tool to address specific language anxieties is featured through the study findings.

Lastly, in answering RQ4, the study demonstrates that the TBLT approach, especially when being implemented online, significantly reduces students' EOCA at the group level. Key factors contributing to this reduction include the employment of task samples in the pre-task phase, encouragement of student independence in solving tasks, and the promotion of collaborative

learning. The flexibility and adaptability of the TBLT approach in an online setting and specific functions of the virtual platform allow for a learning environment free from the limitations of a traditional classroom. In this online learning context, students can engage interactively and focus on improving their communicative competence.

In summary, the research concluded that the majority of the Vietnamese university students involved in the study encountered some degree of EOCA. The primary causes of EOCA were identified. The findings established the TBLT approach as a viable and effective strategy in online language learning to alleviate EOCA. The research supported the integration of TBLT into the virtual learning platform, which could be a strategic move to develop more confident and proficient communicators of English.

6.3 Contributions of the study

This study makes contributions to several aspects in the field of foreign language anxiety (FLA), English pedagogical practice, and methodological development.

Firstly, this study extends the field of FLA research by providing valuable insights into English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) in the scope of English language classrooms, contributing to a deeper understanding of this specific aspect of FLA, particularly amongst Vietnamese language learners. By identifying students' EOCA levels and sources in this context, it provides English language teachers with an understanding of the extent of students' anxiety and its triggers to facilitate more successful learning experiences. This research bridges a gap in the limited literature on EOCA in the Vietnamese learning context.

Furthermore, this study acknowledges the influence of trait anxiety (T-Anxiety) on EOCA by providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between these two forms of anxiety. The study found a significant relationship between T-Anxiety and EOCA, despite the relatively small percentage of the variance share. This result underscores the importance of recognising the impact of trait anxiety on EOCA, which was overlooked in previous related studies. The small variance shares between these two variable also supports the characterisation of EOCA as a form of anxiety that is specific to certain situations.

The study also contributes to understandings into pedagogical practice for an online TBLT approach, and research methodological effectiveness. Amongst the most important of these contributions are the findings regarding the alleviation of EOCA through online language learning, based on the TBLT approach.

Within the limited literature on the use of TBLT in online learning environment to alleviate EOCA, this research provides novel perspectives. The study presents not just a mere extension of the traditional classroom to the virtual platform but instead a detailed exploration of how the TBLT approach has adapted and showed effective in reducing EOCA within online environment. With the accelerated shift toward online education in recent years, this study becomes even more relevant to modern language teaching. It addresses a gap in the current understanding related to TBLT as a solution for EOCA in online pedagogical settings.

A further distinctive contribution of this research is its exploration of the connection between technological integration and EOCA. The study uncovers the role of online tools and resources in reducing student oral communication

anxiety. Through this, it not only enhances the comprehension of solutions to alleviate EOCA within the online learning environment but also highlights the importance of these relatively new digital tools, which have not yet been fully explored in educational research. This novel contribution places this study in a leading position of educational research.

In addition, this research contributes to English teaching methodologies through the development and application of an online TBLT course. The eight sessions designed for this study were shown to be feasible in an online educational context and effective in reducing students' EOCA. This study presents a viable TBLT model for virtual learning environments, offering teachers and educators a practical framework for the development of future online TBLT English courses and instructional design.

Lastly, this study stands out from the majority of research in the field of FLA and speaking anxiety in terms of the research methodology. Most studies in this area have employed solely either quantitative or qualitative methods, or they have used mixed methods but limited their focus to FLA in traditional classroom settings. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of EOCA and its potential underlying factors as well as solutions specific to a particular context. Hence, a detailed understanding of the issue was achieved thanks to this research approach. Initial data was gathered via quantitative questionnaires administered to a large sample of participants, which established a foundation for validating and generalising findings related to EOCA and its underlying causes. Subsequently, qualitative interviews were conducted to gain a more in-depth understanding of the students' experiences with the online TBLT course and their perspectives on EOCA. The combined use of these methods

both enriched the data and reinforced the reliability of the overall findings, thereby providing a methodological contribution to the field.

6.4 Implications of the study

The study offers valuable insights and implications for teachers of English and online course instructors in Vietnam and any similar learning contexts. It also suggests some recommendations for Vietnamese non-English major universities where English is used either partly or fully in teaching.

For teachers of English in Vietnam and similar learning contexts, it is essential to first recognise that English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) is a significant classroom issue that can negatively impact students' English speaking skills. Teachers should be aware of EOCA, acknowledge its presence in the classroom, and understand students' anxious behaviours. It is critical to not immediately attribute students' poor or hesitant responses to a lack of effort or ability; instead, teachers should consider the negative influence of EOCA. Therefore, teachers should take an active role in addressing EOCA, offering support to students dealing with it, rather than underestimating their struggles or expecting students to overcome such challenges by themselves.

The implications from the findings on sources of EOCA are profound for teaching practices aiming at reducing EOCA. They emphasize the importance of a specialised educational strategy that recognises EOCA's unique characteristics, which are influenced by general trait anxiety but predominantly affected by the specific situations of language acquisition. This suggests that foreign language teachers should develop strategies that not only acknowledge a general disposition to anxiety but also offer support for the situational challenges of language acquisition. For instance, this specialised strategy could include activities that enhance linguistic confidence through a

development of a supportive atmosphere that reduces the fear of negative evaluation and employ TBLT that allows for meaningful communication.

The research points out linguistic deficiencies, such as limited vocabulary, inadequate grammar, and poor pronunciation, as factors which may intensify EOCA levels. It proposes the use of authentic communicative tasks, combined with specific instructions and sufficient practice, to create a supportive environment that fosters language skill development and learner confidence. It is necessary for foreign language teachers to provide targeted, contextualised instructions and to adjust the curriculum content to meet students' needs. This ensures that language learning both focuses on accuracy and practical application and fluency, and mistakes are accepted as a part of the learning process. Such a comprehensive approach aims to build a stronger linguistic foundation, reduce EOCA, and encourage a more positive educational experience.

Moreover, the study clarifies the remarkable role that personal and interpersonal anxieties play in causing EOCA, particularly those relating to comparisons with peers and fear of negative evaluation from peers. Recognising the fear of negative evaluation is crucial for foreign language teachers. They need to employ pedagogical strategies that promote a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. This could include positive reinforcement, group activities that ensure diverse proficiency levels, and open discussions about the value of mistakes in the learning process.

In addition, some classroom environments may be promoting competition rather than collaboration. In such settings, the main purpose of language acquisition can become less important than individual achievement. This is particularly considerable in the context where collaborative activities

like group discussions, pair work, and role-plays are crucial for language development. The underlying dynamics here highlight the importance of creating a learning environment where individual progress is emphasized over comparative performance.

Moreover, EOCA may also be increased inadvertently by teachers' beliefs and classroom management strategies. It is important to accept that teacher attitudes, the pace of instruction, and the requirement for spontaneous public speaking can all contribute to anxiety. This circumstance has a wide range of implications for teaching. First, teachers should reassess their beliefs about the effect of anxiety in learning. They should understand that while a manageable level of stress can be motivating, extreme anxiety is counterproductive. Teachers should aim for a balance between maintaining order and being friendly to create a classroom atmosphere that is beneficial to learning and reduces anxiety. Second, teachers need to be mindful of the pacing of their lessons and the clarity of their instructions since a rapid pace and unclear directions can make students feel overwhelmed. They should adopt a suitable teaching approach and ensure that instructions are understandable. They should provide all students the opportunity to follow and engage with the lesson content. Third, the study findings emphasize the importance of giving students with adequate preparation time before participating in speaking tasks to decrease EOCA. This means that spontaneous speaking requirements should be carefully considered and balanced with structured preparation to avoid increasing student anxiety. Lastly, the choice of topics is vital. Topics that are too difficult or unfamiliar can increase anxiety. Teachers are encouraged to select topics that are relevant

and appealing for students, which connect to their existing knowledge and experiences.

In line with the study implications, TBLT is considered a promising instructional approach, especially when being integrated with online learning platforms, to reduce EOCA. The study reveals that a TBLT approach with the use of real-life communicative tasks, along with the flexibility and relaxed atmosphere of online learning environments, can significantly reduce EOCA. The use of pre-task examples, promotion of learner autonomy in task-solving activities, sufficient preparation time, and encouragement of collaborative learning through group and pair work are all TBLT components that have been shown to boost confidence and diminish EOCA in this study. These practices feature a pedagogical shift towards a more interactive, supportive, and student-centred approach in English language learning settings, which promotes language proficiency and student comfort.

The use of the online platform for conducting the TBLT sessions in this study provides more implications for online instructors. The breakout rooms facilitate pair interactions and smaller group discussions, which supports communicative teaching approaches and suggests that such features are fundamental in virtual classroom management. It may be beneficial for online instructors to use breakout rooms for pair or group discussions frequently since this activity can encourage students to practise speaking English with peers as much as possible. The more students practise, the more confident and less nervous they will be when speaking the target language. The study also recommends online instructors to reduce their presence in breakout rooms by turning off their camera and mute their microphone while students are doing a task with peers. This approach allows teachers to observe the students'

discussions without making the students to feel pressured with the teachers' presence in the room. In addition, the chat feature enables private conversations between a teacher and students during a lesson. Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of this online feature in order to offer individualised support to students while keeping the conversations confidential, which helps relieve students' stress while interacting with teachers.

As for the Vietnamese universities that are not English majors, it is recommended to invest in strong technology systems and develop backup plans to manage potential technical failures in order to ensure uninterrupted teaching and learning experiences. Furthermore, these educational institutions should promote and encourage teachers to follow teaching approaches that are interactive, supportive, and student-centred approaches in English language learning. This pedagogical shift can enhance student comfort and reduce their EOCA in their English language classes.

6.5 Limitations and challenges of the study

6.5.1 Limitations

Although this study could provide important evidence regarding EOCA among Vietnamese learners, its contributors, and the effectiveness of the online TBLT course in reducing EOCA at the group level, there are several limitations that must be recognised and considered.

The first limitation of the study is the low enrolment in the online TBLT course. Despite initial interest at the time the Study 1 questionnaire administration, the number of students who committed to the online TBLT course was lower than expected. The initial plan hoped for at least twelve participants but the final count was only ten. The reason for this was that the online course's duration of eight sessions over eight weeks was overly

demanding. It was difficult for the students to maintain their participation alongside their regular university attendance. Although this number was adequate for the course to proceed, a larger sample size would have enhanced the reliability of the findings. However, I believe that the study's design could be replicated in similar contexts with more participants, potentially within or beyond the context of Vietnam, to discover if comparable patterns emerge.

An additional limitation is the potential for recall bias in the self-reported measures used in the Study 1 questionnaire, as participants were asked to reflect on past experiences of EOCA. Memories can fade or be influenced by subsequent events, resulting in inaccuracies in the data gathered. Furthermore, the reliability of the self-reporting tools utilised, particularly the FLCAS, could be compromised by participants' subjective interpretations and their desire to respond in a way they thought that suited the researcher's expectations. However, since anxiety is a construct not easily observed directly, self-reports measures remain essential for this type of research. Also, this study employed interviews along with the questionnaire, which served to support and substantiate the findings from the questionnaire to a certain degree.

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There were some challenges with the adoption of a mixed-method methodology, which combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. Firstly, mixed methods can be quite demanding in terms of time and effort to collect, process and analyse data from multiple sources (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Personally, I found that it took a considerable amount of time for me to process, analyse and integrate data from the questionnaires and interviews, which sometimes led to feelings of discouragement and distraction. Secondly, integrating data from different sources requires a careful consideration of data compatibility and triangulation methods to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Despite efforts to triangulate data, the study could have benefited from more extensive integration of qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of EOCA and the effectiveness of the online TBLT course in reducing EOCA. The details are presented below.

Firstly, the post-course interviews supported the quantitative data by offering a necessary qualitative dimension to the study. However, a more comprehensive method of data triangulation could have been employed for deeper analysis. Integrating structured observations into the research design and adding more targeted questions in the interviews would have facilitated a

more detailed examination of how students engaged with peers during task discussions and how these practices influenced EOCA in the context of online TBLT environments. Through these enhancements, the study could have highlighted specific student behaviours, such as their actions when they were quiet during collaborative work and their use of private messaging during discussions. Such insights could have further explained the role of online platforms and TBLT in decreasing EOCA.

Secondly, while the study did include a post-course questionnaire two months after the completion of the online TBLT course, which helped to examine the long-term effects of the TBLT course on EOCA, the lack of a comparative analysis with the comparison (non TBLT) students and follow-up interviews with the online course participants at this stage is a noted limitation. The comparison with the comparison (non TBLT) group could have provided more evidence on the lasting effect of the online TBLT course. Moreover, such follow-up interviews with the online course group could have provided deeper insights into the factors that contributed to the sustained low levels of EOCA amongst participants. Without this data, it remains uncertain whether the observed reductions in anxiety were a direct effect of the course or if they were influenced by external factors unrelated to the course experience.

An additional limitation to the research methodology was the employment of quasi-experimental design, which lacked random assignment of participants to treatment conditions. Due to the practical restrictions and ethical considerations, participants were allowed to self-select into either the experimental (i.e. the online course group) or control group (i.e. the comparison (non TBLT) group) based on their willingness to participate in the online TBLT course. This lack of randomisation might introduce biases into the

study, such as participants involved in the treatment being more eager to overcome anxiety than the control group. In this research, both experimental and control groups were informed of the study's general purposes as part of the ethics process. However, due to the nature of the intervention, they were aware of their group assignment. It led to the lack of blinding that may have influenced participants' responses. Consequently, they might have provided responses in line with the purpose of the study, aiming to examine a decrease in EOCA following the online TBLT course. Nonetheless, qualitative data collection methods were employed to understand the reasons behind any observed changes in the participants' anxiety levels. Moreover, efforts were made to ensure comparability between the control groups regarding characteristics and experiences outside the intervention.

In addition, the administration of questionnaires to measure EOCA also had certain limitations. Self-reported measures used in the Study 1 questionnaire might recall bias and subjective interpretation (Harris & Brown, 2010), as participants were asked to reflect on past experiences of EOCA. Memories can fade or be influenced by subsequent events, resulting in inaccuracies in the data gathered (Brewer et al., 2004). Furthermore, the reliability of the self-reporting tools utilised, particularly the FLCAS, could be compromised by participants' subjective interpretations and their desire to respond in a way they thought that suited the researcher's expectations. However, since anxiety is a construct not easily observed directly, self-reports measures remain essential for this type of research. Also, this study employed interviews along with the questionnaire, which served to support and substantiate the findings from the questionnaire to a certain degree.

Moreover, although the FLCAS is a well-established measure for assessing EOCA and was supported by post-course interviews, my decision of omitting three items related to test anxiety limited the ability to fully understand the participants' anxiety levels and compare them with previous studies.

The implementation of semi-structured interviews as part of data collection process also presented some limitations. Interviews could offer valuable insights into participants' experiences and perceptions on EOCA and the online TBLT course. However, this method of data collection is inherently subjective and may be influenced by interviewer bias or participants' willingness to honestly share their thoughts (Knox & Burkard, 2009). Additionally, the sample size and selection criteria for interviews participants may limit the ability to generalise the findings to broader populations (Bryman et al., 2022). To mitigate these limitations, the quantitative method was employed alongside the interviews. By triangulating the quantitative findings from questionnaires with the qualitative insights from interviews, the reliability and validity of the current research findings were enhanced and the impact of potential biases from the interviews were minimised.

Lastly, the Online course participant information sheet (Appendix 12, page 516) stated the research purposes related to investigating English language anxiety and evaluating the effectiveness of the online TBLT course in reducing the anxiety. This way of wording might inadvertently create an expectation or bias towards positive outcomes related to the online TBLT course. Hence, participants' feedback on the online course might be impacted since they might want to match their responses with the study objectives. Additionally, in a cultural context like Vietnam, where saving face and keeping

harmony are important (Nguyen, 2002), participants may feel additional pressure to meet what they thought others expect or avoid criticism of the online TBLT course. In other words, participants might not be willing to provide negative feedback or express dissatisfaction with the course.

However, it is important to provide transparency about the study objectives and methodologies in the consent form as it is standard practice in research ethics. Through clear aims stated in the form, participants could know the purpose of their participation and the potential impact of the research findings. This transparency was crucial for maintaining ethical standards and ensuring informed consent from participants. Furthermore, although cultural reservations and concerns about losing face while doing this kind of research in Vietnam are valid considerations, the consent form was designed to mitigate these potential influences by emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation and the confidentiality of participants' responses. Participants had the right to participate in the study voluntarily and were assured that their personal information, responses and feedback would be anonymised to protect their privacy and identity. This action aimed to create a supportive and respectful environment where participants could feel safe to provide honest opinions without fear of negative judgement.

6.5.2 Challenges while conducting the study

The first challenge was the ability to maintain participant engagement for the second phase of the study, the online TBLT course. While there was initial enthusiasm for the first part of the study involving the Study 1 questionnaire, retaining a consistent group of 12 for the TBLT course was challenging. The demanding academic schedules of the participants, all of whom were university students in Vietnam, led to a dropout of two participants

before the course ended. Organising online sessions for ten students with different disciplines and timetables, split in two groups per week, was a considerable challenge. It was also further complicated by the time zone difference between my location in the UK and the participants in Vietnam.

The complicated nature of the interdisciplinary research design, a mixed-methods approach with an online TBLT course which had to be designed from scratch was another major challenge. This endeavour was time-consuming and demanded a thorough understanding of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, alongside proficiency in TBLT lesson planning and knowledge of psychological anxiety. Since my academic background was predominantly in qualitative research, I found the quantitative data analysis aspect particularly difficult. My prior experience with quantitative methods was limited, making the interpretation of statistical data and its integration with qualitative insights a considerable obstacle. The need for precise and systematic analysis in the quantitative approach was new to me, requiring a considerable expansion of my skill set. However, through extensive engagement with relevant academic literature, participation in some modules of the Master of Research course on quantitative research, and guidance from my supervisors, I was able to overcome this obstacle and accomplish the quantitative analysis and interpretation required for the study.

Moreover, some additional difficulties that consumed considerable time and effort were familiarising myself with the online platform chosen for the course delivery, modifying the lessons to fit the online format, and addressing technological challenges such as platform limitations, the varying levels of digital literacy among participants, and adapting data collection methods for virtual settings. It is important to note that the data collection for this study took

place before the Covid-19 pandemic, at a time when online learning was a novel experience for both me and the Vietnamese participants. This issue made the process even more complicated.

6.6 Suggestions for future research

Considering the aforementioned limitations and study findings, this section suggests several recommendations for future research.

Since the small sample size is one of the major limitations of the study, larger sample sizes across different areas in Vietnam and other similar learning contexts are necessary in future studies to strengthen the study reliability and support the ability to generalise the results. The potential for recall bias in self-reported measures and the omission of certain items from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) highlights the need for more comprehensive tools to assess EOCA in specific. Future studies should consider the development and validation of refined self-report instruments that minimise participants' subjectivity.

The findings of this study suggest the potential for online task-based language teaching (TBLT) courses to have a long-term impact on reducing English oral communication anxiety (EOCA) amongst Vietnamese learners. While the results are indicative, they are not definitive. It is necessary to be cautious while interpreting the reduction of EOCA across three timepoints – prior to the course, immediately after, and two months after its end. External factors might have influenced students' responses to the questionnaires. For example, students' growing familiarity with the questionnaire could have decreased their perceptions of anxiety. The relaxed environment of their personal space when answering the post-course and 2mo post-course questionnaires could also have contributed to a perceived reduction in EOCA.

In contrast, the Study 1 questionnaire, which was administered before the course, was completed in a potentially more stressful classroom setting, with the researcher and peers present. In addition, a small number of the participant exhibited a slight increase in their EOCA right after the course finished even though they shared in the interviews that their EOCA level reduced post course and their 2mo post-course scores reduced as well. Again, these differences might have been affected by some external factors at the time the students answered the questionnaire. Future studies should aim to standardise testing conditions to ensure consistency and reduce the impact of such variables on the results. Also, the current study suggests that the effectiveness of the online TBLT course in reducing EOCA at individual level needs to be further investigated. Some particular questions related to students' EOCA increase after the course (if it happens) should be added in the post-course interviews.

Furthermore, future research is essential to confirm the long-term effects of the course. Longitudinal studies with extended follow-up periods could provide empirical evidence to verify the lasting benefits of online TBLT on EOCA reduction. Future research could involve a comparative analysis between the experimental group and the control group at the two-month timepoint to confirm the long-term effect of the TBLT course. Follow-up interviews with the experimental group could also be included to discover the factors contributing to the persistent reduction in EOCA levels. This qualitative data could clarify whether the decreased anxiety levels are attributed to the course itself or other external factors.

In terms of the limitations of this study in providing a detailed discussion on students' behaviours during peer interactions, future research could include structured observations and refined interview questions. This method could

provide a more comprehensive insight into student interactions during task discussions with classmates and detailed explanations of the effects of these behaviours on EOCA in online TBLT settings.

The integration of technology in language learning, particularly in TBLT lessons is a developing field of study that deserves more further research. Future studies should focus on identifying and evaluating the impact of specific digital tools used within TBLT frameworks and their applicability across various educational settings. Such studies could provide a clearer picture of how technology and online environment facilitate language acquisition and reduce EOCA.

While both the contributions and limitations of this study are recognised, it is evident that there is still much work to be done to further develop the findings and continue the development of the language learning and technology field, particularly in the context of reducing EOCA. It is my hope that this research will inspire further exploration, innovation, and development in the field of language education, particularly within digital pedagogy, teaching methodology, and the understanding of EOCA, bringing advantages to both educators and students of English.

6.7 Reflections and future considerations for expanding the online TBLT course

Since the online TBLT course was conducted before the Covid-19 pandemic, it was indeed a novel experience for both me and the participants. We had not had any experience with online teaching and learning before the course, which led to some initial challenges in adapting to the new learning environment. However, the findings revealed that the participants adapted relatively well to the virtual setting, meaning an ability to navigate the online

platform and engage with the course material and teaching approach effectively. Additionally, the course design and implementation were carried out before the widespread adoption of online education. Hence, this study can be considered a pioneering endeavour in online English teaching. Given the unforeseen circumstances and rapid transition to online learning during and post pandemic, the experiences and lessons learned from this study serve as a valuable resources for educators dealing with the complexities of online instruction.

Reflecting on the changes I would have considered for a similar course in the future, one aspect that I would explore is expanding the course with larger number of participants to suit the typical class size in Vietnam of around 30 to 40 students. To adapt the course structure and materials to accommodate a larger number of students while maintaining the quality and effectiveness on EOCA reduction, the tasks and activities in the course may need to be restructured to facilitate group work and peer collaboration on a larger scale. For example, instead of pair work, group work can be emphasized. Students can be assigned to work in a small groups of four or larger groups of six to eight students, depending on topic difficulty and task complexity. It also means the tasks complexity may need to be slightly adjusted to ensure active participation and contribution from all group members.

Furthermore, implementing a rotating group roles system, where each student takes on different responsibilities in successive tasks, can be considered. This promotes equal participation and develops a sense of shared ownership amongst group members. Additionally, assigning tasks for students to work together outside the classroom can sometimes enhance engagement and teamwork while saving time during class and providing students with more

autonomy to finish tasks with peers. Creating a channel or a forum for students within each group to discuss tasks prior to class can allow for focused reporting during class sessions. This reporting stage enables students to share their group's outcomes and how they have worked together to achieve the task. They can also address any questions from the instructor and other groups regarding the tasks completed before class.

In addition, different instructors can be employed to provide students with exposure to various teaching styles while still maintaining consistency with the TBLT approach. This method can explore further the effectiveness of the TBLT course in reducing EOCA since the familiarity with teacher will be minimised, leaving the TBLT approach as the only constant factor.

6.8 Personal reflection on my PhD journey

Throughout my research journey, I have developed a wide variety of skills, both personally and professionally. I have learnt to employ a mixed-method approach, which combined quantitative and qualitative methods, to analyse and interpret mixed data and to understand the research ethical considerations. My supervisors' feedback has taught me how to write my work critically and rationally at a PhD level. In addition, my work organisation and time management skills have been developed through this extensive journey. It also taught me to be patient, perseverant and determined to overcome obstacles in my life and complete my study.

One of the most significant personal challenges I faced during my PhD was the depression caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the adaptation to my new role as a mother. The negative impact of the pandemic and the demands of childcare not only delayed my study but also strained my mental health. It was difficult to maintain focus and motivation during this time.

However, with support from family and supervisors, I managed to get back on track and finish this journey.

From this study, I have gained a deeper understanding of my students' emotions, particularly in terms of English oral communication anxiety. This understanding has enhanced my ability as a teacher to show more empathy and respect for their anxiety when speaking English in front of peers. This research has also broadened my knowledge about the role of psychological and other external factors affecting language proficiency and the importance of creating a positive and comfortable learning environment to reduce English anxiety in classrooms.

In addition, I have gained some experiences with task-based language teaching implementation in online learning contexts. This will be valuable and helpful for my future teaching. To conclude, I am excited to apply what I have learnt through my PhD journey to my future English classes. This study has encouraged me to continue my passion in doing research related to English language teaching and education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Zoom Session Organisation

Regarding the learning material delivery, I sent all materials needed via Zoom. Nevertheless, they appeared in the common chat box and it was inconvenient for the students to access all the materials during and after the session. Therefore, I uploaded the learning materials in a folder on Google Drive and shared the access right to my students. I only uploaded the learning materials before a session began so that the students could not know the lesson content and prepare the task in advance. If they had known about the lesson content and been able to prepare the task beforehand, they might have felt confident during the class. Since they had to deal with the task while being in the class, I could examine whether the TBLT approach was effective in reducing the students' EOCA during the online course.

During the pilot course, some parts of the lesson plans were adjusted to be more suitable for the students' level. For example, unfamiliar vocabulary needed to be explained more carefully before the students started doing their task. With some topics, the students needed more task preparing time than I expected. Also, it was necessary to give the students two or three minutes to think about the task alone before they joined the discussion with other students. The pre-task phase was occasionally longer than planned, especially with complicated topics, since it took the students some time to understand the task sample then do some small tasks to establish a schema for the topic. On the other hand, there were some activities which could be done in shorter time than anticipated. Therefore, during each session, I took notes of when more time was needed or which activities could be shortened. Then I adjusted the time allotted for each phase in the lesson plans so that the whole lesson would not take too long but the students still had adequate time to do a task. In

addition, some pictures were added or replaced with better quality ones to provide a better demonstration for the lesson and task. Some more detailed instructions were added because the students sometimes showed confusion when reading the task requirements. With clearer instructions, the participants could understand the tasks given better. However, the topics were kept as original since the students shared in the pilot interviews that these topics were useful and practical.

APPENDIX 2: A: Permission For the Use of Cutting Edge Pre-Intermediate (Cunningham et al., 2014)

07/09/2021

Sheffield Hallam University Mail - Re: EDUCATIONAL USE REQUEST FORM - Phuong Nguyen



PHUONG NGUYEN

Information redacted

Re: EDUCATIONAL USE REQUEST FORM - Phuong Nguyen

PearsonEMA, Permission

Information redacted

24 April 2018 at 08:30

To: PHUONG NGUYEN

Good day,

I trust you are well.

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Wishing you a good day further.

Kind regards,
Julia Alexander

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APPENDIX 3: Study 1 Questionnaire

Your ID Code:

This questionnaire is designed to only serve my PhD research project and I ensure that all information that you give in this questionnaire will be kept anonymously and confidentially. Therefore, I hope to receive your honest answers for these questions.

Please create your own ID code used as your identity by combining the first 2 letters of your middle name, the first 2 digits of your date of birth and the last 2 digits of your phone number. You could find the reason for creating your ID code in the Participant Information Sheet.

Thank you!

I. **Background:**

1. **Gender: Male/Female**

2. **Major:**

3. **Age:**

4. **How much do you like English as an academic subject? Please circle ONLY ONE CHOICE below.**

1	2	3	4	5
Very much	Much	Neutral	Not very much	Dislike

5. **How important are English oral communication skills to you?**

Please circle ONLY ONE CHOICE below.

1	2	3	4	5
Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all

6. **Where do you speak English the most? Please circle ONLY ONE CHOICE below.**

1	2	3	4	5
At school	At home	In your English private class	Others:	I do not use English anywhere

7. For which of the following reasons do you use English? Please circle AS MANY CHOICES AS POSSIBLE.

1	2	3	4	5
For my study	To communicate with foreigners	In leisure activities	Others:	I do not use English

8. How do you rate your English oral communication skills? Please circle ONLY ONE CHOICE below.

1	2	3	4	5
Fluently	Fairly fluently	Moderately	With difficulties	Only a few words

9. Your English speaking skill last final-term result:...../10

II. Students' general anxiety

Rating Scale

Please read the statements below and choose the appropriate number to the right of the statement to indicate **how you generally feel**, using √. Each level equals to the number from 1 to 4:

1 = Not at all

2 = Somewhat

3 = Moderately so

4 = Very much so

(The statements are taken from State-Trait Inventory for Adults Self-Evaluation Questionnaire by Spielberger, C., Gorsuch, R., & Lushene, R. (1970). STAI Manual for The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory: ("Self-Evaluation Questionnaire"). Consulting Psychologists Press.)

Statements	1	2	3	4
1. I feel pleasant.				
2. I feel nervous and restless.				
3. I feel satisfied with myself.				
4. I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be.				
5. I feel like a failure.				
6. I feel rested.				
7. I am "calm, cool, and collected".				
8. I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them.				
9. I worry too much over something that really doesn't matter.				
10. I am happy.				
11. I have disturbing thoughts.				
12. I lack self-confidence.				
13. I feel secure.				
14. I make decisions easily.				
15. I feel inadequate.				
16. I am content.				

17. Some unimportant thought runs through my mind and bothers me.				
18. I take disappointments so keenly that I can't put them out of my mind.				
19. I am a steady person.				
20. I get in a state of tension or turmoil as I think over my recent concerns and interests.				

III. A. Students' foreign language anxiety in English language classes

Rating Scale

Please read the statements below and choose one level mostly suitable to you, using √. Each level equals to the number from 1 to 5:

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Disagree

5 = Strongly disagree

(The statements are taken from Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale by Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132.)

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class.					
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English language class.					

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English language class.					
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.					
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes.					
6. During English language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.					
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.					
8. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English language class.					
9. I don't understand why some people get so upset over English language class.					
10. In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.					
11. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English language class.					
12. I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.					
13. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.					

14. Even if I am well prepared for English language class, I feel anxious about it.					
15. I often feel like not going to my English language class.					
16. I feel confident when I speak in English language class.					
17. I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.					
18. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English language class.					
19. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English language class.					
20. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.					
21. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.					
22. English language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.					
23. I feel more tense and nervous in my English language class than in my other classes.					
24. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.					

25. When I'm on my way to English language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.					
26. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English language teacher says.					
27. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.					
28. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.					
29. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.					
30. I get nervous when the English language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.					

III.B. Reasons for students' foreign language anxiety

Please read the statements below and choose one level mostly suitable to you, using √. Each level equals to the number from 1 to 5:

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Disagree

5 = Strongly disagree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
3B-1. I feel anxious in my English language class because I do not have adequate English vocabulary.					
3B-2. I feel anxious in my English language class because I do not have adequate knowledge of English grammar.					
3B-3. I feel anxious in my English language class because of my lack of knowledge of a certain lesson topic.					

IV. Short-answer questions related to foreign language anxiety

Please give short answers for these questions

1. Please name the reasons you feel anxious in your English language classes other than lack of English vocabulary, grammar, and knowledge of certain lesson topics.

.....

2. What kinds of activities in your English language classes do you like the most?

.....

3. What kinds of activities in your English language classes make you feel nervous?

.....

APPENDIX 4: Pre And Post Session Anxiety Ratings

Your ID code:

- 1. Rate your anxiety level BEFORE the lesson starts. Please select ONE level ONLY.**

1	2	3	4	5
Not present	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Very severe

- 2. Rate your anxiety level AFTER the lesson finishes. Please select ONE level ONLY.**

1	2	3	4	5
Not present	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Very severe

APPENDIX 5: FLCAS Item Results

No.	Item	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class.	38.8 %	36.1 %	14.2 %	8.3 %	3.0 %
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in English language class.	10.6 %	22.5 %	17.2 %	34.9 %	15.4 %
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English language class.	32.4 %	33.7 %	22.5 %	6.5 %	5.3 %
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	28.2 %	45.6 %	12.4 %	8.9 %	5.3 %
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes.	27.1 %	29.0 %	22.5 %	16.6 %	5.3 %
6	During English language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	15.9 %	29.6 %	30.8 %	19.5 %	4.7 %
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	31.2 %	40.8 %	17.8 %	9.5 %	1.2 %
8	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English language class.	38.2 %	39.6 %	10.1 %	7.1 %	5.3 %
9	I don't understand why some people get so upset over English language class.	6.5 %	20.1 %	40.8 %	23.7 %	9.5 %
10	In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	18.8 %	30.2 %	22.5 %	20.1 %	8.9 %
11	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English language class.	17.1 %	33.7 %	21.3 %	19.5 %	8.9 %
12	I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.	9.4 %	17.2 %	20.7 %	33.1 %	20.1 %
13	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	22.4 %	40.8 %	20.7 %	14.2 %	2.4 %
14	Even if I am well prepared for English language class, I feel anxious about it.	12.9 %	37.3 %	29.0 %	13.6 %	7.7 %
15	I often feel like not going to my English language class.	6.5 %	14.8 %	32.0 %	33.1 %	13.6 %
16	I feel confident when I speak in English language class.	3.5 %	11.8 %	26.0 %	37.3 %	21.9 %

17	I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	6.5 %	13.6 %	18.9 %	36.1 %	25.4 %
18	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English language class.	26.5 %	30.2 %	22.5 %	16.0 %	5.3 %
19	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English language class.	7.1 %	23.1 %	27.2 %	33.1 %	9.5 %
20	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	20.6 %	44.4 %	21.9 %	11.2 %	2.4 %
21	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	15.9 %	37.9 %	23.7 %	20.1 %	3.0 %
22	English language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	14.7 %	39.6 %	24.9 %	18.3 %	3.0 %
23	I feel more tense and nervous in my English language class than in my other classes.	24.7 %	43.2 %	12.4 %	15.4 %	4.7 %
24	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.	17.6 %	42.0 %	18.9 %	20.1 %	1.8 %
25	When I'm on my way to English language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	2.4 %	12.4 %	37.3 %	33.1 %	14.8 %
26	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English language teacher says.	20.0 %	52.7 %	13.6 %	13.6 %	0.6 %
27	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	13.5 %	42.0 %	24.9 %	18.3 %	1.8 %
28	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	17.6 %	28.4 %	29.6 %	18.9 %	5.9 %
29	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.	5.3 %	24.3 %	32.5 %	28.4 %	10.1 %
30	I get nervous when the English language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	26.5 %	48.5 %	14.8 %	8.3 %	1.8 %

Note. SA: Strongly Agree A: Agree N: Neutral D: Disagree SD: Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX 6: Lesson plans

Teacher's Name: Phuong Nguyen	
Topic: Interview & Report	Date: Session 1 Time: 65 minutes
Level: pre-intermediate	
General aims (including development of key skills)	CHAPTER 7 To do an interview in English and develop reporting skills
Specific learning outcomes for the session:	• To be able to make questions about basic personal information, interests, family and future • To be able to answer questions about basic personal information, interests, family and future properly • To be able to report the information got from the interviews
Class Profile	4 students at pre-intermediate level. Even though they have learnt English for more than 7 years, they are still anxious of speaking English with other people. They need to be equipped useful language to improve their oral fluency as well as given more chances to practice English so that they can overcome their anxiety in speaking English
Materials	Cunningham, S., Moor, P., & Crace, A. (2014). <i>Cutting Edge Pre-intermediate. Students' book</i> (3rd ed). Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
5 mins	Introduce the lesson topic	T-Ls	- Show a picture of a reporter interviewing the famous actress Freida Pinto and ask learners some questions related to the interview: - What are they doing? - What are the purposes of doing an interview? - Introduce the topic: do an interview	Answer teacher's questions	
5 mins	Brainstorm ideas for interview (pre-task phase)	T-Ls	Ask learners about what information they want to know when they interview other people <i>(Possible answers: personal information including name, nickname, place of birth, hometown, job, interests, family, future plans, etc.)</i>	Answer teacher's question	
10 mins	Review/ Introduce language use for interview (pre-task phase)	Ls-Ls T-Ls	- Ask learners to make questions they might ask to know more about other people - Summarise students' questions and correct their answers (if any) - Ask learners to read the interview of Freida Pinto and find the answers for their questions	Raise questions in turn Read the interview and find the answers for their questions individually	Appendix 1 D:\My document\SHEFFIELD HALLAM\Thesis\FULL THESIS\Freida Pinto Interview.PNG
15 mins	Practise doing an interview (task-cycle phase)	Ls-Ls	Ask learners to work in pair to practise interviewing. A learner will be an interviewee, the other will be a reporter and vice versa. The reporter has to take note what they get from the interviewee's answers.	Prepare the personal information and questions Take turn to ask and answer questions in pair Take note of the famous person's answers	

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
15 mins	Practise reporting skills (task-cycle phase)	Ls-Ls	- Give learners a few minutes to prepare to report to the whole class. Help learners if they need. - Ask learners to report to the class in turn	Rehearse their report Report to the whole class	(Optional)
15 mins	Review language focus (language focus phase)	T-Ls	- Give feedback - Review the language use and vocabulary for interview from Freida Pinto's interview and learners' - Correct some common mistakes that students have made - Ask learners to do some grammar exercises (homework)	Listen to feedback Read Freida Pinto's interview and underline useful language for interview Practice saying language use for interview (if needed) Listen Take note Do exercises	Appendix 2

60-SECOND interview with

Freida Pinto

Q1 What's your full name?

Freida Pinto.

Q2 Have you got a nickname?

Fro.

Q3 Where and when were you born?

On 18th October 1984, in Mumbai, India.

Q4 Tell me about your family.

My mother, Sylvia, is a head teacher at a high school and my father, Frederick, is a bank manager. I've also got an older sister, Sharon. She works for a TV news company. She's my best friend.

Q5 What was your first acting job?

In 2008, I played Latika in the film *Slumdog Millionaire*. I don't have any acting training so I did a three-month acting course to prepare for the film. My other films include *Trishna*, *You will meet a tall dark stranger*, *Miral*, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* and *Immortals*.

Q6 Where do you live?

I live in three suitcases! I come from Mumbai and sometimes I live there. But I also spend time in London and New York, and lots of other places. Right now, I don't mind moving around a lot.

Q7 What do you do in your free time?

I do yoga regularly and I read books. I don't do much sport, but I have a lot of different hobbies! I like dancing, especially Indian dance and Salsa. I cook different kinds of food, especially Italian. Also, I collect boarding passes! I travel by air a lot for work, and also with my friends, so I've got a lot of them now!

Q8 Are you scared of anything?

I'm scared of water and I can't swim very well! I want to learn to swim properly so I don't feel so scared.

Q9 What's your favourite possession?

Shoes! And my Chanel bandana bag!

Q10 What's your favourite weather?

I like rain. I love the monsoon season in India when it rains a lot!

Q11 Who is your favourite actor?

I've got lots of favourite actors: Aamir Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Nicole Kidman and Johnny Depp. And my favourite singer is Sting.

Q12 What are your ambitions for the future?

I want to continue acting in films. I also want to open a school for poor children in India.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

a Asking about basic personal information

What's your ... (full name)?

When/Where ... (were you born)?

Where do you ... (live / work / go to school)?

b Asking about interests and family

What do you ... (do in your free time)?

Have you got ... (a nickname / any pets / any brothers and sisters)?

Are you ... (scared of anything / interested in cooking)?

Who is your ... (favourite actor/singer/hero)?

What is your ... (favourite possession / favourite weather)?

Tell me about your ... (family/hobbies).

c Asking about the future

What are ... (your ambitions for the future)?

REMEMBER THESE WORDS

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

to go out with friends

to go to evening classes

to go to the cinema

to go to the gym

to listen to music

to listen to the radio

to play a musical instrument

to play computer games

to play sport

to use the internet

to watch live music

to watch TV

SPORTS AND GAMES

a ball

a champion

equipment

a games console

to hit a ball

to kick a ball

a player

a racket

to score a goal

a team

to throw a ball

a winner

OTHER

an ambition

to be scared of

a board game

to do yoga

favourite

free time

a hobby

an injury

a music channel

a nickname

a number game

a professional musician

a puzzle

a survey

to train

a word game

1 Question words

To ask about:	We use:
a person	Who's your favourite film star?
a place	Where do you live?
a thing	What's that under the table? Which is your coat?
a time	When's your next holiday?
the reason for doing something	Why do you always wear black?
the way you do something	How do you open this?
a period of time	How long does this film last?
the number of times you do something	How often do you go to the gym?
the type of thing	What kind of car have you got?
the number of people or things	How many cousins have you got?
the cost of something	How much does the ticket cost?

1 Complete the questions with question words or phrases.

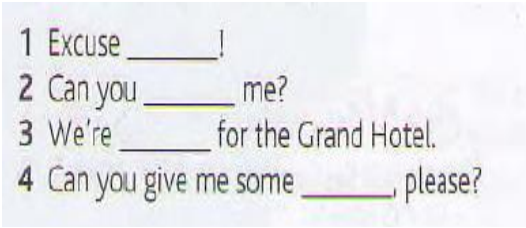
- '_____ were you born?' 'In 1990.'
- '_____ did the journey take?' 'About two hours.'
- '_____ colour do you prefer: red or pink?' 'Red.'
- '_____ is that young woman?' 'That's my sister.'
- '_____ do you get to school?' 'I walk.'
- '_____ of music do you like?' 'R&B and soul.'
- '_____ do you have for breakfast?' 'Coffee and toast.'
- '_____ do you live?' 'In Beijing.'
- '_____ colour are his eyes?' 'Blue.'
- '_____ did you phone me?' 'Because I wanted to ask you something.'
- '_____ do you go to the gym?' 'Three times a week.'
- '_____ children has he got?' 'Three.'

2 Put the words in the correct order to make questions.

- Cristina / Does / play / computer games ?
- at home / Is / today / your brother ?
- football / Can / play / tomorrow / you ?
- late / the train / this morning / was / Why ?
- come shopping / Will / with me / tomorrow / you ?
- did / have lunch / today / Where / you ?

Teacher's Name: Phuong Nguyen	
Topic: Asking for and giving directions	Date: Session 2 Time: 60 minutes
Level: pre-intermediate	

General aims (including development of key skills)	To ask for and give directions in English
Specific learning outcomes for the session:	• To be able to ask for directions • To be able to use functional vocabulary and imperative sentences for giving directions in English • To be able to follow direction instructions to find a place
Class Profile	4 students at pre-intermediate level. Even though they have learnt English for more than 7 years; they are still anxious of speaking English with other people. They need to be equipped useful language to improve their oral fluency as well as given more chances to practice English so that they can overcome their anxiety in speaking English
Materials	Cunningham, S., Moor, P., & Crace, A. (2014). <i>Cutting Edge Pre-intermediate. Students' book</i> (3rd ed). Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
5 mins	Introduce the lesson topic	T-Ls	- Ask learners to list what they usually do when they arrive in a new city/country? They can discuss with their classmates for a few minutes - Ask learners whether they have got lost in a new place? What did they do in the situation? - Introduce the topic: asking for and giving directions	Answer teacher's questions	
12 mins	Review/ Introduce language use for asking for directions (pre-task phase)	LS-Ls T-Ls	- Ask learners to watch the video and answer the questions below: - Where are the people going to? - What happened to them on the way? - What did they do when they got lost? - Ask learners to watch the video again and complete the sentences people in the video used to ask for directions - Ask learners to share more ways to ask for directions if they know any	Watch the video and answer the questions Watch the video again and complete the sentences Answer teacher's question	Video Language Live unit 8 p.76  1 Excuse _____! 2 Can you _____ me? 3 We're _____ for the Grand Hotel. 4 Can you give me some _____, please?

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources										
8 mins	Review/ Introduce language use for giving directions (pre-task phase)	Ls-Ls	- Ask learners to do the exercise alone then share answer with friends in pairs - Ask learners to share more ways to ask for directions if they know any	Do the exercise and share answers with friends in pairs Answer teacher's question	Match the phrases in the box to the pictures below. <table><tr><td>go to the end of the road</td><td>go past the cinema</td></tr><tr><td>turn left at the traffic lights</td><td>it's on the corner</td></tr><tr><td>it's on your left</td><td>cross the road</td></tr><tr><td>go straight on at the traffic lights</td><td>take the next right</td></tr><tr><td>on the other side of the road</td><td>take the second right</td></tr></table> 	go to the end of the road	go past the cinema	turn left at the traffic lights	it's on the corner	it's on your left	cross the road	go straight on at the traffic lights	take the next right	on the other side of the road	take the second right
go to the end of the road	go past the cinema														
turn left at the traffic lights	it's on the corner														
it's on your left	cross the road														
go straight on at the traffic lights	take the next right														
on the other side of the road	take the second right														
15 mins	Practise asking for directions and giving directions (task-cycle phase)	Ls-Ls	Ask learners to work in pairs to make some conversations to ask for directions and give directions using the map given. (They can look for more ways to show directions themselves using the Internet). Help learners if they need.	Work in pairs <											

Appendix





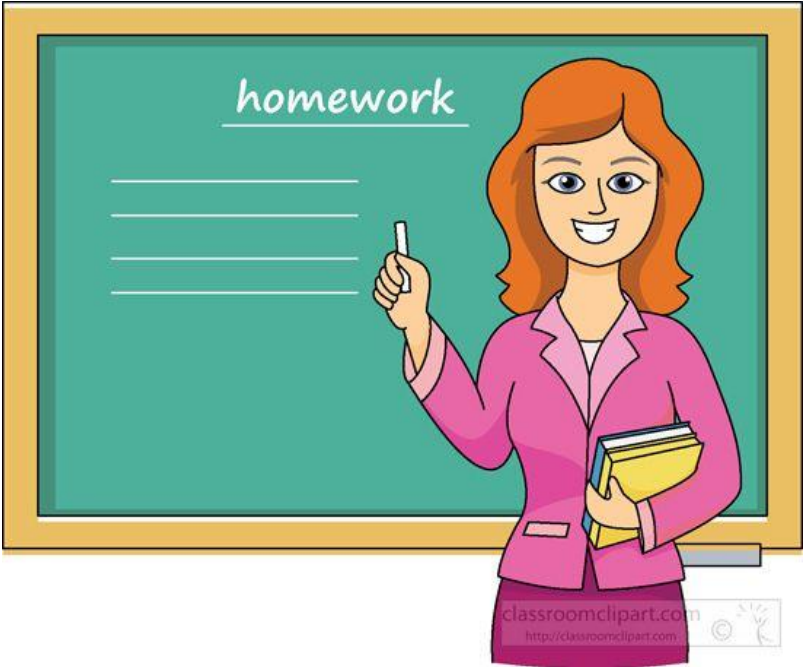
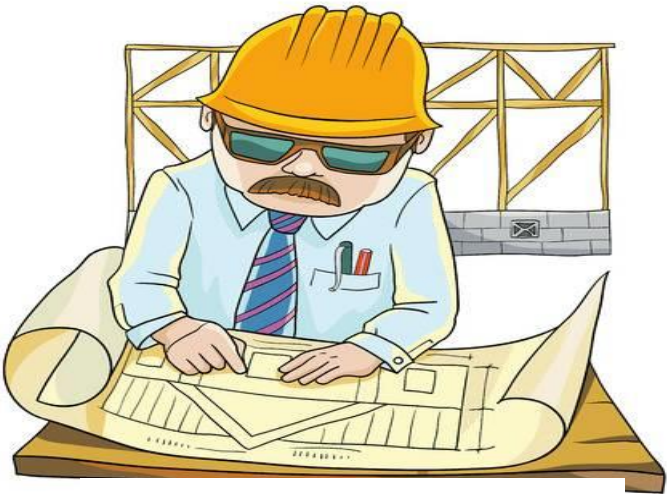
Teacher's Name: Phuong Nguyen	
Topic: Jobs	Date: Session 3 Time: 60 minutes
Level: pre-intermediate	

General aims (including development of key skills)	CHAPTER 8 To decide on the best job and give reasons for the decision
Specific learning outcomes for the session:	• To be able to compare ideas and give reasons • To be able to show agreement or disagreement
Class Profile	4 students at pre-intermediate level. Even though they have learnt English for more than 7 years, they are still anxious of speaking English with other people. They need to be equipped useful language to improve their oral fluency as well as given more chances to practice English so that they can overcome their anxiety in speaking English
Materials	Cunningham, S., Moor, P., & Crace, A. (2014). <i>Cutting Edge Pre-intermediate. Students' book</i> (3rd ed). Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
7 mins	Introduce the lesson topic	T-Ls Ls-Ls	• Give a learner a picture of a job and tell them to describe the job to other learners by saying what they can/can't do and what they have/don't have to do. Other learners will guess which job is being described. Learners play the game in turn. • Ask learners which jobs in the game they like/dislike and why • Introduce the topic: deciding on the best job	Play in group Share ideas in turn	Appendix 1
15 mins	Review/ Introduce language use for planning a holiday (pre-task phase)	Ls-Ls T-Ls	• Ask each learner to read a paragraph of a person talking about himself/herself and make note about their interests and skills. • Ask learners to listen to the audio record of 2 students trying to decide the best job for one of the people in the reading texts and answer the questions below: - Which person are they talking about? - What job do they agree on? - What reasons do they give for the decision? • Check learners' answers • Ask learners to listen to the audio record again and tick the phrases they hear in the Useful language box given	Read the paragraphs and take notes then discuss the notes in pairs Listen to the record and answers the questions Give answers to teacher Listen to the record and do the exercise	Appendix 2 p.28

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
25 mins	Practise deciding the best job (task-cycle phase)	Ls-Ls	- Ask learners to work in pairs and decide the best job for each person in the reading paragraph and give reasons for their decision. Assign different cases for different pairs. (12 mins) - Give learners some minutes to prepare to tell the whole class their choice and the reasons why (5 mins) - Ask each pair to report to the whole class (13 mins)	Work in pairs Prepare the report Present the report	
13 mins	Review language focus (language focus)	T-Ls	- Give feedback - Review the language use and vocabulary for deciding the best job from the script of the audio recording learners listened to in the previous task. - Correct some common mistakes that learners have made in their reports - Ask learners to do the vocabulary exercise and give each job one reason why it is the best job (homework)	Listen to feedback Listen Practice saying the language use (if any) Take note Do exercise	Appendix 3

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

A = Annie **J** = Jem **S** = Silvia **J** = Jarek

A: My name's Annie and I'm from New Zealand ... from a city called Christchurch. I'm still at high school and my favourite things at school are science subjects – especially biology. Outside school, I love all the usual things really ... like music, going to the movies ... but most of all I love my friends. I'm really interested in people and making friends. One day, ... er ... my ambition is to do something that can really help people, I'd like to study for that.

J: Well, I'm Jem and I'm from England. I'm 32 years old ... I'm an accountant but I don't like my job. When I was at school, I was good at maths, so I trained as an accountant. But now, I've realised that I want to do something more practical. I'm good with my hands – I like making things and solving problems. Also, I'm an independent person – I don't like working for a big company and I don't want to work in an office anymore. I'd like to work for myself and do something really useful.

S: My name is Silvia and I'm from Argentina. I'm at college right now, studying English and Italian ... I want to meet people from all over the world, that's one reason why I study languages. Also, my mum is Italian, so I've always been interested in different cultures. I like reading, too ... and meeting people ... Travelling and meeting people is something I love. I want to go to every continent, maybe learn some more languages, maybe Chinese or something.

J: Hi. I'm Jarek. I am 23 years old, from Krakow in Poland, and I am living in London at the moment and working as a barman. It's not a great job but it's a start – and it's giving me time to think about what I really want to do. Another good thing about living in London is that I can visit a lot of art galleries and interesting buildings. I love modern art and design, and also fashion. I'm not sure which direction to go in at the moment, but one day, I'd like to have my own company.

Appendix 3

USEFUL LANGUAGE

a Comparing your ideas and giving reasons

I think he/she should be a (doctor/teacher) because he/she's good at ...

I don't think he/she will be a good (lawyer/translator) because he/she can't ...

He/She likes solving problems, so he/she'll be a good (plumber/accountant) ...

Perhaps he/she should be a (doctor/journalist) because he/she likes ... (he/she's good with) ...

b Agreeing and disagreeing

Do you agree?

What do you think?

Yes, I agree.

That's true.

I don't think so.

I'm not sure.

JOBS

an accountant

a cook

a doctor

a judge

a nanny

a plumber

a taxi driver

a translator

Read the definitions and add the letters to complete the jobs.

- 1 someone who works with languages:
t _ _ _ _ _ r
- 2 someone who makes food in a restaurant:
c _ _ k
- 3 someone who looks after your teeth:
d _ _ _ _ t
- 4 someone who tells you about tourist sites:
t _ _ r g _ _ _ e
- 5 someone who looks after children:
n _ _ _ y
- 6 someone who helps you when you are ill:
d _ _ _ _ r
- 7 someone who repairs water pipes and toilets:
p _ _ _ _ _ r
- 8 someone who keeps and checks financial accounts:
a _ _ _ _ _ t
- 9 someone who makes and serves you drinks:
b _ _ _ _ n
- 10 someone who drives you where you want to go:
t _ _ i d _ _ _ _ r

Teacher's Name: Phuong Nguyen	
Topic: Ambitions	Date: Session 5 Time: 60 minutes
Level: pre-intermediate	

General aims (including development of key skills)	CHAPTER 9 To talk about achievements or ambitions and give reasons for them
Specific learning outcomes for the session:	Describe ambitions, dreams and achievements using appropriate tenses and vocabulary Exploring common themes or differences in achievements or ambitions with partners
Class Profile	4 students at pre-intermediate level. Even though they have learnt English for more than 7 years, they are still anxious of speaking English with other people. They need to be equipped useful language to improve their oral fluency as well as given more chances to practice English so that they can overcome their anxiety in speaking English
Materials	Cunningham, S., Moor, P., & Crace, A. (2014). Cutting Edge Pre-intermediate. Students' book (3rd ed). Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
10 mins	Introduce the lesson topic	LS T-Ls	- Ask learners to list their top 5 ambitions, dreams and achievements by themselves - Ask learners to share their ideas to the whole class - Introduce the topic: ambitions	Work individually Share ideas	
15 mins	Review/ Introduce language use for talking about ambitions (pre-task phase)	LS LS-Ls T-Ls	- Ask learners to read 4 paragraphs of 4 people talking about their ambitions/achievements and complete a table with the information from the paragraphs - Ask learners to underline useful language for talking about ambitions from the paragraphs - Check learners' answers for the 2 exercises above - Give the useful language box to learners	Read the paragraphs and do the exercise individually then compare answers in pairs Do the exercise then compare their answers in pairs Give answers to teacher	Appendix 1

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
25 mins	Practise talking about ambitions/dreams/achievements (task-cycle phase)	LS-LS	- Give learners some minutes to prepare to tell their partner(s) their ambitions/dreams/achievements and the reasons for them. Then discuss with their pair or group common themes or differences in each member's achievements or ambitions. Help them if they need. (15 minutes) - Ask each pair or group to plan and then report their common themes or differences in their achievements, dreams or ambitions to the whole class. (10 minutes)	Work in pairs/groups Present their outcomes	
10 mins	Review language focus (language focus phase)	T-LS	- Give feedback - Review the language use/tenses and vocabulary for talking about ambitions/achievements from the reading paragraphs. - Correct some common mistakes that learners have made in their reports - Ask learners to do some grammar exercises (homework)	Listen to feedback Listen Practice saying the language use (if any) Take note Do exercises	Appendix 2

Appendix 1

B = Bill **R** = Ralph **D** = Deb **P** = Pawel **S** = Swati

B: My surname is O'Driscoll, which is originally an Irish name, and I know that my family came over from Ireland sometime at the end of the 19th century and settled in the States and ... well, I've never been to Ireland. It's always been my dream to go back there and rediscover my family roots. Maybe find some of my long-lost cousins over there ... So that's my ambition: to rediscover the Irish side of my family ... yeah, I'd really like to do that.

R: Well, looking back, I'd say my greatest achievement was when I was about 18. I was very keen on football and I actually played one match for my local team where I scored three goals and I was the hero for a week or two. I still look back on that with a lot of pride ... As for my dream ... one thing I'd love to do is to visit the Taj Mahal in India. I suppose I'm getting a bit old now, but you never know – one day!

D: Well, I've always wanted to own a car. I don't have a car at the moment because I can't afford one ... also because I can't drive ... but anyway, it's my ambition to own a car one day – but not just any old car. It has to be a Ferrari ... and a red Ferrari at that. I don't know why ... I suppose I ought to learn to drive first ... but that's what I really want, yeah, to own a lovely red Ferrari.

P: I'd really love to buy an enormous house which is in the middle of the countryside, or in the mountains somewhere, but you know, really miles from anywhere ... and it has to have lots and lots of space, enough space so that I can invite all my friends and all my family for a big party ... and then they can all go away and I can just enjoy the peace and quiet ... that's my ambition.

	Ambitions	Achievements
Bill		
Ralph		
Deb		
Pawel		
Swati		

USEFUL LANGUAGE

a Talking about your ambitions

It's my ambition to ...

I've always wanted to ...

It's always been my dream to ...

One thing I'd love to do is ...

I'd really love to ...

b Talking about your achievements

My greatest achievement was when I ...

One thing I've done that I'm very proud of is ...

I think one of the best things I've achieved is ...

Something special that I've achieved is ...

Appendix 2

Present perfect

We form the Present perfect with *have/has* + past participle. Regular past participles end in *-ed* in the positive form. Many verbs have an irregular past participle (see the list on page 175).

+ I/You/We/They've (= have) **finished/won.**

He/She/It's (= has) **finished/won.**

- I/You/We/They **haven't** (= have not) **finished/won.**

He/She/It **hasn't** (= has not) **finished/won.**

? Have I/you/we/they **finished/won?**

Has he/she/it **finished/won?**

We use the Present perfect to talk about the past and present together. It tells us something about the present.

I've met Daniel before. (= I know him now)

He's left the country. (= he is not in the country now)

Present perfect and Past simple with *for*

- We use the Present perfect with *for* to talk about an action or state which continues from the past to the present.

I've been in New York for two weeks.



- We use the Past simple with *for* to talk about a past action or state in a period of time which is finished.

I was in New York for two weeks.



- We can ask about the period of time using *How long ... ?* with both the Present perfect and the Past simple.

How long have you had that car?

How long did you live in Canada?

2 Choose the correct answers.

- 1 I *have stayed* / *stayed* with my aunt last year.
- 2 My neighbours *have lived* / *lived* there for 25 years. They'll never move.
- 3 Your car is in really good condition. How long *have you had* / *did you have* it?
- 4 Gary *has started* / *started* his first business in 2001.
- 5 So far this year, we've *saved* / *saved* over £500.
- 6 I love this watch. I've *had* / *had* it for ten years.
- 7 Before my brother became a banker, he *has studied* / *studied* abroad for several years.
- 8 How long *have you played* / *did you play* the piano for when you were a child?

3 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

- 1 We _____ (be married) now for two years.
- 2 I _____ (live) in Africa for three years when I was a child.
- 3 I'm very tired because I _____ (not sleep) for 24 hours.
- 4 Kate _____ (work) here for nine months, but she's leaving next week.
- 5 _____ (Pelé / be) the best football player of the 20th century?
- 6 Lara and Martin first _____ (meet) eight years ago.
- 7 How long _____ (you / have) your ring? It's beautiful.
- 8 They _____ (not wait) very long before the bus came.
- 9 We _____ (stay) in Tenerife for our holiday four years ago.
- 10 I _____ (be) on the phone for over an hour now!

REMEMBER THESE WORDS

VERB PHRASES ABOUT AMBITIONS

to appear on television	to go round the world
to become famous	to go to university
to buy a house or flat	to have children
to earn €1 million	to learn how to drive
to get married	to start your own business
to go abroad	to write a book

Teacher's Name: Phuong Nguyen	
Topic: Your special days	Date: Session 6 Time: 65 minutes
Level: pre-intermediate	

General aims (including development of key skills)	To describe a special day or personal event
Specific learning outcomes for the session:	To be able to explain personal events and special occasions using appropriate tenses and vocabulary To be able to share thoughts on or asking about partners' special ones
Class Profile	4 students at pre-intermediate level. Even though they have learnt English for more than 7 years, they are still anxious of speaking English with other people. They need to be equipped useful language to improve their oral fluency as well as given more chances to practice English so that they can overcome their anxiety in speaking English
Materials	Cunningham, S., Moor, P., & Crace, A. (2014). <i>Cutting Edge Pre-intermediate. Students' book</i> (3rd ed). Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
5 mins	Introduce the lesson topic	LS-LS T-LS	- Ask learners to work in group and list all the special days they know - Introduce the topic: to describe your special days or personal events	Work in group	
20 mins	Review/ Introduce language use for describing special days/events (pre-task phase)	LS-LS T-LS	- Ask learners to read a passage about the dates of some special events/occasions that people in the UK and the USA celebrate. Find the date for each event in the box given. They can discuss the answer with their friends - Ask learners to listen to some people talking about their special days. Write the dates in the table given and complete the notes about why each day is special. Then ask them to listen again and tick the phrases they hear in the Useful language box - Check learners' answers	Read the presentation and complete the table. Discuss the answers with friends Listen to the recording and do the exercises Give answers to teacher	Appendix 1 Appendix 2 Unit 4_Recording 8

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
30 mins	Practise describing special days/events (task-cycle phase)	Ls-Ls	- Ask learners to choose one or two special events of themselves and prepare a talk about them (5 mins). Help them if they need. - Ask learners to share their talk in pair or group of 3 then discuss which special days sound the most interesting and reasons for their choice (15 mins) - Ask learners to prepare their group report on their most interesting special events and then report the class (10 mins)	Work alone Discuss in group Prepare the report Report	
10 mins	Review language focus (language focus phase)	T-Ls	- Give feedback - Review the language use and vocabulary for describing special events from the transcript and students' performance - Correct some common mistakes that learners have made in their reports - Ask learners to do some vocabulary and grammar exercises (homework)	Listen to feedback Listen Practise saying the language use (if needed) Take note Do exercises	Appendix 3

Appendix 1

New Year	Christmas	Easter
Independence Day	International Women's Day	
Father's Day	Mother's Day	Halloween

For many people around the world, New Year is on January the 1st, of course. But many people in the UK and the USA also celebrate Chinese New Year, which is at the end of January or the beginning of February. Christmas Day is on December the 25th around the world but the date of Easter changes; it's usually between the middle of March and the middle of April.

There's no Independence Day in the UK, but the USA celebrates its independence on the 4th July, and International Women's Day is on March the 8th in both countries. Father's Day is on the third Sunday in June in both the UK and the USA. Whereas Mother's Day is on different days: in the UK it's in March, but in the USA it's two months later, in May. Children – and many adults – in both the UK and the USA celebrate Halloween on October the 31st.

Appendix 2

Month	Date	Why it's special
JANUARY	26th	1 _____ Day. Public holiday, lots of concerts, 2 _____, big boat race
FEBRUARY		
MARCH	3 _____	Wedding 4 _____
APRIL		
MAY		
JUNE	9th	5 _____'s birthday ... organising a 6 _____
JULY		
AUGUST	7 _____ 2012	8 _____
SEPTEMBER		
OCTOBER	2nd	starting 9 _____
NOVEMBER		
DECEMBER	24th	Flying to Austria ... Spending 10 _____ there

USEFUL LANGUAGE

a Explaining personal events and special occasions

I wrote ...

It's the day when ...

... is a special day because ...

We always go to ...

We're spending ...

I got married on ...

b Questions

What happens on ... / What happened ... /
is happening on ... ?

What are you doing on ... ?

What do you usually do on ... ?

Why is (May 3rd) a special day?

Why is (March 12th) important for you?

Appendix 3

REMEMBER THESE WORDS

VERB PHRASES FOR SPECIAL DAYS

to buy flowers

to dress up

to eat out

to exchange presents

to have a day off school/work

to invite people into your home

to make a cake

to prepare a special meal

to send cards to people

to visit relatives

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in the box.

buy prepare dress eat exchange have invite
make send visit

- 1 We usually _____ out every Saturday night at an Italian restaurant near us.
- 2 On Thanksgiving Day, we travel to the south of the country to _____ relatives.
- 3 Everyone _____ a day off work on Independence Day.
- 4 I _____ a special meal tonight because I'm celebrating my new job.
- 5 I forgot to _____ Caroline a card for her birthday!
- 6 He always _____ me flowers when he wants to say sorry.
- 7 It's traditional for people to _____ presents at Christmas.
- 8 My neighbours always _____ people into their home on New Year's Eve.
- 9 I _____ a cake for you, but I'm afraid I burnt it!
- 10 They _____ up in traditional costume for a big parade through the town.

Present continuous or Present simple?

- We use the Present simple for actions which are generally or usually true.
*I **speak** four languages.*
- We use the Present continuous for actions which are in progress now or around now.
*Who **is she speaking** to?*
- We usually use the Present simple with phrases like *always, never, every day, usually, normally.*

Present continuous for future arrangements

- We use the Present continuous to talk about what we have arranged to do in the future.
*A: What **are you doing** next weekend? (= what have you arranged?)*
*B: I'm **taking** my son to the zoo on Saturday, then I'm **cooking** lunch for some friends on Sunday. (= I've arranged to do this)*
- When we use the Present continuous like this, either we give a future time (e.g. this weekend) or we know from the situation that we are talking about the future.

- We usually use the Present continuous with phrases like *now, at the moment, today, right now.*

- We do not usually use some verbs in the continuous form.

These are:

– describing mental states

believe know understand

– verbs connected with likes and dislikes

like love want

– verbs connected with possession

have own possess

Choose the correct answers.

- 1 Who *cooks* / *is cooking* the dinner? It smells great!
- 2 *Do you know* / *Are you knowing* what that sign means?
- 3 I *speak* / *am speaking* Italian, Spanish and Russian.
- 4 I *don't like* / *'m not liking* tea.
- 5 Julio *is living* / *lives* in Moscow at the moment.
- 6 He *has* / *is having* three mobile phones.
- 7 *Do you want* / *Are you wanting* any more bread?
- 8 Normally, I *take* / *'m taking* the train to work, but this week I *walk* / *'m walking*.
- 9 He always *goes* / *is going* to the gym at 7 a.m.
- 10 I *don't take* / *'m not taking* any evening classes right now.

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

- 1 We _____ (have) a party for my daughter's birthday next Saturday.
- 2 Where _____ (you / meet) Rita for lunch tomorrow?
- 3 How often _____ (you / go) for a long walk?
- 4 Alan _____ (look) for a new job at the moment.
- 5 Maria _____ (not come) to the party tonight.
- 6 What _____ (your brother / want) to do after university?
- 7 I _____ (come) from Ukraine, from Kiev.
- 8 Oh no! It _____ (rain).
- 9 This weekend Greg and I _____ (visit) some old friends.
- 10 _____ (you / like) cats?
- 11 Susan and Tim _____ (get married) in the summer.
- 12 James _____ (hate) going to the dentist.

Teacher's Name: Phuong Nguyen	
Topic: Business 1	Date: Session 7 Time: 60 minutes
Level: pre-intermediate	

General aims (including development of key skills)	To plan a café makeover
Specific learning outcomes for the session:	• To be able to make suggestions • To be able to discuss problems • To be able to present conclusions
Class Profile	4 students at pre-intermediate level. Even though they have learnt English for more than 7 years, they are still anxious of speaking English with other people. They need to be equipped useful language to improve their oral fluency as well as given more chances to practice English so that they can overcome their anxiety in speaking English
Materials	Cunningham, S., Moor, P., & Crace, A. (2014). <i>Cutting Edge Pre-intermediate. Students' book</i> (3rd ed). Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
5 mins	Introduce the lesson topic	LS-LS T-LS	• Show learners a picture of a café. Ask learners to discuss in group the questions: – What do you like about this café? – What don't you like about this café? Do you want to change what you don't like to improve the café? • Introduce the topic: To plan a café makeover	Discuss in group	Appendix 1

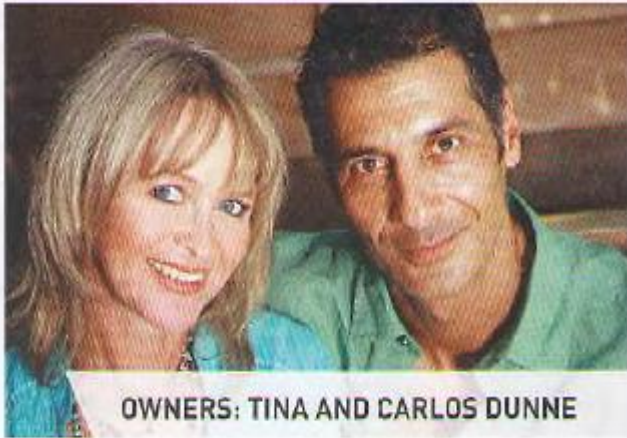
Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
15 mins	Review/ Introduce language use for planning café makeover (pre-task cycle)	LS-LS T-LS	- Ask learners to read the information about Blue Parrot Café and some reviews of the café and answer the questions below. They can discuss the answers with their friends - Where is the Blue Parrot Café? - Who owns it? - Do you think it seems to be a good place to go? Find 2 reasons why. - Based on the reviews, was each customers' experience good or bad? - Ask learners to listen to the audio record of 2 customers discussing how to improve the Blue Parrot Café and tick the phrases they hear in the Useful language box - Check learners' answers	Read the information and reviews given and answer the questions then discuss the answers with friends Listen to the recording and do the exercise Give answers to teacher	Appendix 2 U9_R7

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
30 mins	Practise planning a café makeover (task-cycle phase)	Ls-Ls	• Show learners a video of Roots Café and send them some customer reviews. Ask learners to work in pairs to decide what improvements to make to improve the café, using the questions given. Ask them to list all the ideas they have. Help learners if they need • Give learners some minutes to prepare to tell the whole class their decision and try to persuade others that their ideas are the best • Ask each pair to report • Agree on the best plan	Work in pairs Prepare the report Present the report Discuss with the whole class	Appendix 3
10 mins	Review language focus (language focus phase)	T-Ls	• Give feedback (if necessary) • Review the language use and vocabulary for planning a café makeover from the script of the audio recording learners listened to in the previous task. • Correct some common mistakes that learners have made in their reports • Ask learners to do a grammar exercise (homework) • Ask each learner to give a suggestion to improve a famous café in the city (homework)	Listen to feedback Listen Practise saying the language use (if any) Take note	Appendix 4

Appendix 1



Appendix 2



OWNERS: TINA AND CARLOS DUNNE



WELCOME TO THE BLUE PARROT CAFÉ ...
THE NUMBER ONE PLACE ON SAINT JUDE!



- Lively café – popular with locals and holidaymakers
- Comfortable terrace on the beach
- Beautiful views – sunny 365 days a year
- Clean, modern interior with attractive decor
- Delicious tropical food
- Wide selection of hot and cold drinks
- Polite, attentive staff – waiting to serve you!

Blue Parrot Café, Hopi Beach,
15 km east of Judetown, St Jude

HOLIDAYADVICE.COM

Blue Parrot Café

No. 66 of 66 restaurants on St Jude

★★★★ **Excellent:** 0 reviews; ★★★ **Good:** 0 reviews;

★★ **Poor:** 0 reviews; ★ **Awful:** 24 reviews

NOT a place I will return to! ★

Maggie, TX: When we went to eat at the Blue Parrot we were the only customers in the restaurant. The decor looked old and dirty and some of the chairs were broken. Before our meal arrived, I looked at the bar and there was a mouse eating the peanuts! We didn't stay to find out what the food was like ...

Rude service, awful food ★

Davina FL: The 'fish special' came from a microwave oven and was so hot I burnt my mouth. When I complained, the waiter said it was my own fault and walked away! To make things worse, my husband's burger was burnt and his chips were cold!!

No cold drinks ★

Dave, London: My wife and I went in for a coffee one morning. The owner said they didn't sell tea or coffee, only cold drinks. When we asked for two colas, he said he didn't have any cold drinks or ice because the fridge was broken.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

a Making suggestions

How about (changing/painting/putting) ... ?

It will look (better / more spacious / cleaner ...) if we ...

I think we should ...

Where shall we put ... ?

b Discussing problems

I don't think it's a good idea to ...

I don't think we should ... because ...

If the food is very expensive, people might not ...

c Presenting your conclusions

We've decided to ...

We'd like to ...

If we ... people will ...

Appendix 3

Decor and furniture

- What ideas do you have for improving the look? Think about colours, furniture, paintings, etc.

Food and drink

- What kind of food will you sell?
- Make a list of 10–12 food/drink items for the menu board.

Service

- How will you improve the service?
- Will you get new waiters, cooks, etc., or will you re-train them?



Roberta N
Hurst, Texas

📌 28 👍 13



Reviewed 10 September 2014

Service please. Hello???

Read the reviews and was excited to try this place. Envisioned drinking coffee on the patio with my love. However, we could not get any of the 3 girls working behind the counter to wait on us. We gave them 3 opportunities to assist but they never acknowledged we were there. Once coming in the door and walking to the counter. A second time looking around the display case and again back to the counter. A third time after using the restroom and back to the counter. Oh, they saw us but the conversation they were having with each other was way more important. Too bad the owner works so hard advertising to get people in the door only to lose customers because they are not waited on.

Date of visit: August 2014



Service



WileyPost
Columbia,
South Carolina
📍 279 👍 143



Reviewed 28 July 2013

OK coffee, but avoid the breakfast food.

I was also amazed that the ratings are so high for this place. The atmosphere is excellent, the coffee is passable and the service is OK. However, the food is prepared in a microwave and very poor quality. My first burrito was evidently pulled out too quickly the the potatoes were still frozen. On the second try, it was warm, but just barely - -and they charge a high price. I won't go again.

Date of visit: July 2013



Value



Atmosphere



Service



Food

[Ask WileyPost about Root House Coffee + Shop](#)



Thank WileyPost





SFA87

📝 141 👍 34



Reviewed 23 December 2016 📱 via mobile

Limited selections, but overall good

Very nice staff. Good coffees and teas. Americano and lattes were worth another visit. Breakfast selection is limited and just warmed in microwave. Breakfast burrito wasn't anything special, but it was okay. Blueberry muffin was good and loaded with blueberries. Quiche was good too. Smoothie was okay, but not great. We'd return.

Date of visit: December 2016

[Ask SFA87 about Root House Coffee + Shop](#)

👍 Thank SFA87





Russ R
Colorado
Springs,
Colorado

📍 55 👍 13



Reviewed 24 December 2016

Close proximity, flavor lacking

My wife and I like good coffee. We drink espresso and regular brew. We used to visit here frequently on our trips to Pagosa Springs, because it's right downtown, and near the Springs and river. This time, however, the quality of the drinks was really lacking. We really weren't sure what changed, but the drinks didn't really taste like anything. It was weird. Maybe there wasn't enough espresso in our drinks? I'm not certain, but neither of us finished our drinks. But I want to be clear, the drinks here have always been good. Perhaps this was an off visit, or the coffee shop changed management?

Date of visit: December 2016



Value



Service



Food



Richard L
Pagosa
Springs, CO

1 4



Reviewed 24 October 2015

New Owners as of October 2015

Food selection very limited. Service has changed dramatically-not for the better.

Doesn't feel warm any more. Need to work on customer connection/satisfaction.. Bring back better selection of food/breakfast items/muffins/pound cakes. Food display cabinet nearly empty on a Saturday ! Train staff to smile and work with customers. It's not a factory!

Date of visit: October 2015



Value



Service

Food

[Ask Richard L about Root House Coffee + Shop](#)



4 Thank Richard L



Appendix 4

REMEMBER THESE WORDS

MODERN EQUIPMENT

air conditioning	a microwave oven
central heating	an oven
a computer	a shower
a dishwasher	a vacuum cleaner
a flat screen television	a washing machine
a freezer	a wi-fi router
a fridge	

ADJECTIVES FOR DESCRIBING PLACES

an attractive house	an old-fashioned house
a comfortable room	a private garden
a dark living room	a quiet street
a large bedroom	a shady garden
a light kitchen	a small bathroom
a lively café	a spacious kitchen
a modern kitchen	a sunny room

OTHER

air freshener	a priority
a bottle of bleach	a rubbish bag
a cave house	running water
furniture	a shower curtain
messy	time-consuming
modern interior	wipes
to move house	

may, might, will definitely, etc.

1 *will definitely*

We use *will definitely* when we are sure something will happen. The negative of this phrase is *definitely won't*.

We will definitely be out tomorrow evening.

I definitely won't get there before 6 o'clock.

2 *will probably*

We use *will probably* when we are fairly sure something will happen. The negative of this phrase is *probably won't*.

We will probably be out tomorrow evening.

I probably won't get there before 6 o'clock.

3 *may/might*

We use *may/might* to say it's possible that something will happen. The negative of these verbs is *may not / might not*.

We may/might be out tomorrow evening.

I may not / might not get there before 6 o'clock.

Choose the option (a, b or c) that means the same as the phrase in bold.

- 1 I **promise** I'll think about it.
a I'll definitely b I might c 'll probably
- 2 **It's possible** we'll buy a house abroad.
a We'll definitely b We definitely won't c We might
- 3 I **don't think** they'll change their minds.
a They probably won't b They might c They may
- 4 **There might** be too many people.
a I'm sure there'll b There may c I'm sure there won't
- 5 I'm **fairly sure** it'll cost about \$40.
a It might b It'll probably c It'll definitely
- 6 **He might not** give me the day off.
a I'm sure he won't b I'm sure he'll c It's possible he won't
- 7 I'm **sure** the children will be in bed when you arrive.
a The children will definitely b The children might
c The children probably won't
- 8 I **definitely** won't lose it.
a I'm fairly sure I won't b I'm not sure I won't
c I'm very sure I won't

Teacher's Name: Phuong Nguyen	
Topic: Business ideas 2	Date: Session 8 Time: 66 minutes
Level: pre-intermediate	

General aims (including development of key skills)	To present a new product or a business idea
Specific learning outcomes for the session:	• To be able to introduce a presentation • To be able to give details about a new product or a business idea in a presentation • To be able to finish a presentation • To be able to persuade investors to invest in the idea/product
Class Profile	4 students at pre-intermediate level. Even though they have learnt English for more than 7 years, they are still anxious of speaking English with other people. They need to be equipped useful language to improve their oral fluency as well as given more chances to practice English so that they can overcome their anxiety in speaking English
Materials	Cunningham, S., Moor, P., & Crace, A. (2014). <i>Cutting Edge Pre-intermediate. Students' book</i> (3rd ed). Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
5 mins	Introduce the lesson topic	LS-Ls T-Ls	- Ask learners to watch a short video of “Shark Tank” (a TV show for people to present their new product and business ideas and ask for money to invest in their new companies) and answer the questions: - What is the aim of the TV show? - What product was introduced in the video? - Do you want to participate in the show if you have a new product or business idea? - Introduce the topic: To present a new product or a business idea	Watch the video and answer the questions	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iKitGJeAZ4 Shark Tank Mobile app for nursery teachers to update their students’ activities when they are at school (log activities, send quick updates, take photos) ➔ Save teachers’ time ➔ Parents can easily see/check what their kids did at school and talk with them about their school activities
15 mins	Review/ Introduce language use for presenting a new product or business idea (pre-task phase)	LS-Ls T-Ls	- Ask learners to read a presentation of a new product and complete the table given. They can discuss the answer with their friends - Ask learners to listen to the presentation tick the phrases they hear in the Useful language box - Check learners’ answers	Read the presentation and complete the table. Discuss the answers with friends Listen to the recording and do the exercise Give answers to teacher	Appendix 1 Recording Unit 12_4

Time	Stage Aim	Pattern of interaction	Teacher (T) Activity	Learner (L) Activity	Resources
36 mins	Practise presenting a new product or business idea (task-cycle phase)	Ls-Ls	- Ask learners to work in pairs to choose a product in a list given, discuss and prepare for their product presentation together. Help learners if they need (10 mins) - Ask each pair to present to the whole class and try to persuade the other groups to invest in their product (7 mins for each pair) - Ask the whole class to work together and decide which product is the best and why (5 mins)	Work in pairs Prepare the presentation Present the product/idea Ask and answer questions from other pairs Discuss in group	Appendix 2
10 mins	Review language focus (language focus phase)	T-Ls	- Give feedback - Review the language use, vocabulary and structure of a presentation of a new product or business idea - Correct some common mistakes that learners have made in their presentation - Ask learners to do some grammar exercises (can be homework)	Listen to feedback Listen Practice saying the language use (if needed) Take note Do exercises	Appendix 3

Appendix 1

Today, I've come to talk to you about a great new product, which I think will be extremely popular and will become a best-seller very quickly. We have developed an amazing new fizzy drink called FizzFive! It's a drink that's both fizzy and healthy, too! Feel alive with FizzFive!

The idea for FizzFive was developed by myself and three friends after we found that no fizzy drinks in the shops were healthy. We have taken several years to develop this drink and we now believe that it is ready for the market. Previously, there were plain, natural, healthy fruit drinks, and there were unnatural, unhealthy fizzy drinks. We wanted something which was both – fizzy and healthy. So, we decided to make a drink that contains real fruit and vitamins and is totally natural – but fizzy too. And we believe that's exactly what FizzFive is. ... Feel alive with FizzFive!

FizzFive comes in five different flavours: orange, apple, lemon, grape and pineapple. It contains five different vitamin groups. It increases your energy by five times. In summary, it tastes good, it makes you feel good ... and it's fizzy! ... Feel alive with FizzFive!

The drink was tested on various different people and we believe it will be popular with all age groups. However, we feel that the main target market will be young people who like fizzy drinks but also understand about the importance of health. We think the packaging is very important so the bottle is colourful and appealing to young people.

Now, what we need is some help and investment from you to help us to launch this fantastic product in the market. We'd like to ask you for £55,000 to help get FizzFive into the shops and start selling. We know it will be a winner and will make money for ourselves and you. Feel alive with FizzFive! Thank you very much for listening!

	Your notes
Type of product	
Name	
Slogan	
Important points	
Target market	
Money needed	

Appendix 2

Product list

- a personal item (e.g. cosmetics, jewellery, toiletries)
- something to eat or drink (e.g. fizzy drink, chocolate bar, biscuit, breakfast cereal)
- a gadget, new technology or a new feature for a phone

	Your notes
Type of product	
Name	
Slogan	
Special features	
How/Why you first thought about the idea	
Target market	
How much you need to produce your idea	

Appendix 3

REMEMBER THESE WORDS

TYPES OF PRODUCT

accessories	electronic mail
chocolate bars	fast food
clothes	an internet search engine
coffee and pastries	soft drinks
electronic goods	sportswear
	trainers

PERSONAL ITEMS

aftershave	hair gel
a bracelet	lipstick
a comb	moisturiser
cosmetics	nail varnish
deodorant	a necklace
earrings	perfume
an eyeliner	a razor
a hairbrush	shaving foam

OTHER

to be disappointed with	to recommend something
to be made of (cotton/canvas)	a slogan
comfortable	a target market
fashionable	toiletries
highly recommended	value for money
a logo	well-designed
jewellery	

Present simple passive and Past simple passive

- We use the passive when the person who does the action:
 - is not important.
*This chocolate **is made** in Switzerland.* (= it's not important who makes it)
 - is unknown.
*Hundreds of cars **are stolen** every week.* (= we don't know who steals them)
 - means 'people in general'.
*His face **is recognised** all over the world.* (= people in general recognise his face)
- If we want to say who or what is the 'doer' of the action, we use *by*.
*All my clothes **are designed by** Federico Pirani.*
- Active or passive? Compare the following examples:
 - a *Martine **makes** all her own bread at home.*
 - b *The bread **is made** in a large bakery outside town.*In sentence a, we use the active form because we are more interested in who makes the bread, so Martine is the subject (of an active verb).
In sentence b, we use the passive form because we are more interested in the bread (not in who makes it), so the bread is the subject (of a passive verb).

- As with the Present simple passive, we use the Past simple passive when the action is more important than the person who did it.
- The Past simple passive is common when we are speaking formally, or in written reports.
*More than thirty people **were injured** in the explosion.*
*The idea **was developed** with a team of 15 designers.*
*Great Expectations **was written** by Charles Dickens.*

1 Choose the correct answers.

- 1 Coca-Cola *sells / is sold* all over the world.
- 2 It *drinks / is drunk* by millions of people.
- 3 94 percent of people *recognise / are recognised* it.
- 4 Rolex watches *cost / are cost* up to \$20,000.
- 5 They *wear / are worn* by thousands of people.
- 6 They *show / are shown* different time zones.
- 7 Mercedes cars *come / are come* from Germany.
- 8 They *drive / are driven* by many rich and famous people.
- 9 The company *names / is named* after the owner's daughter.
- 10 Samsung products *make / are made* in South Korea.

Complete the sentences with the Past simple passive form of the verb in brackets.

- 1 Razor blades _____ (produce) for the first time in 1901 by an American businessman, King Camp Gillette.
- 2 In 1928, penicillin _____ (discover) by Alexander Fleming, a Scottish scientist.
- 3 The first electric guitar _____ (make) in 1935 in Michigan, USA.
- 4 A new airport at Heathrow _____ (open) in London in 1946.
- 5 Car seat belts _____ (use) for the first time in 1959.
- 6 In 1970, the Nobel Prize for Literature _____ (give) to the Russian writer, Alexander Solzhenitsyn.
- 7 In 1982, the Best Actor Oscar _____ (win) by Ben Kingsley as Gandhi in the film *Gandhi*.
- 8 The Berlin Wall _____ (pull down) in 1989.
- 9 The Brazilian racing driver, Ayrton Senna, _____ (kill) in the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix.
- 10 In 2012 the Olympic Games _____ (hold) in London, England.

APPENDIX 7: Original interview questions

1. What difficulties did you experience when studying English online?
2. Do you prefer studying English online or in traditional classroom? Please explain.
3. Did you feel less anxious or more anxious when studying English online? Please explain.
4. What do you think about the lesson topics of this online course?
5. Which tasks in this online course interested you? Why?
6. Did the task-solving activities make you feel more comfortable/less nervous or less comfortable/more nervous in English language class? Please explain.
7. What did you think or feel when you were told to work in pairs or a group?
8. After working or discussing with your friends, did you feel more confident to speak English? Why?
9. Did you think your oral communication skills have improved during the online course? How?

APPENDIX 8: Revision of interview questions

1. What difficulties did you experience when studying English online?
 - 1.1 Did you encounter any difficulties when accessing the online course or installing the platform? If yes, what were they?
 - 1.2 Did you have any problem with the Internet connection? If yes, what was it?
 - 1.3 Was it easy to download the learning materials such as exercises or pictures that I sent to you? Were they clear enough to see/read?
 - 1.4 Did you have any problem with seeing the exercises or pictures when I shared screen with you?
2. Do you prefer studying English online or in traditional classroom? Please explain for your choice. (If they don't give reasons for their choice, ask questions 2.1 and 2.2)
 - 2.1 What did you like about this online course?
 - 2.2 What didn't you like about this online course?
3. Did you feel less anxious or more anxious when you studied English online, compared to the traditional classroom? Please explain.
(Probing: physical interaction, class recording, interaction via screen)
4. What do you think about the lesson topics of this online course?
 - 4.1 Which topics did you like the most? Why?
 - 4.2 If you can study more in the future, what topics do you want to study?
5. What do you think about the learning method of the online course? Was the learning method effective to you? Why?
(Remind participants of the learning method – worked on sample first - prepared the task & did a task with other students - performed to the class – language focus)
6. Did the task-solving activities make you feel more comfortable/less nervous or less comfortable/more nervous in the online class? Please explain.
 - 6.1 Which one makes you feel more confident, having time to prepare the task or speaking immediately without preparing the task in advance? Why?
 - 6.2 What do you think when teacher did not give a grammar lecture before you did your task? Do you think this teaching method is more or less effective

than when teacher has a lecture first and lets you do a task later? Please explain.

6.3 What did you think when you did the task-solving activity? Did you feel anxious when you had to do the task before learning the language focus?

7. What did you think or feel when you were told to work in pairs or a group?

7.1 During the task performance, did you prefer discussing in group and pair or working alone? Why?

7.2 After working or discussing with your friends, did you feel more confident to speak English? Why?

8. After the eight online sessions, do you think your oral communication skills have been improved? If yes, in what aspects?

9. Did you feel anxious when you had to study with different students that you hadn't met before every week? Please explain.

10. What would you think if you studied with different teachers? If the teaching method was the same but you studied with different teachers, would you be anxious? Please explain.

11. Could you assess your anxiety level before and after the course? Is there any change?

12. Will you be confident to speak with foreigners after the course? Why?

13. Ask about the mini questionnaire data.

APPENDIX 9: Interviews and initial coding

Interview English Transcription

ID Code: VA1663

P: I'm going to ask you some questions about your experience with the online English course? Did you encounter any difficulties when accessing the online course or installing the platform?

H: No, I didn't. It was very *Simplicity w/ platform access / experience w/ OL +* simple. Just need *1-2 clicks of mouse to access the class.*

P: Did you have any problem with the internet connection?

H: No. My *Stable Internet connection* internet connection was good (laugh)

P: Was it easy to *Ease of material download / exp. w/ OL +* download the learning materials such as exercises or pictures that I sent to you? Were they clear enough to see/read?

H: I had no problems with this.

P: Did you have any problem with seeing the exercises or pictures when I shared screen with you?

H: No. They were *visibility of learning materials / exp. w/ OL +* clear as if they were on my screen, not screen sharing.

P: What did you like about this online course?

H: I *EOCA ↓ in OL - compared to TC / Screenbased interactions / no physical interaction* felt more comfortable because I just sat in front of the screen, not in a physical class. *FNE related* Nobody could affect me even when I made mistakes. Fear of making mistakes

P: What didn't you like about this online course?

H: (pause 5,6s) I didn't have any reasons to dislike this. I think it was *Convenience of OL* suitable to my time, convenient and comfortable. I didn't have any trouble with it. *Benefits of OL - compared to TC - Exp. w/ OL +*

P: So, do you prefer studying English online or in traditional classroom?

H: It depends on time. If I *compared to TC / TC +* have free time, I prefer going to the traditional class. Although each type of classroom has its own pros and cons, the *TC +* traditional class brings me a different feeling. *convenience of OL* The online class is more convenient. I just need to *convenience of OL* turn my computer on, being in my own space but still can work with others. It's very interesting. *compared to TC - OL +*

P: Ok. Did you feel less anxious or more anxious when you studied English online, compared to the traditional classroom?

H: Obviously I felt ^{EOCA ↓ in OL} less anxious when studying online. I feel anxious when studying at school. ^{EOCA in TC}
Because I am ^{Presence of physical interactions in TC} in a big group with many students. There are many friends around me, they may ^{FNE} judge me so I feel stressed, even though I have prepared the lesson in advance.

P: Why? ^{Reasons EOCA ↑ in TC}

H: It's because I ^{Screen-based interaction / No physical interaction} just sat in front of the screen and didn't have to face others physically when I spoke, so I felt comfortable. ^{Reasons EOCA ↓ in OL}

P: But in the online class, you had to see and ^{screen-based interactions} interact with your teacher directly via the screen. It could be counted as direct interaction and you didn't feel anxious?

H: Ya it's true but I still didn't feel anxious. ^{EOCA ↓ in OL}

P: Did the class recording make you anxious?

H: No, it didn't. Although I knew about the class videoing, it didn't affect me during the class. It didn't appear on the screen so I didn't have the feeling of being recorded.

P: Ok. Let's talk about the topics we studied in the online course. What did you think about them?

H: These ^{Utility of topics / TBLT +} topics were practical. For example, the topics about ^{favourite topics} giving directions, discussing the café makeover, my interests and also my future plan. We talk about these topics daily.

P: Which topics did you like the most? ^{Relevance to real-life communication / TBLT +}

H: I ^{favourite topic} liked the topic about giving directions the most because it was ^{TBLT +} very practical. Although we can use Google maps now, I still feel more professional when I can show somebody directions in English. ^{TBLT +}

P: What else did you like?

H: I liked talking about ^{TBLT +} my future plan. ^{favourite topic}

P: Why?

Relevance to real-life com.
H: Because I can add this into the introduction about myself when I meet a foreigner. This is really good. Maybe they will give me a job or introduce me to their friends who may help me with my future plan. *Future help/practical topic*

P: If you can study more in the future, what topics do you want to study?

H: About daily life, for example asking for prices, bargaining, or having small talk with people. *future topics*

P: Ok. Now let's talk about the learning method. At first, I showed you a video to watch, or gave you a conversation or discussion to listen or a sample paragraph to read. Then I gave you a task to do. You had some time to discuss with other students or prepare the talk before performing in front of the whole class. What do you think about this learning method? Was this effective to you?

EOCA ↓
D: Yes. It gave me a confidence to some extent. When I saw the sample, I knew what I needed to do. I could copy the good and interesting sentence structures in the sample. I felt more professional and more confident to talk to others. *Benefits of task samples*
EOCA ↓ / TBLT + Effective teaching method

P: Which one makes you feel more confident, having time to prepare the task or speaking immediately without preparing the task in advance?

EOCA ↓
H: I felt more confident when I could prepare the task in advance. It gave me time to prepare the vocabulary and ideas. *Availability of preparation time*
TBLT + / Effective teaching method

P: Normally I didn't give a grammar lecture before you did your task. Then I gave you feedback, revised the talk and presented the grammar point at the end of the class. Do you think this teaching method is more or less effective than when teacher has a lecture first and lets you do a task later?

Ineffectiveness of preliminary lectures
H: I think being corrected after my talk is better. Sometime, in normal class, when teacher gives a lecture first, they can't anticipate all the mistakes their students may have. When I did the task first, I had time to prepare the task myself. I knew and remembered more about the task and the language used for the task. So, giving feedback and presenting grammar later is more reasonable. *Preparation time + Effectiveness of initial task completion*
delayed feedback
TBLT

P: What did you think when you did the task-solving activity? Did you feel anxious when you had to do the task before learning the language focus?

H: It depends on the task difficulty. With an easy and familiar topic, I was comfortable while doing the task. ^{Encounter w/ difficult topic EOCA↑} With a difficult topic, I was a bit worried because I ^{Idea scarcity} didn't have enough ideas to share and my ^{Vocabulary deficiency} vocabulary was limited. But after a few sessions, I knew I could find words that I needed for the talk online so I felt calm and normal while doing the task. ^{Reliance on digital assistance EOCA↓}

P: During the task performance, did you prefer discussing in group and pair or working alone?

H: Any. However, ^{enjoyment in study} talking with friends was more fun. (Group work/ pair work +)

P: Why did you like working in group or pair?

H: Because ^{peer assistance during difficulties} my friends helped me when I ran out of ideas and ^{speaking skills↑} my talk could be much longer and more detailed.

P: Did you feel more confident to speak English in front of the class after you discussed with your friends in pair or group?

H: Yes. ^{Reason EOCA↓/Group work - pair work +}

P: Why?

H: Because ^{Reason EOCA↓} my talk sounded more professional after discussing with my friends.

P: After the 8 online sessions, do you think your oral communication skills have been improved?

H: (laugh) yes.

P: In what aspects?

H: Firstly, my pronunciation has been a little bit more concise. Secondly, I could use some sample structures in my talks about different topics. More importantly, ^{enjoyment in study} I felt like speaking English more and more after each session. I had a ^{EOCA↓} desire to talk more after each lesson.

P: Ok. One more thing, I often changed the study group. Did you feel anxious when you had to study with different students that you hadn't met before every week?

H: ^{Initial discomfort w/ new classmates} At first, I felt a bit strange but I realised that I had many chances to ask for new classmate's information. By repeating this, I could practice the first lesson about personal ^{TBLT+ / Increased speaking opportunities}

interviewing and I remembered this lesson more. So, I think it was a good thing to do and I didn't have any problem with it. No effect on EOCA - benefits of ≠ classmates

P: OK. What would you think if you studied with different teachers? If the teaching method was the same but you studied with different teachers, would you be anxious?

H: I haven't been in this situation but I could imagine that there would be no problem. It would be like studying with different classmates. Adaptability to ≠ teachers - No effect on EOCA

P: Could you assess your anxiety level before and after the course? Is there any change?

H: Yes, there was a change. I remember I was worried and anxious before the first lesson started because I didn't speak English regularly, my English level wasn't high and my pronunciation wasn't good. I got too much stress. However, after a few sessions, I didn't feel anxious anymore. I didn't feel anxious when I made mistakes in speaking and I knew I could fix my mistakes later. Later on, I realised that there was nothing to be shy and I dared to speak even when I only knew a few words.

high pre-course anxiety level
Linguistic difficulty/bad pronunciation EOCA ↑
limited speaking opportunities
Negative self-perceived English proficiency
post-course confidence boost
TBLT +
Fear of making mistakes ↓
EOCA ↓

P: Will you be confident to speak with foreigners after the course?

H: Yes. If I met a foreigner right now, I would talk to him right away. post-course confidence boost

P: OK. Now I'm going to ask about the chart showing your anxiety level when you studied in the online English course. The chart is based on the data of your mini questionnaires. I see that you didn't feel anxious at all after each session.

H: Ya it's true. After each session, I always felt comfortable and I wanted to talk more. post-session EOCA ↓

P: Why was your anxiety level before the second session was the same as the first session? (level 4)

H: Because we only had one session per week, so at the beginning of the second session, I still felt like the first one and I hadn't got used to the class. After 3,4 weeks, I could adapt better. Adaptability to learning method / EOCA ↓

P: OK. That's all for this interview. Thank you.

P: I'm going to ask you some questions about your experience with the online English course? Did you encounter any difficulties when accessing the online course?

T: No, I didn't. I *simplicity of class access* didn't have any difficulties with class login. *exp w/ OL +*

P: Did you use computer or phone?

T: I used computer.

P: Was it easy to download the learning materials such as exercises or pictures that I sent to you? Were they clear enough to see or read?

T: All the *visibility w/ learning materials* pictures you shared were clear and easy to see. *exp w/ OL +*

P: Did you have any problems with seeing the exercises and photos via screen share?

T: No, I didn't. However, while doing the exercises with my friends, it was *challenges of unstable Internet* sometimes unclear to hear them when the Internet connection was not good. Apart from this, everything else was fine.

P: Next, what did you like about the online course?

T: I could be *convenience of OL* more flexible in study time arrangement than in traditional class. It was easier to arrange the study time in the online class.

P: Anything else?

T: Although I was *exp w/ OL +* alone at home while studying online, I still felt the same learning atmosphere as in traditional classroom. It was quite fun and interesting. *enjoyment in study online*

P: What didn't you like about the online course?

loss of self-discipline / OL —

T: It might make me be lazier in study. (laugh)

P: Why?

Reliance on digital assistance

T: Because I could use Google when I needed. When you checked the old vocabulary, I could glance at my notes.

P: (laugh) so online study might make you lose your self-discipline in study?

T: yes (laugh)

P: So, do you prefer studying English online or in traditional classroom?

OL = TC preference

T: I like them both.

P: Ok. Did you feel less anxious or more anxious when you studied English online, compared to the traditional classroom?

T: I felt less anxious in the online course. Because the small size of OL class increased speaking opportunities, was small. I mostly did tasks with another classmate so I had more chance to speak, boost in speaking confidence — compared to TC which made me feel more easily to talk than in the traditional classroom.

P: How did you feel when you talked with teacher directly via screen? Did you feel anxious?

T: No, I didn't. I was a bit anxious at first but then I felt fun when studying, so I didn't feel anxious.

P: When I said I would record the lesson, did you feel anxious?

T: No, I didn't. I didn't notice the recording function.

P: Let's talk about the topics we studied in the online course. What did you think about these topics?

Topics + engagement w/ stimulating topics utility of topics
T: These topics were good and gave me many chances to talk about practical matters.

The first few topics were easy but then they got harder.

P: Which topics did you like the most?

favourite topics
T: I liked the topic about dreams.

P: Why?

engagement w/ stimulating topics
T: Because I could self-reflect to see whether I had achieved my dreams.

P: What else did you like?

T: I like all.

P: If you can study more in the future, what topics do you like to learn?

future study topics
T: I would like to learn the topics related to my jobs, tourism, hobbies and daily communications

P: OK. Now let's talk about the learning method. At first, I showed you a video to watch, or gave you a conversation or discussion to listen to or a sample paragraph to read. Then I gave you a task to do. You had some time to discuss with other students or prepare the talk before performing in front of the whole class. What do you think about this learning method? Was this method effective to you?

T: Yes, it was. Before watching or listening to the samples, I had had very few ideas to talk and my talk hadn't been fluent. After seeing the samples, I found it easier to speak and my speaking skills were improved.

TBLT +

benefits of task samples.

P: What did you feel when you had time to prepare your talk?

T: This obviously helped me speak more fluently and I felt less anxious to speak. I could find words, sentences and ideas.

P: Normally I didn't give a grammar lecture before you did your task. Then I gave you feedback, revised the talk and presented the grammar point later. Do you like being given all the related language use or do you like having time to prepare your talk first and teacher gives lecture later?

TBLT + effectiveness of initial task completion

T: I could remember the lesson longer when I could do the task first myself, compared to when teacher gives me everything first and I just learn the talk by heart and repeat it. It was not effective this way.

ineffectiveness of preliminary lectures

P: Do you like being corrected immediately after you make a mistake or after you finish your talk?

delayed feedback +

T: I think it was more effective when you revised my talk after I finished talking. I could easily realise my mistakes and correct them.

P: Why do you like being corrected after finishing the talk?

T: Because I will lose the mood to talk when I am corrected in the middle of the talk.

P: What did you think when being told to work in groups or pairs before performing the task outcomes to class?

group work +

T: When I could discuss in a group or pair before presenting in the class, I felt more confident and had more ideas to share. Since I could discuss the task with my friends, I spoke more fluently in front of the class.

EOCAT

idea 1 - peer learning

effectiveness of initial task completion

P: Did you feel more comfortable to work in pairs and groups than working alone?

T: Working in ^{Groupwork +} groups or pairs was more comfortable. It is comfortable to work alone too but I will have less ideas to talk about. I ^{collaborative idea generation} had more ideas from discussing with my friends.

P: So, did you feel more confident to speak English in front of the whole class after your group or pair discussions?

T: Yes, I was ^{EOCA ↓} more confident.

P: After the 8 online sessions, do you think your oral communication skills have been improved?

T: Yes, they have

P: In which aspects?

T: I ^{post-course confidence boost} am more confident to speak English. Before I was ^{high pre-course anxiety level} too shy and anxious to speak English. However, I ^{fear of making mistakes ↓} can speak English now, even if I speak right or wrong.

P: I often changed the study group. Did you feel anxious when you had to study with different students that you just met every week?

T: Sometimes I ^{EOCA ↑} felt anxious when I didn't know their levels. I was ^{Eng. proficiency} afraid that I ^{negative self-perceived} couldn't speak as well as they did and would affect them. But when I actually talked to them, they ^{sense of inferiority} were all friendly and I felt more confident.

P: So, at first you felt a bit anxious when you hadn't known your classmates clearly, but then you didn't feel anxious anymore when working in groups.

T: Yes

P: If you studied with different teachers that you hadn't met before but with the same teaching method, what would you think? Would you feel anxious or confident to speak?

T: I think it ^{adaptability} would be normal but I prefer studying with one teacher only.
~~to # teachers~~

P: Why?

T: I feel closer to the teacher. When I have any problems, I can ask my teacher easily.

P: So, does it mean you wouldn't dare to ask questions with new teachers?

T: Ya, maybe

P: Alright. Could you assess your English speaking anxiety level before and after the course? Is there any change?

T: Yes, there is. I ^{pre-course EOGA} felt anxious before the course but I ^{EOGA ↓ post-course} felt normal after the course

P: What were you afraid of before the course?

T: I ^{Eng proficiency} was afraid that I ^{negative self-perceived} couldn't speak. But ^{post course - fear of making mistakes ↓} after the course, I can ^{group work +} keep talking even if I speak right or wrong. I also remember more English when I could do tasks with my friends, so I felt more confident. ^{boost in speaking confidence}
→ EOGA ↓

P: Will you be confident to speak with foreigners after the course?

T: If it is daily communication, yes, I will. If I have to talk about a specialised topic, I may not be confident enough. I need to study more.

P: Ok. Now I'm going to ask about the chart showing your anxiety level when you studied English, based on the mini questionnaire you sent me after each online session. I see that you didn't feel anxious at all from the 3rd session. Why did you feel anxious before the first session (level 4)?

T: At that time, my English level was too low. I didn't dare to speak English with other people. I was afraid that I couldn't speak English. I was afraid I couldn't answer any questions from you or other classmates.

*Reasons for EOCA:
negative self-perceived Eng. proficiency*

P: The first topic was quite easy. The last topic was harder. It was about the business idea. But it seemed like you didn't feel anxious. Why?

adaptability w/ TBLT / Interest in TBLT
T: Because I got familiar with the learning method, I liked this method so I didn't feel anxious anymore. Plus, my level was improved a bit, so I could speak what I thought, I wasn't afraid to make mistakes anymore.

EOCA ↓ ↑ confidence in Eng. proficiency
fear of making mistakes ↓

P: Ok, that's all. Thank you so much.

P: I'm going to ask you some questions about your experience with the online English course? Did you have any difficulties in studying English online? Did you encounter any difficulties when accessing the online course or installing the platform?

C: The biggest difficulty I had was my Internet connection. My *Challenges of unstable connection - unstable connection* Internet connection was *unstable*, sometimes I got *disrupted while studying*.

P: Was it easy to download the learning materials such as exercises or pictures that I sent to you? Were they clear enough to see/read?

C: All the *visibility of learning materials +* files you sent were good. However, due to my Internet problem, sometimes I *Challenges of unstable Internet - visibility of learning materials +* couldn't hear the listening recordings clear enough. Everything else was fine.

P: What did you like about this online course?

C: When studying, I could be assigned to a *OL platform +* private virtual room to speak English with my classmates. This, firstly, helped me improve my speaking skills. Secondly, I *enhanced study focus* could discuss with my friends *↑ study focus* without being disturbed by other people. We could discuss face to face without being disrupted by other groups' noise. Besides, I sometime couldn't recognise who was talking in a traditional classroom, I had to look for the person who was talking. In online class, when someone talked, their video would be appeared in the centre of the screen. Therefore, I could *↑ study focus* easily focus on what they were saying.

P: What didn't you like about this online course?

C: *OL disadvantages -* I didn't like the time scheduling with other classmates. In a traditional class, there is always a fixed time to start the class. In the online class, due to others' different technical *OL -* problems, the class couldn't start on time. The second point is that I was lazier since

Loss of self-discipline -
there was **nobody to control my study**. This is my most concern. Apart from these, the
online class was very good, even **more convenient** because we could **learn at anytime**,
even at late night.
convenience of OL + convenience of OL +

P: Ya, I see. Since this online course is voluntary, I couldn't force people to study. It was
your own autonomy.

C: Yes

P: Ok. Do you prefer studying English online or in traditional classroom?

C: If I'm **not lazy** and am **determined to study** seriously, I will **definitely choose to study**
online. I'm just afraid that I **can't overcome my laziness**.
compared to TC / OL + w / condition
Loss of self-discipline -

P: What are the reasons for your choice?

C: I think studying online is **more convenient** than studying in a traditional class. I can
save my time and effort on commuting. Even when my class is next to my house, it still
takes me at least 15 minutes to prepare for the class. When I study online, I **don't** need to
care about my appearance. I just need 2 minutes to start my computer. I think I can **save**
a lot of time with online studying. Besides, studying online **makes me more active** in study.
convenient of OL +
↑ study engagement
I can **search** for **whatever** I don't know **via Internet**. In the era of technology development,
we can spend more time on doing something useful like studying online instead of
wasting time on surfing useless websites and Facebook.
convenient of OL +
↑ study engagement

P: Ok. Let's talk about the topics we studied in the online course, what did you think about

them? Relevance to real-life communication / TBLT +
Utility of topics / TBLT +

C: The **topics** were **close to daily communication**, for example the topics about **giving**
directions, holidays or travelling.
favourite topics

P: Which topics did you like the most?

C: I liked the first topic, talking about ^{favourite topics} personal information because it was the easiest.

P: What else?

C: I also liked the topic of ^{favourite topics} café makeover. Although I ^{incentives from new topics} hadn't talked about this topic before,
^{new topics +} I still got a lot of ideas and could respond fast enough in the discussion.

P: If you can study more in the future, what topics do you want to study?

C: I like the topics about ^{Future topics} personal communication and the ones that can help with my major. For example, English in restaurants and hotels, English to use in companies, English for business. ^{Future topics}

P: Ok. Now let's talk about the learning method. At first, I showed you a video to watch, or gave you a conversation or discussion to listen or a sample paragraph to read. Then I gave you a task to do. You had some time to discuss with other students or prepare the talk before performing in front of the whole class. What do you think about this learning method? Was this effective to you?

C: Yes partly effective. Before I performed my own talk, I had a sample to have an ^{benefits of task sample / TBLT +} overview of what I needed to present and I could apply the sample structure to my talk.

P: What did you think or feel when you were told to work in a pair or a group? Did you feel more comfortable or more anxious to work in pairs and groups than working alone?

C: When I studied online, I had a feeling of being alone even though I was still in a group discussion. So I ^{Absence of physical interaction} didn't have the pressure of speaking in front of people and my ^{EDCA ↓} confidence level increased day by day. Generally speaking, I prefer working alone.

However, it's better to communicate with my classmates to improve my English speaking skills.

P: Why do you **prefer** working alone?

C: Because when I **do a task alone**, I feel that whatever I say is right. There is **no one to object to my ideas**, which ^{EOCA ↓} **makes me feel like talking more.**
enjoy studying

P: What did you feel when being given time to prepare your talk? Did it help improve your speaking skills?

C: Yes, definitely, ^{preparation time +} **having time to prepare** is always **good** in any case. I **could think of** ^{EOCA ↓} **ideas and look for vocabulary and grammar** before talking. I **felt more confident** with my speech. *TBLT + / effective teaching method*

P: So, normally I didn't give a grammar lecture before you did your task. Then I gave you feedback, revised the talk and presented the grammar point at the end of the class. What do you think about this teaching method? Do you prefer being corrected while you are talking or after you finish your talk?

C: I honestly **don't find this teaching method effective** to me. However, there is no other ways for teachers to do differently in correcting students' mistakes. If you correct me while I am talking, I will remember where I was wrong. I **don't remember my mistakes when you correct them after my talk.** *delayed feedback +*

P: Does that mean you prefer being corrected while you are talking?

C: Yes. Although my talk will be interrupted if you correct me when I am talking, I will know and remember what I spoke wrong. If you leave it till the end, I can't remember whether I got that mistake.

P: Did you feel less anxious or more anxious when studying online, compared to studying in a traditional class?

C: I felt less anxious. EOCA ↓

P: Why?

C: Because I was actually alone in real life. I counted the online class as a mirror in which I could still discuss with my friends. My friends also helped me correct my mistakes. In a traditional class, others around me just comment on my mistakes indirectly, which distracts me.

Absence of physical interaction
peer assistance
Absence of peer commenting

P: Did you feel anxious when you had more direct communication with me (your teacher) via the screen and you saw me all the time during the class?

C: No, I didn't. I considered the teacher as a friend, helping me correct my mistakes. In the online class, OL platform + classmates' microphones were muted while you were correcting everyone's mistakes. In a traditional class, when I am wrong, I get corrected by my teacher and also get indirect comments from my classmates, which makes me worry.

peer judgement - FNE ↑
EOCAT in TC

P: Did the class recording affect your anxiety?

C: No, it didn't. I didn't have any problem with that because class recording helped you assess my progress.

P: Did you feel more confident to speak English in front of the class after you were told to work in pairs or groups?

C: It depends on the topic. When I worked in pair, my partner corrected my mistakes and I felt more confident. However, when the topic was too difficult, both of us couldn't speak.

TBLT + pair-work + peer assistance
boost in confidence
Encounter w/ difficult topics

much since we didn't have ideas. For example, in the last topic about business idea, I felt *EOGA / idea scarcity* anxious because I didn't know what to say.

P: After the 8 online sessions, do you think your oral communication skills have been improved?

C: I don't know (laugh). The *Adaptability to OL +* ability to adapt with the online learning environment has been increased. I can't assess my speaking ability.

P: OK. Regarding your English speaking anxiety, could you assess your anxiety level before and after the course? Is there any change?

C: I think my anxiety level has been changed in a positive way. When I *Familiarity to* got used to the *with TBLT + EOGA* learning method and friends, I felt more confident.

P: Ok. I often changed study group. Did you feel anxious when you had to study with different students every week?

C: I think it is both a benefit and a disadvantage. When we study with the same students all the time, we don't have to get to know them again and again, we know who they are and how they are in class, so we understand each other better in discussion. When we *adaptability to different classmates* study with different people, we can learn how to adapt to new circumstances and make new friends.

P: So, did you feel anxious when studying with new people?

C: A little bit *Initial year w/ new classmates* at first. It took time for me to get familiar with their accent and speaking style.

P: OK. Do you think you would still feel confident to speak English if you studied with a different teacher but with the same teaching method?

<sup>TBLT +
Relevance to real life com.</sup>
C: If a teacher is in charge of a series of related topics, I feel good.

P: So will you feel anxious when you study with different teachers?

C: I don't think so. Because my goal is to be able to speak English so it's ok to study with any teachers. ^{w/ different teachers} ^{adaptability}

P: Will you be confident to speak with foreigners after the course?

C: Before the course, I already tried to speak with foreigners although I didn't know much English. So, I am definitely more confident to talk to them after the course. ^{EOCA ↓ / confidence boost}

P: OK. Now I'm going to ask about the chart showing your anxiety level when you studied in the online English course. The chart is based on the data of your mini-questionnaires. I see that at the end of each session, you didn't feel anxious much (level 2 & 1). Why was your anxiety level at the second highest level (level 4) before the first two sessions?

C: Because I had to study with different classmates in the first two sessions so I had to get to know them first. Later on, I got familiar with the way the course worked so my anxiety decreased. ^{EOCA ↓} ^{Adaptability to learning method} ^{OL}

P: From the third session, I see that you didn't feel anxious much already.

^{EOCA ↓ - TBLT +}
C: Yes, because I felt more comfortable. I was familiar with the learning method so I didn't feel anxious.

P: OK. That's all for this interview. Thank you.

P: I'm going to ask you some questions about your experience with the online English course? Did you encounter any difficulties when accessing the English online course or installing the platform?

Stable Internet connection/Exp w/ OL +
M: No, I didn't have any difficulties when the Internet connection was good.

P: So in general, it depended on the Internet, didn't it?

M: Yes

P: Apart from this, did you face any other troubles from the beginning till the last session?

Simplicity of platform access
M: No, I didn't. It was easy to install the software, easy to access the class if the Internet was stable.
OL +

P: How about when the Internet was not good?

challenges of unstable connection
M: When the Internet connection was not good, it would take me longer to join the class.

P: Was it easy to download the learning materials such as exercises or pictures that I sent to you?

Ease of material download
M: Yes, it was extremely easy.

P: Did you have any problems when looking at my screen share while studying online?

OL + compared to TC
M: No, I didn't. I think studying online like this is better than studying in traditional class if the Internet is stable.

P: OK. So do you prefer studying English online or in traditional classroom?

M: If I can study in a quiet place like in my own room with a strong Wi-Fi signal, I prefer learning online (laugh).

P: (laugh) Why? Why do you prefer online learning?

M: Because when I studied alone in my room, I felt like I ^{enhanced study focus} could focus more on studying ^{OL + TC - distraction from surrounding} than in traditional classroom. In traditional classroom, there are many things around that distract me.

P: For example?

M: For example, people talk to each other or use phones in class. So, I lose my focus on studying.

P: But you also used your phone in this online class.

M: But I ^{↑ study engagement} used my phone only for my study when I studied online. For example, I used my phone to see the exercises you sent me. In the traditional classroom, I use the phone for my personal purposes such as chatting or playing games and I don't focus on the lesson.

P: Apart from this reason, is there any other reasons why you like studying online?

M: It was ^{Convenience of OL +} more convenient. I could save the time and cost from travelling to a class.

P: Could you explain more clearly about the "convenient" you mentioned?

M: I mean I just need a computer to join the class. Furthermore, all the ^{easy access to materials} learning documents were available in the computer, I didn't need to take notes much or I could take a screenshot instead. ^{convenience of OL +}

P: What didn't you like about this online course?

M: Nothing, it was just the unstable Internet that annoyed me sometimes.

^{challenges of unstable Internet}

P: Ok. Did you feel less anxious or more anxious when you studied English online, compared to the traditional classroom?

M: When studying online, I studied with less people than in traditional classroom and I had many chances to interact directly with the teacher and my friends in English so I felt more confident, unlike when I am in a traditional classroom. In a normal class, I can't have much English interaction, so I am shy and uncomfortable to speak English.

P: So when you studied English online with less students and more interactions, you felt confident...

M: and studied more effectively.

P: How did you feel when you talked to me through the screen?

M: I felt normal, not anxious.

P: When I said I would record the lesson, did you feel anxious?

M: No, I didn't.

P: About the topics we studied in the online course, which ones do you like?

M: I like the topic about asking for and giving directions because I think it is useful.

P: Anything else?

M: I also like the topic about the café.

P: You mean the topic about café makeover? Why do you like this topic?

M: Yes, because I could learn how to talk about café renovation. I could obtain more vocabulary.

P: In general, what do you think about these topics?

M: The topics are *relevance to real-life communication* quite familiar to my real life.

P: OK. Now let's talk about *the learning method*. At first, I showed you a video to watch, or gave you a conversation or discussion to listen to or a sample paragraph to read. Then I gave you a task to do. You had some time to discuss with other students or prepare the talk before performing in front of the whole class. What do you think about this learning method?

M: I think it *TBLT +* was effective. It helped me *enhancement in speaking skills* improve my English group discussion skills.

P: In the lesson, I didn't give the lecture first but you did the task first, then I gave you feedback, revised the talk and presented the related grammar point. Do you like this way of learning?

M: I think this method was good for me, because I *Effectiveness of initial* could critically think about what I would *task completion / TBLT +* talk about *without repeating an instructed sample only*. In my English classes at the university, my teachers often give us a sample and ask us to *practise saying out loud* the sample. It *Ineffectiveness of preliminary lectures* was not speaking.

P: Regarding the error correction, I normally gave feedback after you talked. Do you like being corrected immediately after you make a mistake or after you finish your talk?

M: I like *delayed feedback* being corrected after I finish my talk. Because if you correct my mistakes immediately I will forget what I am going to talk next.

P: So with the learning method that you did the task first then I gave feedback and revision, did you feel comfortable to talk? Did you feel anxious when being told to do the task before I gave the lecture?

Reasons EOCA ↓ ^{task preparation time +} Idea adequacy
M: When I had enough ideas and time to prepare, I didn't feel anxious. But with an Encounter w/ difficult topics unfamiliar topic, I took me longer to prepare the task.

P: OK. Did you feel more comfortable to work in pairs and groups or to work alone to complete the tasks?

M: I think working in ^{TBLT + /group work +} groups or pairs was better for me because I could ^{collaborative idea} creatively produce ^{generation} better ideas when interacting with my friends.

P: Did you feel more confident to speak English after you were told to work in pairs or groups?

M: I think I was ^{boost in speaking confidence} more confident than when I worked alone. (laugh)

P: Why?

M: Because I ^{↑ speaking opportunities} could practise speaking while working in groups. When I worked alone, I didn't know whether my ideas were right or wrong or what other people would think about my opinions.

P: Ok, it means when you work in groups or pairs, there would be someone to test your ideas in advance.

M: Yes.

P: After the 8 online sessions, do you think your oral communication skills have been improved?

M: (laugh) I think I got a little improvement. ^{post-course confidence} I am more confident now. ^{high pre-course} Before this course, I ^{anxiety} couldn't speak much English in front of other people and I didn't have conversational ^{low English proficiency} reflex in English.

P: If this course lasted longer than 8 sessions, do you think your English speaking ability would be better?

M: Yes, if I practiced more often and diligently studied what you taught, my English would be improved more.

P: OK, there is one more thing I want to ask. I often changed the study group. Did you feel anxious when you had to study with different students every week?

M: No, I didn't. Studying with *Adaptability to different* **different classmates** gave me **the adaptability to work with** *classmates* **new people**. It is not good to work with somebody that we are too familiar with. Plus, each person has different ways of thinking.

P: Do you mean you didn't feel shy when speaking English with different people and you liked this because you could learn from others' ideas?

M: Yes, that's right, and I could make more friends (laugh).

P: If you studied with a different teacher, what would you think? I mean with the same learning method but you studied with a new teacher, would you feel anxious or confident?

M: If the *teacher friendliness ↓ EOCA* **teacher was as friendly** as you (laugh), I think I **wouldn't have any problem**. I *Interest in TBLT* would feel normal. In summary, I think **this learning method is good**.

P: Alright. Regarding your English speaking anxiety, was there any difference in the anxiety level between before and after the course?

M: A little bit different. Now *EOCA ↓* **I feel more confident to speak English**.

P: Ok. Now I'm going to ask about the chart showing your anxiety level when you studied English, based on the mini questionnaire you sent me after each online session. In the

first session, your anxiety level was at level 4 (severe) and after the session, it reduced to level 3 (moderate). But before the session 2 began, your anxiety level was at the highest level, level 5 (very severe), why? Session 2 is about asking for and giving directions.

M: Because after the first session, I realised that ^{negative self-perceived} my English was too horrible so I felt ^{English proficiency} anxious before the second session.

P: But your anxiety level after this first session was reduced a little bit (level 3). Why?

M: I don't know why (smile). I just felt better when the session finished.

P: OK, after session 2, you started feeling less anxious (based on the data in the chart).

M: Yes. Because I ^{ECCA↓ - familiarity w/ TBLT / TBLT+} got used to the learning method. This method was effective. I could ^{vocabulary expansion improved pronunciation} learn relevant vocabulary and improve my pronunciation.

P: Then, your anxiety level after session 8 reduced to the lowest level. OK, I don't have anything else to ask. Thank you a lot!

Interview English Transcription

ID Code: CA1885

P: I'm going to ask you some questions about your experience with the online English course? Did you encounter any difficulties when accessing the online course or installing the platform?

Challenges of unstable connection

D: Sometimes the **Internet connection was unstable** so I **couldn't hear** clearly. Apart from the connection problem, *OL +/experience w/BLT* **everything else was fine**. Plus, I *Idea scarcity* **didn't have a great deal of vocabulary**, so I **couldn't fully express myself** and sometimes my talk couldn't be fluent.

P: Was it easy to download the learning materials such as exercises or pictures that I sent to you? Were they clear enough to see/read?

D: You normally sent pictures and exercises online, but I was always in full screen in Zoom. Whenever I wanted to see the pictures or exercises, I had to quit Zoom. If I used Zoom *Disadvantages of OL platform* **on my phone**, I **couldn't multitask**. For example, I couldn't use Zoom simultaneously with using Google or opening the materials you sent.

P: So, it can be deduced that using a mobile phone is quite inconvenient for studying online.

D: Yes.

P: Now let's talk about our online course. What did you like about this online course?

D: I like my classmates. They were quite friendly. I had a feeling that they were better than me.

P: What did you like about studying online?

D: I like the fact that I **didn't need to commute**. I **could study at home**. I like that so much.

Convenience of OL

P: What didn't you like about this online course?

D: The ^{Audio distraction from peers} noise from other classmates when they didn't turn their microphone off. It was ok to study at home, but it was different when I had to study somewhere else. I ^{distracted} got distracted by the noise around me. ^{distractions from surrounding}

P: Ok. Do you prefer studying English online or in a traditional classroom?

D: To me, I still ^{OL - / compared to TC} prefer studying in a traditional classroom.

P: Why?

D: The response to teacher's questions in a traditional class is different from online class. ^{loss of self-discipline in OL} In online class, we can use Google to look up for a word or a sentence while talking. We ^{TC +} can't do this in a normal class, which forces us to practise the response skills.

P: Did you feel less anxious or more anxious when studying online, compared to studying in a traditional class?

D: I ^{EO CA ↓} felt less anxious when studying online because I ^{↑ speaking opportunities} could talk more than in a traditional classroom.

P: Why?

D: Because I ^{reliance on digital assistance} could prepare my talk, or I could use Google if I didn't know anything. Plus, it was basically the feeling, I always feel more anxious if I have to talk face-to-face with somebody in real life. ^{presence of physical interactions in TC}

P: Did you feel anxious when you had more direct communication with me (your teacher) via the screen?

↑ direct interactions
D: No, I didn't. Another benefit of studying online is that I **could talk to my teacher directly** w/ teachers **more often** and also **ask more questions**. In a traditional class with more students, teacher has to move around, come closer to each student so I **can't ask a lot of questions**.
In online class, listening to teacher answering students' questions is better/clearer.

P: Did the class recording make you anxious?

D: No, it didn't. I didn't notice that you recorded the lesson even though I know you would do it.

P: Ok. Let's talk about the topics we studied in the online course, what did you think about them?

Utility of topics / TBLT +
D: **The topics were practical**, for example the topic of giving directions. **Before** this session, I **couldn't show directions** to foreigners when being asked. Although I knew the way, I couldn't say it in English. So, I always said "I don't know".

P: Now you know how to say it in English, will you be willing to show foreigners directions when they ask?

D: Yes.

P: Which topics did you like the most?

Utility of topics / TBLT + favourite topics
D: Apart from the topic about **giving directions**, I also liked the topic about **sharing my dreams**. favourite topics

P: Why?

D: Because I could think about my dreams and **learn more vocabulary** related to what I want to do in the future. Incentive from new topics

P: If you can study more in the future, what topics do you want to study?

future study topics

D: I like to study about the **topics related to business, trading and how to introduce products to customers.** I am doing a part-time job at a coffee shop. We sometimes have foreign customers but I can't understand and answer them when they order.

P: Ok. Now let's talk about the **learning method.** At first, I showed you a video to watch, or gave you a conversation or discussion to **listen or a sample paragraph to read.** Then I gave you a task to do. You had some time to discuss with other students or prepare the talk before performing in front of the whole class. What do you think about this learning method? Was this effective to you?

effective teaching method / speaking opportunities

D: Yes, it was **effective** because I **could talk more** and **my pronunciation was improved** more than before the course. *Benefits of task samples*

P: What did you feel when being given time to prepare your talk? Did you **feel more confident?** *Even*

Even
D: Yes, since **I had time to prepare my talk in advance,** I had **more vocabulary** to talk about a topic. *Availability of task preparation time + vocabulary expansion*

P: What did you think or feel when you were told to work in a pair or a group?

group work +

D: I saw that **group discussion was livelier** than pair discussion.

P: Why?

D: Because I personally knew that my pronunciation was not good. My partner didn't understand me and vice versa. So, it wasn't lively. However, **after the discussion, both of us still got some ideas and vocabulary.** *Collaborative idea generation* Therefore, when we discussed in a bigger group,

we could share the ideas we had discussed in pair and we could talk more. So, it was livelier in group discussion.

P: Did you feel more or less confident to speak English in front of the class after you were told to work in pairs or groups? And why?

D: I ^{EOCA ↓} felt more confident because I ^{initial task completion +} already discussed my ideas with some classmates and also ^{boost in confidence} listened to their ideas. I ^{vocabulary expansion} was not anxious when I got ideas and vocabulary to talk about a topic.

P: Normally I didn't give a grammar lecture before you did your task. Then I gave you feedback, revised the talk and presented the grammar point at the end of the class. What do you think about this teaching method?

D: I think this method is suitable to me. Sometimes ^{fear of making mistakes ↓} we don't need to use grammar completely correct when we are talking. Even Vietnamese sometimes don't use Vietnamese grammar properly. It's the same for sentence structures and vocabulary. ^{Fear of making mistakes ↓ delayed feedback +} Hence, I think I just keep taking and then teacher will correct my mistakes later. By doing this, I will speak better next time. If I am interrupted while talking, I will lose the mood to speak.

P: Does that mean you prefer being corrected after you finish your talk and not being disrupted while you are talking?

D: Yes

P: So, which way do you prefer, you do a task yourself first, then teacher gives you feedback and revises the talk/grammar or teacher presents the grammar point and provides sentence structures first and gives you a task to practice later?

D: I am not a type of person who likes repeating formulas by heart, so I prefer you ^{Interest in TBLT} teaching grammar after my talk.

P: After the 8 online sessions, do you think your oral communication skills have been improved?

D: A little bit. Although my vocabulary is not good enough, I can speak more fluently if I ^{Preparation time +} have time to prepare.

P: Do you still remember the vocabulary we studied?

D: Yes, I remember some and I also took notes.

P: What else that you improved?

D: I can see that my intonation is better than before. Before I spoke English without putting stress on words, now I know where to put stress in the sentence to make it sound better. I also know how to lengthen my talk. Instead of speaking simply, I can give more supportive ideas to explain more for my points.

P: Ok. I often changed study group during the course. Did you feel anxious when you had to study with different students every week?

D: No, I didn't. I ^{Adaptability to ≠ classmates} could communicate with more people and ^{Learning from peers} learn more from them. Each person has their own strong suit.

P: OK. Do you think you would still feel confident to speak English if you studied with different teachers but the same learning method?

D: It depends on the teachers' characteristics and teaching methods. ^{Effect of teacher to EDCAT}

P: So, would you feel anxious if you made mistakes in speaking or if you couldn't speak at all with the new teachers?

D: Yes. If I study with one teacher throughout the course, she/he will know my level and how to help me when I face troubles. However, *Adaptability to learning methods* if teachers follow the same method like in this course, *Interest in TBLT* I think I would be fine because I know teachers would correct mistakes after my talk and *EOCA ↓* I do not need to feel anxious about making mistakes while speaking English. Also, *Benefits of initial task completion* I could work with my friends to do a task before teachers teach grammar, so I would remember lessons better. *TBLT +*

P: OK. Regarding your English speaking anxiety, could you assess your anxiety level before and after the course? Is there any change?

D: My anxiety level before the course was at moderate level. Now it goes down to level 2, mild.

P: How can you assess your level? What factors have been changed?

D: I can see that during the course, *fear of making mistakes ↓* even though I made mistakes, I still kept talking, then *TBLT +* you corrected me. It has become a habit which helped me kept talking even when I spoke wrong. I could revise my mistakes later.

P: Will you be confident to speak with foreigners after the course?

D: Yes, if we do common communication. If I have to talk about a topic, it depends on the topic difficulty.

P: OK. Now I'm going to ask about the chart showing your anxiety level when you studied in the online English course. The chart is based on the data of your mini-questionnaires. I see that your anxiety level before and after session 1 didn't change (level 4). Why?

Reason EOCA ↑
D: Because I hadn't got familiar with the course. Before the course, I had never spoken English via video call. Even before the class started, I felt anxious already. After the session, I saw that my friends were better than me so I still felt anxious. I was worried about the next session.
high pre-course anxiety level
sense of inferiority

P: In the next session, your level was lower than the first one. The levels before and after the session were lower (at level 3 and 2)

D: Because I reviewed the old lesson before the class so I felt more confident.

P: In the fifth session, your level after class went up to level 4. The session topic was "ambitions". Why?

FN E
D: In that session, I studied in a coffee shop. Everyone looked at me when I was talking. Plus, it was difficult to look up vocabulary or pronunciation when studying with phone, so I felt anxious.
vocabulary deficiency *bad pronunciation*
EOCA ↑

P: Your anxiety levels were the same before and after the 7th session. Why? The topic of this session was "café makeover".

D: In that session, I was in a hurry for an affair so I couldn't focus on studying.

P: OK. That's all for this interview. Thank you.

P: I'm going to ask you some questions about your experience with the online English course? Did you encounter any difficulties in studying English online?

U: No, I didn't.

P: Did you encounter any difficulties when accessing the online course?

U: The only difficulty I had was that ^{Challenges w/ unstable connection} my Internet was not stable sometimes. It depended on the weather or the Internet status.

P: Ok. Was it easy to download the learning materials such as exercises or pictures that I sent to you? Were they clear enough to see/read? And did you have any difficulties when looking at my screen share while studying online?

U: No, I didn't. The ^{Exp w/ OL + visibility of learning materials} learning materials were clear and easy to see. The only problem was that when the ^{Challenges of unstable Internet} Internet connection was not good, I couldn't see your screen clearly.

P: Ok. Do you prefer studying English online or in traditional classroom?

U: If the class is for ^{OL + / compared to TC} English communication, I prefer studying English online.

P: Why?

U: To low level students who don't have adequate vocabulary and cannot speak English much like me, ^{convenience of OL} studying online allowed me to ^{↑ study engagement} look for the words I wanted to use while I was speaking. Also, I could ^{increased study engagement} find the right pronunciation to practice and more specially (laugh) it helped ^{EDCA ↓ / OL +} reduce my stress while speaking in English.

P: But didn't you feel anxious when you had to speak in front of your teacher?

EOCA ↓ in OL
Teacher's influence
U: It was **less anxious** than studying in a traditional class. **Teachers in traditional**
on EOCA/TC -
classroom look scarier than in online class (laugh).

P: Ok. So, you mean you felt less anxious when you studied English online?

EOCA in OL ↓ compared to TC Reasons for EOCA ↓
U: Yes, **less anxious** because (laugh) **there were many things that helped me speak more**
confidently such as using **Google or dictionary while preparing the talk.** Availability of task
Reliance on digital assistance preparation time

P: And since you didn't have direct/physical interaction with your teachers, you felt less worried, right?

Small class size EOCA ↑
U: Yes. Moreover, I **studied with less people** when studying online, so I **felt more**
confident than in traditional classroom where I usually have to study with more than 10 people.

P: Alright, so if you study with many people, you will be shy. What **didn't** you **like** about this course?

OL + for ↑ EOC skills
U: Nothing, it was **good for learning English communication**. If it was **for writing**, it might
be **not good** because you **could not check my writing online** at the time we were in class.
OL - for ↑ writing skills

P: Alright. About the topics we studied in the online course, what do you think about them?

engaging w/ stimulating topics / TBLT +
U: The **topics were interesting, easy to talk about** and also **gave me more knowledge**. For
example, with the topic **"café makeover"**, if I didn't like anything about a coffee shop, I
incentives from new topics
knew how to discuss in English with my friends **what I wanted to change**. Or the **topic**
incentives from new topics,
about **product or idea introduction**, I **knew how to introduce a new idea** or a **new product**
in English.

P: Which topics did you like the most?

U: (pause 3,4s) I liked the topic about how to ^{favourite topics} introduce a new product and how to attract other people's attention on my product in English.

P: What do you want to study more in the future?

U: I want to study more in detailed about ^{future study topics} my major, tourism and hospitality.

P: Ok. Now let's talk about the learning method. At first, I showed you a video to watch, or gave you a conversation or discussion to listen or a sample paragraph to read. Then I gave you a task to do. You had some time to discuss with other students or prepare the talk before performing in front of the whole class. What do you think about this learning method?

U: This ^{TBLT +} method was effective, because I normally ^{TC = /no preparation time} do not have a chance to prepare the task in traditional classroom. I have to speak out immediately and I always forget what I have said. In this class, I ^{available of task preparation time +} had time to prepare the talk so I remembered my talk for longer and when you corrected my mistakes, I remembered exactly what I was wrong and could understand your feedback more easily. I also remembered the lesson better than when I am not allowed to prepare or discuss the talk in advance. ^{Effectiveness of initial task completion}

P: So, which way do you prefer, you do a task yourself, then teacher gives you feedback and revises the talk/grammar or teacher presents the grammar point first and gives you a task to do later?

U: I prefer doing the task myself first, then teacher gives me feedback because I could ^{effectiveness of initial task completion / TBLT +} prompt ideas myself or with my friends and I could try to find the right grammar to talk first. ^{Ineffectiveness of preliminary lectures} If teacher presents the lecture first, I will be lazy to brainstorm and I will not try my best to do the task. I think I myself have to think of how to do the task first.

P: Was this difficult for you to do? I didn't present the lesson first, you only watched a video, or listened to a model conversation or discussion, or read a sample paragraph then you did the task. Did this make you feel anxious when you prepared for the task? Or did you feel more comfortable?

U: It depended on the topic. With the topic I knew well, it was easy to do the task. With the ^{Encounter w/ difficult topics} topic that ^{EOCA ↑} required a large range of vocabulary, I found it difficult and I felt anxious.
vocabulary deficiency

P: What did you think or feel when you were told to work in a pair or a group?

U: I felt comfortable. I ^{EOCA ↓} could exchange ideas with my friends. Sometimes ^{collaborative idea generation} they had better ideas than mine, and I could learn from their ideas.
peer learning experience

P: So did you feel more comfortable to work in pairs and groups or to work alone?

U: I definitely felt more comfortable when working in pairs or groups.

P: Did you feel more confident to speak English after you were told to work in pairs or groups?

U: I felt ^{EOCA ↓ / TBLT +} very confident because apart from my ideas, I ^{enhancement in speaking} knew more interesting ideas from my friends which ^{↑ speaking skills} helped me talk more about the topic that you gave me.

P: After the 8 online sessions, do you think your oral communication skills have been improved?

U: Yes. My pronunciation was corrected in order to pronounce English more precisely. I also knew how to revise my words so that I could speak better and more properly. Also, there were some ^{engagement w/ stimulating topics} interesting topics which encouraged me to critically think of ideas and then share them with others.

↑ speaking interest
Boost in speaking confidence

P: Did you feel **anxious** when you had to **study with different students** every week?

EOCAT *negative self-perceived Eng. proficiency*
U: A **little bit** because I was **not confident** of my English speaking skills. I **was afraid** that I *initial discomfort w/ new peers* *sense of inferiority* **couldn't share a lot of ideas** and my speaking skills were not as good as others'.

P: Did you still feel anxious in later sessions?

sense of inferior ↓ → EOCA ↓
U: In later sessions, I **knew** that **others' English speaking skills** were not good either. They couldn't speak well like me so I felt **less inferior**. Also, I got **more ideas** from different *EOCA ↓* *learning from peers* **classmates**.

P: OK. Do you think you would still feel confident to speak English if you studied with a different teacher?

U: (laugh) It depends.

P: If you still studied like this, I mean with the same learning method but with a new teacher, would you feel ok?

Adaptability to TBLT / TBLT + → EOCA ↓
U: Yes, if I **can discuss with my friends** and **prepare the talk with them in advance** (laugh).

P: OK. Regarding your **English speaking anxiety**, do you think your anxiety level is reduced or increased after finishing this course?

improved pronunciation
U: It is **reduced** because during 8 sessions, I **got my pronunciation corrected** so I feel *EOCA ↓* **more confident now**.

P: OK. Now I'm going to ask about the chart showing your anxiety level when you studied English. Why was your anxiety level at the highest before every session?

U: (laugh). Because I didn't know about the topic before each session. I didn't know whether it **was too difficult for me** or it would **require a lot of new vocabulary** or not.

encounter challenging topics → EOCA ↑

P: OK. Your anxiety level after session 2,3,4 remained the same at level 3 (moderate). Why? Session 2 is about asking for and giving directions. Session 3 is about ambitions and session 4 is about planning a holiday.

U: I was afraid of giving directions because I am not good at directions in reality. The other topics were not too hard. I could still talk about them but I ^{ED CAT} was anxious because I ^{idea scarcity} didn't have many ideas about these topics.

P: OK, how about from sessions 5 to 8? Your anxiety level after these sessions was reduced to level 2 (mild). Were the topics about café makeover or business idea easier for you to talk about?

U: Not really, they were not totally easy to talk about but I ^{Adaptability to TBLT} got used to the learning method ^{TBLT} and I ^{Improved pronunciation} got my pronunciation corrected during the course so I was not as shy as I was in the ^{ED CA ↓} beginning.

P: OK, that's all. Thank you!

ID Code: TR0694

T: My first difficulty was my anxiety. I rarely spoke English but I felt more confident after the first three sessions.

T: No, I didn't.

T: No, it was **simple**. Platform easy access

T: It depended on the Internet connection, but I think it was ok in general.

T: No, I didn't. The **only problem** was whether the **Internet connection** was **stable or not**.

T: I prefer the online class.

enhance study power

T: I think I was **more diligent** in online class. Furthermore, in online class, I **could both** *↑ speaking opportunities* **speak** with the teacher and **look up words** so I **could talk more**. When I am in a traditional *reliance on digital assistance*

physical interaction in TC No digital assistance in TC
classroom, I have to face the teacher and I can't use dictionary while speaking. I have to look at the teacher while talking (laugh).

P: So, did you feel more or less anxious in the English online class?

EOCA ↓ in OL

T: I felt less anxious.

P: Why?

TBLT + → EOCA ↓

T: (pause 3-5s) it was partly because of the teaching method and partly because I could look up vocabulary fast enough to speak.
digital assistance

P: What didn't you like about the online course?

T: There was nothing I didn't like about the course. OL +

P: Ok. Now let's talk about the learning method. At first, I showed you a video to watch, or gave you a conversation or discussion to listen or a sample paragraph to read. Then I gave you a task to do. You had some time to discuss with other students or prepare the talk before performing in front of the whole class. What do you think about this learning method? Was this effective to you? Or do you like the learning method in which you speak immediately after teacher gives you the topic?

Interest in TBLT advantages of initial task completion
T: I like the learning method that I can discuss the topic first. Because when I discussed with others, I knew what I needed to say and had more ideas to speak in front of the class and teacher later.
TBLT + initial task completion + idea expansion

P: Which one do you prefer, teacher gives you a task to do first then he/she gives you feedback and presents the related lecture, or teacher gives the lecture first and then you do the task? Which one is more effective to you?

T: I prefer teacher giving me a task to do first, then he/she ^{delayed feedback +} corrects my pronunciation and ^{TBLT +} teaches grammar after I finish my talk. Because I can ^{effectiveness of initial task completion} remember vocabulary faster and I can remember all the grammar or pronunciation mistakes right in the class. It doesn't work if teacher gives the lecture first. ^{ineffectiveness of preliminary lectures}

P: Why? Why did you remember faster with the teaching method of this online course?

T: Because I ^{↑ study engagement} myself found the vocabulary and prepared my own talk. Hence, I remember faster when teacher corrected me. ^{availability of preparation time}

P: Does it mean when teacher corrected your mistakes, you remember those mistakes right away and you didn't make the same mistakes later?

T: Yes, exactly.

P: Let's talk about the topics we studied in the online course. What did you think about them?

T: The ^{Relevance to real-life communication} topics were close to my life. There were a lot of topics that I needed to study or some were new to me. I hadn't learnt them in school before. For example, the ^{favourite topics} topic about restaurant makeover. That topic was difficult (laugh).

P: Did you like it even though it was hard? Or you didn't like it?

T: I liked it although it was hard.

P: Which topics did you like the most?

T: I liked the final topics about ^{favourite topics} introducing a new business idea or product.

P: Why?

T: Although it was hard, it was a new topic to me. I learnt a lot of new vocabulary and the way to present my creative idea. *incentive from new topics*

P: What did you think or feel when you were told to work in a pair or a group?

EOCA ↑
T: I was a bit anxious because there were some classmates who were better than me. I was afraid that they couldn't understand me or I couldn't understand them. *sense of inferiority*
negative self-perceived Eng. proficiency

P: So, did you feel more comfortable to work in pairs or group than working alone?

initial anxiety/pre-course
T: At first, I was shy and couldn't talk when working in a group or pair but later on, I was adaptable to TBLT & classmates familiar with the learning method and other classmates, so I thought working in groups was better than working alone. *group work +*

P: So you felt a bit anxious in general?

T: Yes

P: Did you feel more confident to speak English in front of the class after you were told to work in pairs or groups? Did you feel less anxious than the beginning of the discussion?

EOCA ↓ after group work
T: (nod her head). After the discussions, I felt less anxious because I could gain more knowledge or vocabulary to speak to teacher. We helped each other when we worked in groups or pairs. Sometimes, there was something I couldn't come up with but others could, so I could use their ideas. *knowledge + vocab expansion*
peer assistance
peer learning exp.

P: After I gave you time to do a task before you spoke in front of the class, did you feel more confident to speak, compared to when you don't have time to prepare in advance and have to speak immediately?

EOCA ↑

T: That was the scariest thing (laugh). It is really scary to speak immediately when I don't have any ideas, vocabulary or sentence structures. I think having time to prepare in advance is better.

idea scarcity
inadequate English

Availability of task
preparation time +

P: After the 8 online sessions, do you think your oral communication skills have been improved?

T: I think they have been improved a little bit.

P: In what aspects?

T: I think they improved a little.

P: What I meant is whether your pronunciation, grammar or sentence structures got better?

T: Ah yes, I didn't make the mistakes that I often made before. For example, after the word "want", I have to add "to", I don't make this mistake anymore.

P: If you could study longer, what would you think?

T: I think I would talk more and more. I am more confident to talk than before already.

confidence in speaking ↑ past-course

P: Ok. One more thing, I often changed the study group. Did you feel anxious when you had to study with different students that you hadn't met before every week?

T: Yes, I did. I felt anxious when I studied with people whose level was higher than mine.

sense of inferiority

P: How about after few lessons, how did you feel?

T: A little bit less nervous. When I studied with better students, I could learn from them. For example, I could imitate their pronunciation or speaking style, so I felt less anxious.

peer learning exp.

EOCA ↓

P: OK. What would you think if you studied with different teachers that you had never met before but with the same teaching method, would you be confident or anxious?

EOCA *adaptability to learning method*
T: I think I would feel a bit anxious at first but I could still talk.

P: How much has your English speaking anxiety level changed after the course?

EOCA ↑ *adaptability to ≠ teachers*
T: It has changed a lot. I am confident to speak English with other English teachers now.
high pre-course anxiety level
Before, I couldn't talk at all and I was so scared to talk.

P: Will you be confident to speak with foreigners now?

T: (laugh). I think I will be anxious a little bit because my vocabulary is limited. If I can speak English more regularly, I won't feel anxious.

P: OK. Now I'm going to ask about the chart showing your anxiety level when you studied in the online English course. The chart is based on the data of your mini-questionnaires.

Why did your anxiety level remain the same in session one?

Reasons EOCA ↑
T: Because everything was too new to me. New learning method, new classmates. It was the first time I studied English online. Although the topic was familiar, I still felt anxious. I was worried about the next sessions.

P: Why did you feel more anxious before the second session than before the first session?

T: Because I was afraid that I would have to talk about myself like in the first session. I had studied this topic at school so I was familiar with it. *EOCA ↑*
Talking about myself made me nervous.
topic related

P: From the third session, you always felt a bit worried.

T: Yes

P: Why didn't your anxiety levels before and after the 4th and 7th change at all? The topic of the 4th session was "planning a holiday" and the 7th sessions was "café makeover".

T: The topic in the 4th session was new to me and the one in the 7th session was the most difficult topic to me. *EOCAT*
Encounter w/ new/challenging topics

P: Why was it the most difficult?

T: Even when I saw the picture of the café, I didn't know what to say. *idea scarcity*

P: Alright, so the topic was hard. I see that your anxiety level after each session wasn't at the "not worry at all", which means you still felt a bit anxious after each lesson.

T: Yes (laugh). I was still not completely confident with my English ability. *inconfidence on own Eng. proficiency*

P: OK. That's all for this interview. Thank you.

P: I'm going to ask you some questions about your experience with the online English course. Did you encounter any difficulties when installing the platform and accessing the online course?

simplicity of platform access
T: No, I didn't. It was normal in general.

P: Was it easy to download the learning materials such as exercises or pictures that I sent to you? Was it clear enough to see/read?

Ease of material download
T: It was really easy.

P: Did you have any problems with seeing the exercises and photos via screen share?

convenience of OL
T: No, I didn't. It was very convenient to see them on computer. However, I still had the habit of writing the exercises down.

P: What did you like about the online course?

convenience of OL *OL +* *enjoyment*
T: I could be more flexible in my study time and I could study at home. The class was fun in study even though we didn't see each other in person.

P: What didn't you like about the online course?

OL - / Difficulty in classroom management
T: Teacher sometimes couldn't control each individual's actions. Sometimes I did other things in the class and I didn't focus completely on the lesson.
Loss of self-discipline

P: So, do you prefer studying English online or in traditional classroom?

TC preference
T: I prefer going to tradition classroom to study English communication.

P: Why?

in person interaction preference *convenience*
T: Because I **felt good to meet my friends face – to – face**. However, I **could save time**
of OL *OL = TC*
and **be flexible in online learning**. In sum, I'm **neutral** with these two learning styles.

P: Ok. Did you feel less anxious or more anxious when you studied English online, compared to the traditional classroom?

EOCA ↓ in OL - compared to TC *Absence of physical interaction*
T: I **felt less anxious in the online course**. Because I **didn't have to face other classmates**
availability of talk
in person and I **could prepare my talk**, so I **felt less anxious**.
preparation time

P: But you could see yourself when you **spoke and also directly talked with teacher** more often via screen. How did you feel? Did you feel anxious?

initial anxiety *adaptability to OL*
T: No, I didn't. I was **a bit anxious at first** but then I gradually **got familiar with** this so I
OL + in ↑ pronunciation
didn't feel anxious anymore. I **could revise my pronunciation** since I could **see my mouth**
shape when I **pronounced** a word.

P: When I said I would record the lesson, did you feel anxious?

T: No, I didn't. I felt normal.

P: Let's talk about the topics we studied in the online course. What did you think about these topics?

Utility of topics / TBLT +
T: These **topics** were **comprehensive** and could **provide a lot of sentence structures** and
incentive from new topics
vocabulary.

P: Which topics did you like the most?

favourite topics
T: I liked the topic about **giving directions** and **ambitions**.

P: Why?

T: Because the pictures you gave us in the topic of giving directions were good. Regarding the topic about ambitions, I could have some reflections on my real ambitions and somehow, I ^{incentive from new topic} got encouraged to achieve those ambitions.

P: Did these lessons help you anything in your daily communication?

T: Yes. If I am in a similar situation, I can speak now. These ^{relevance to real-life} topics are close to me. com.

P: If you could study more in the future, what topics would you like to learn?

T: I would like to learn the ^{future study topics} topics related to daily communications.

P: OK. Now let's talk about the learning method. At first, I showed you a video to watch, or gave you a conversation or discussion to listen to or a sample paragraph to read. Then I gave you a task to do. You had some time to discuss with other students or prepare the talk before performing in front of the whole class. What do you think about this learning method? Was this method effective to you?

T: Yes, it was. ^{TBLT + / increased speaking opportunities} This method gave me chances to interact more. At first, I thought we just studied in a big group. But actually, I was ^{Group work + OL +} assigned into smaller groups in a ^{enhancement of study focus} breakout room, so I could focus on speaking more. In a traditional class, even when I am in a small group, I ^{Distracted in TC} am still distracted by other groups ^{TC -}

P: Did the reading or listening to samples before you did your task help you anything?

T: Yes, it did because I ^{benefits of task samples / TBLT +} could follow the sample structures and learn some related vocabulary.

P: What did you feel when you had time to prepare your talk? Did you feel more confident?

EOCAT

availability of task preparation time

T: Yes, exactly. I felt more confident when I had time to prepare my talk. However, I sometimes still spoke out my immediate thoughts and forgot what I had prepared in advance.

P: How do you feel if you have to speak immediately after you get a task and don't have time to prepare it in advance?

EOCAT ↓

adaptability to TBLT

T: I think I won't feel anxious. I will speak what I know. But I may feel anxious if the topic is too strange.

EOCAT → encounter w/ new topics

P: Normally I didn't give a grammar lecture before you did your task. Then I gave you feedback, revised the talk and presented the grammar point later. Did this teaching method help you in anything?

TBLT + w/ hard-working students

T: Yes, it did. If a student is diligent, this method is really good to him/her. But I was too lazy. I did take notes of what you said but I didn't review them to remember longer.

loss self-discipline

P: Do you like being corrected right at when you are talking or after you finish your talk?

T: I prefer being corrected after my talk so that I could summarise my mistakes. I don't like that teacher interrupts me because I am focusing on presenting my next ideas and I won't remember what the teacher has said.

P: What did you think when being told to work in groups or pairs before performing the tasks in class? Did you feel more or less comfortable to work in pairs and groups than working alone?

Group work + TBLT + enjoyment in study

collaborative idea generation

T: Working in groups was more fun. I had more ideas after the discussions and my friends also gave me more vocabulary.

peer assistance

P: So, did you feel more confident to speak English in front of the whole class after your group or pair discussions?

EOCA ↓ TB LT groupwork + effectiveness of initial task completion
T: Yes, I was more confident. I could work with friends in advance to finish the task, we peer assistance + checked each other's speaking so I felt sure with my speaking.
boost in speaking confidence / EOCA ↓

P: After the 8 online sessions, do you think your oral communication skills have been improved?

T: Regarding the vocabulary, I couldn't improve much because I was lazy reviewing the lessons. EOCA ↓ Regarding my confidence and communicative skills, they have been improved.
post-course confidence boost

P: In what aspects?

boost in confidence in speaking / high pre-course EOCA
T: I am more confident to speak English. Before I was too shy to speak English. My English level before the course was at 5,6/10 but now it is at 8/10. I can't get to 10/10 because I am lazy so I still lack vocabulary and sentence structures.

P: I often changed study group during the course. Did you feel anxious when you had to study with different students that you just met every week?

enjoyment in study
T: I felt more fun instead of studying with the same classmates throughout the course. If I studied with the same friends all the time, I would know their English levels and speaking styles, so I would feel bored. initial discomfort w/ new classmates
At first, I felt a bit shy since they were too new to me, I didn't know how to start the discussion. But later on, I didn't feel anxious anymore. EOCA ↓ / adaptability to ≠ classmates

P: If you studied with different teachers that you hadn't met before but with the same teaching method, would you feel confident to speak?

EOCA ↑ w/ different teachers

T: Perhaps I would feel anxious. I don't feel anxious when I am used to a teacher's teaching method and close to her/him. If I study with a different teacher for each lesson, I won't know their teaching style and I will feel anxious.

P: Could you assess your English speaking anxiety level before and after the course?

high pre-course EOCA

T: My English speaking anxiety level was high before the course. I didn't dare to communicate. I feel more confident after the course finished.

post-course confidence boost

P: Will you be confident to speak with foreigners after the course?

T: Yes, I will. I will speak whatever I know.

P: Ok. Now I'm going to ask about the chart showing your anxiety level when you studied English, based on the mini questionnaire you sent me after each online session. I see that you felt very anxious before the first session (level 5).

high pre-course EOCA

T: Because I didn't know how the class would be. I didn't know about the learning style and other classmates' English level. So, I felt anxious.

sense of inferiority

P: You still felt quite anxious after the first session (level 3). Why?

T: The level decreased but I still felt a bit anxious. I don't know why. Maybe it was because I didn't know what we would learn on that day.

P: Why did you feel quite anxious before the second session?

initial anxiety w/ new learning environment

T: Because I hadn't been familiar with the class yet.

P: But you didn't feel anxious at all at the end of this session (level 1).

enjoyment in study

T: Yes, it's true. Because I liked the lesson.

P: You didn't feel anxious before and after the fifth session, which was about ambitions.

But your anxiety level increased to level 2 before the 6th session started. Why?

T: There was homework on that day so I felt a bit anxious.

P: Ok, that's all. Thank you so much.

Interview Transcription

ID Code: TH2008

P: I'm going to ask you some questions about your experience with the online English course? Did you have any difficulties when studying English online? Did you encounter any difficulties when **accessing the online course or installing the platform**?

T: No, I didn't. It **was easy**. I just needed to **click on the link you sent to access the class**.
simplicity of platform access
computer +
Using **computer** was **easier** than **using mobile phone**.

P: Was it easy to **download the learning materials** such as exercises or pictures that I sent to you? Was it clear enough to see or read? Did you have any troubles with the exercises and pictures?

T: No, I **didn't have any problems**. They were **clear and easy to see and download**.
exp. w/ OL +
Ease of material download *visibility of learning materials*

P: So do you prefer studying English online or in traditional classroom?

T: I used to prefer the traditional class but **after this course**, I realised that **online class** was **more convenient**, especially when I didn't have much free time. However, teacher **could not revise students' exercises directly when studying online**.
convenience of OL +
OL - difficulty in classroom management

P: Can you explain more clearly about this problem?

T: For example, teacher **couldn't directly revise my writing** with me.
OL -

P: I see. I just want to ask about your experience with this online speaking course.

T: For this course, there was one thing I didn't like which was the **unstable Internet connection**. Sometimes the **connection got disrupted**.
challenge of unstable Internet

P: ok. So what did you like about the online course?

Exp w/ OL + increased speaking opportunities

T: It **was convenient** and I **could speak with everyone**.

P: I see in your questionnaire you answered before the course that you didn't experience any anxiety in learning English.

T: I was a ^{minor EOC pre-course} **bit scared, not much**.

P: Ok. Did you feel less anxious or more anxious when you studied English online, compared to the traditional classroom?

T: I felt **less anxious**. Because I **could use dictionary** right at the time I **prepared the task**.
EOCA ↓ in OL Reliance on digital assistance / task preparation time Availability of
Reasons: EOCA ↓ - Reliance
Compared to TC - EOCA ↑ / higher anxiety in TC
In my **traditional class**, I feel **more stressed** because I have to **answer teacher's questions**
Absence of task preparation time
immediately without any preparation. I **am anxious** when I **don't have enough vocabulary**.
EOCA ↑ vocabulary deficiency

P: When I said I would record the lesson, did you feel anxious?

T: No, I didn't. I didn't care about the video recording. (laugh)

P: Did you feel **anxious** when you interact directly with teacher via screen?

T: A ^{minor} **little bit** when I **didn't have any ideas to share**.
EOCA ↑ idea scarcity

P: Let's talk about the topics we studied in the online course. What did you think about these topics?

T: These **topics** were **useful**. For example the topic about **giving directions**. Before the course, giving directions in English had been too difficult for me.
Utility of topics favourite topics

P: Which topic did you like the most?

T: I liked the topic about **giving directions** because it was the **most useful to me**.
favourite topics

P: What else did you like?

T: The topic about my *favourite topics* **ambitions and dreams.**

P: Why did you like this topic?

T: Since I could *engagement with stimulating topics* **realise my strengths and weaknesses and know what I want to do in the future.**

P: If you could study more in the future, what topics would you like to learn?

T: I would like to learn the topics about **economics.** *future study topics*

P: For example?

T: For example, I like to learning about using English in doing **interviews** and other things happening in a **business**, like **how a meeting will be.** *future study topics*

P: OK. Now let's talk about the **learning method.** At first, I showed you a video to watch, or gave you a conversation or discussion to listen to or a sample paragraph to read. Then I gave you a task to do. You had some time to discuss with other students or prepare the talk before performing in front of the whole class. What do you think about this learning method? Was this method effective to you?

T: Yes, it was. Because I could *benefits of task samples* **practice listening skills and I had more ideas from the sample.** TBLT +

P: What I meant is whether the reading and listening samples were helpful to your talk?

T: Yes, they *TBLT +* **gave me more ideas about a certain topic.** *benefits of task samples*

P: What did you think when being told to work in groups or pairs before performing the tasks in class? Did it help you in anything?

T: *group work +* **From the discussions, I could know others' ideas.** *peer learning experience*

P: Anything else?

T: That's all. (laugh)

P: Did you feel more or less comfortable to work in pairs and groups, compared to working alone?

EOCAT / group work +

T: I felt more confident because I could know my friends' ideas. We could choose the best ideas to speak in front of the class.

collaborative idea generation
boost in speaking confidence

P: Did you feel more or less confident to speak English in front of the whole class after your group or pair discussions?

EOCAT - idea adequacy

T: More confident. As I said above, I felt confident when I knew what I was going to talk about. Having no ideas to talk is scary.

EOCAT - idea scarcity

P: Which one do you prefer, having time to prepare a task before speaking in front of the class or speak immediately after getting the task?

T: I think each way has its own pros and cons. If I have to speak immediately, I can practice my speaking response. If I have time to prepare, I will have more vocabulary and ideas to present. I think we should combine the two methods.

immediate speaking + availability of preparation time
idea adequacy TBLT + vocabulary expansion

P: Ok. In the lesson, I didn't give the lecture first but you did the task first, then I gave you feedback, revised the talk and presented the related grammar point. Was this teaching method effective to you?

delayed feedback +

T: Yes, my talk wasn't interrupted when you gave feedback at the end of the class. When I could speak English without being reminded of my mistakes while talking, I felt good and more confident with my English speaking skills.

EOCAT - Boost in speaking confidence

P: After the 8 online sessions, do you think your oral communication skills have been improved?

T: Yes, they have.

P: In which aspects?

T: I speak more fluently and know more vocabulary.

P: I often changed study group during the course. Did you feel anxious when you had to study with different students every week?

T: No, I didn't. *adaptability to + classmates*
I felt normal.

P: Why did you feel normal?

T: Because I have to study with different students in school already, so I felt normal.

P: If you studied with different teachers that you hadn't met before but with the same learning method, would you feel more confident to speak or more anxious?

T: I think I *TBLT +* would be confident. *adaptability to + teachers*

P: So you wouldn't feel anxious when studying with new teachers?

T: No (laugh). Because I know about the learning method, I know what teachers will do in the class. *adaptability to TBLT → EOGAN*

P: Alright. Regarding your English speaking anxiety, was there any difference in the anxiety level between before and after the course?

T: A little bit different. *pre-course anxiety had*
I was worried how I would study in this course, but after the course I am more confident and I can speak more English.
post-course confidence boost

P: Will you be confident to speak with foreigners?

T: A little anxious if I don't understand their questions.

P: Ok. Now I'm going to ask about the chart showing your anxiety level when you studied English, based on the mini questionnaire you sent me after each online session. I see that you didn't feel anxious after every session (level 1). Before the sessions, your anxiety levels were low too (level 2). So does it mean you didn't feel anxious when studying English?

T: Yes, it's true.

P: So why do you feel anxious when speaking English with foreigners?

T: Because they speak too fast, I don't understand their questions, I have to ask them to repeat what they say, so I feel anxious.

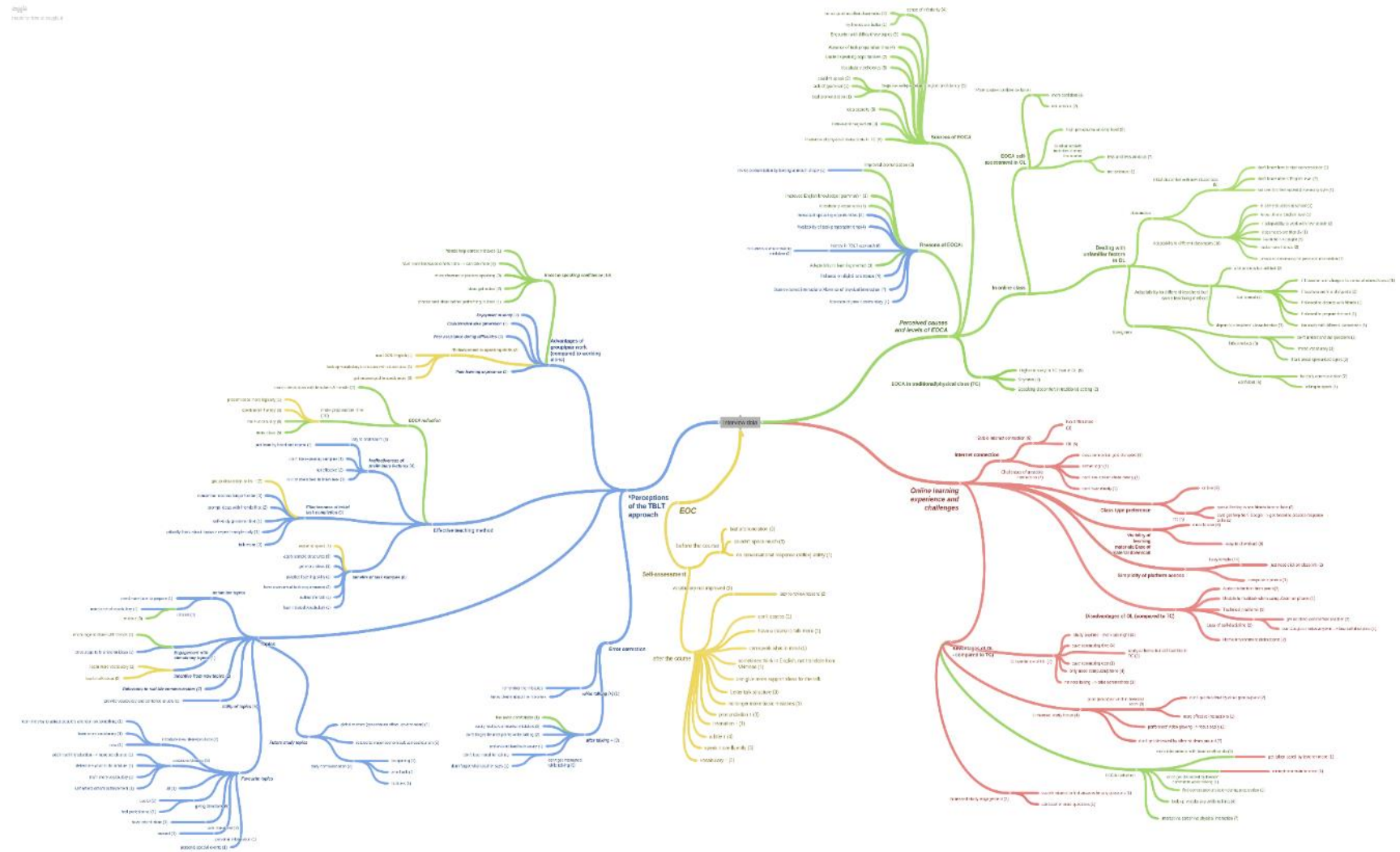
P: Alright. From the chart, I see that before the second and the 4th session, you felt a bit anxious (level 2). Why? The second session was about giving directions and the 4th session was about travelling plan.

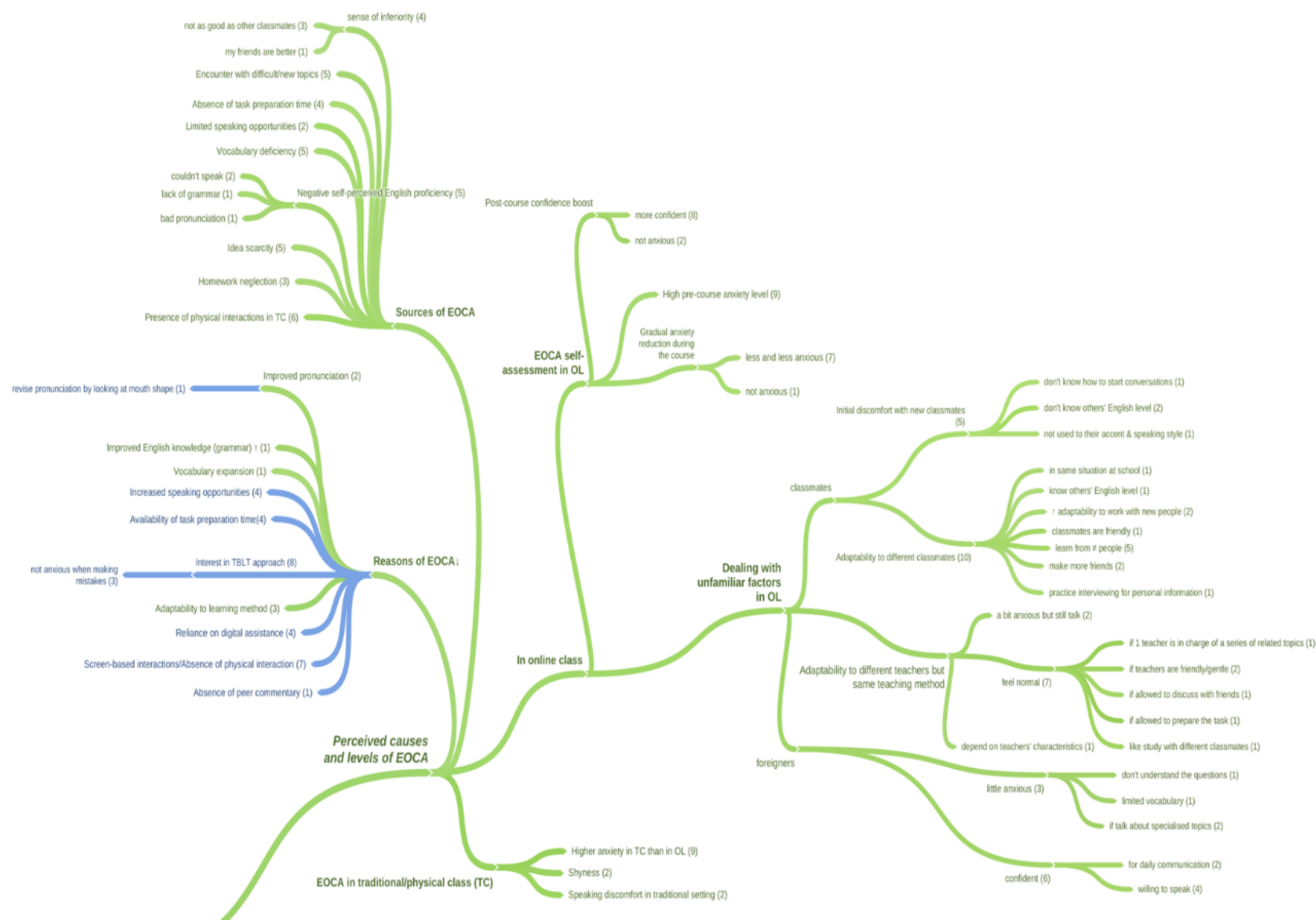
M: It was because I didn't do homework so I felt a bit anxious.

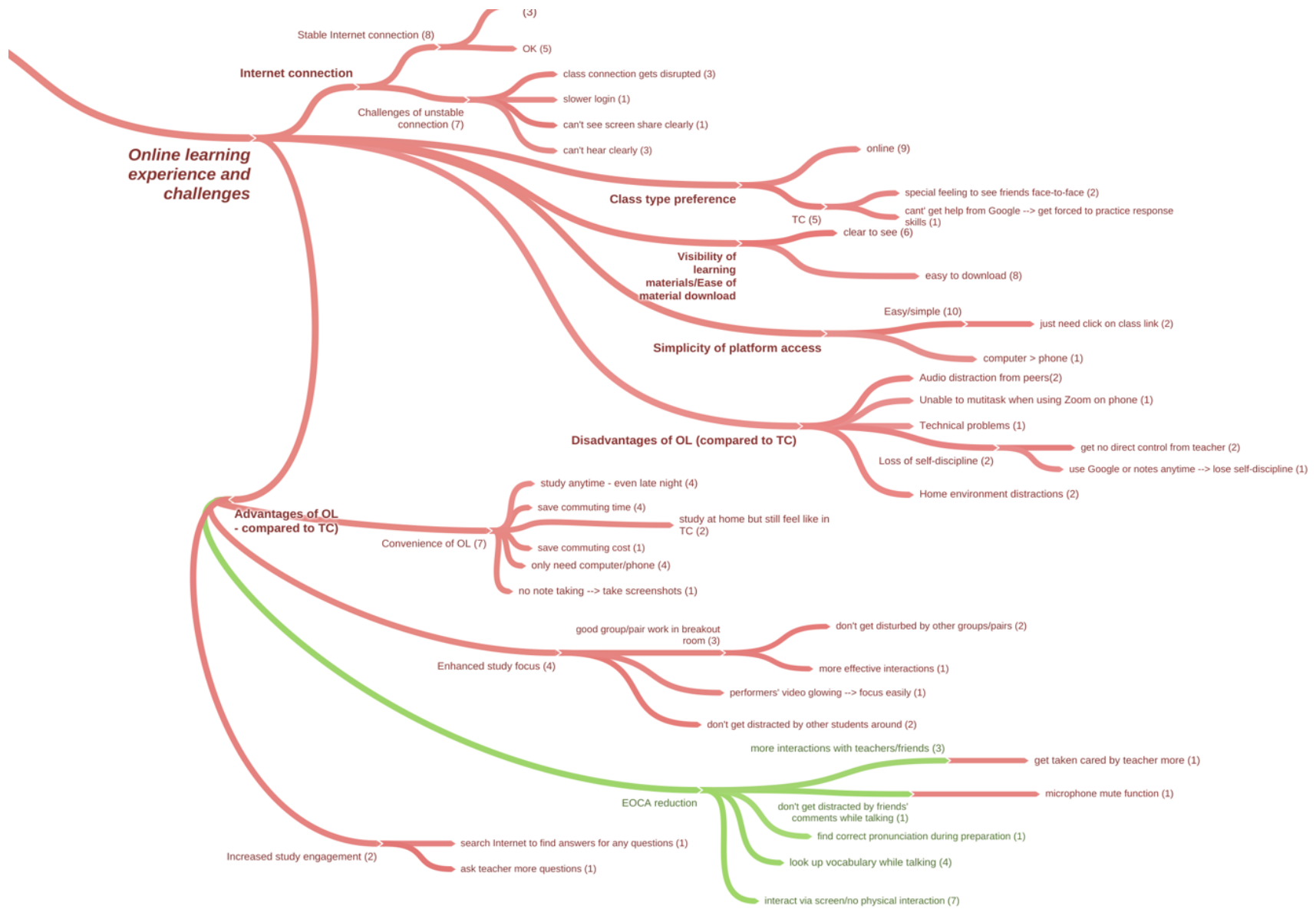
P: Ok, that's all. Thank you so much.

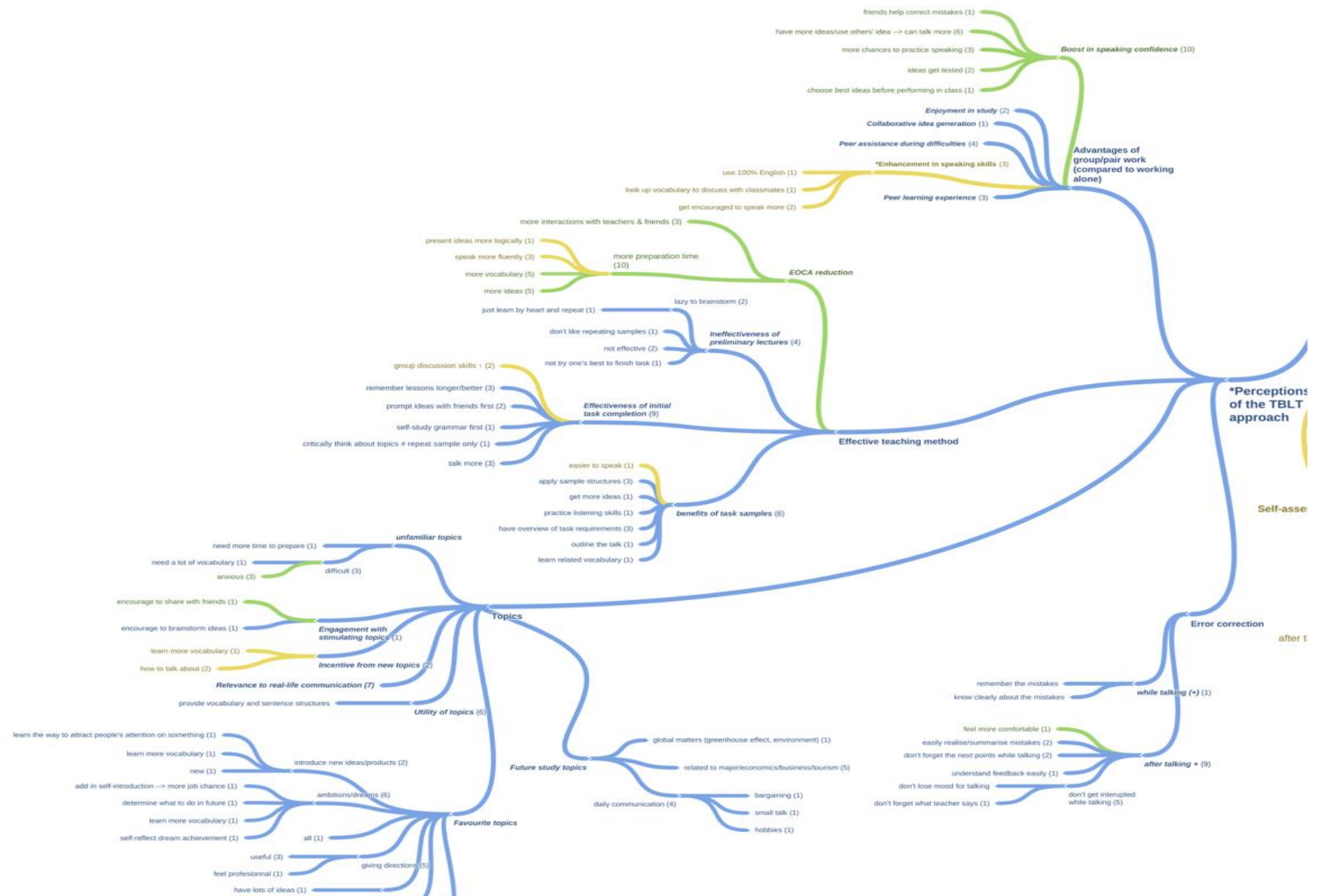
APPENDIX 10: Interview coding with visual mapping

(Details on following pages)









APPENDIX 11: Overarching themes, subthemes, codes and example lines from interview data

Overarching themes	Subthemes	Initial Codes	Example lines from data
Perceived causes and levels of EOCA	Sources of EOCA	Presence of physical interactions in traditional classroom (TC)	I always feel more anxious if I have to talk face-to-face with somebody in real life. (CA1885) I felt less anxious in the online course. Because I didn't have to face other classmates in person. (TH0193)
		Sense of inferiority	I saw that my friends were better than me, so I felt anxious. (CA1885) I was a bit anxious because there were some classmates who were better than me. I felt anxious when I studied with people whose level was higher than mine. (TR0694)
			I was afraid that I couldn't speak as well as they did and would affect them. (TR1210)
		Encounter with difficult/new topics	I feel anxious if the topic is too strange. (TH0193) When the topic was too difficult, we couldn't speak much since we didn't have ideas. (CA1512) I was anxious because of the difficult and unpredicted topic. I think it would be difficult to talk about this topic in Vietnamese, let alone English. (TH0301)

	With the topic that required a large range of vocabulary, I found it difficult. I felt anxious. (PH3110)
Absence of task preparation time	In traditional class, I feel more stressed because I have to answer the teacher's questions immediately without any preparation. (TH2008) I normally do not have a chance to prepare the talk in the traditional classroom. I have to speak out immediately and I always forget what I have said. It makes me feel anxious. (PH3110)
Fear of negative evaluation	I feel anxious when studying at school. Because I am in a big group with many students. There are many friends around me, they may judge me, so I feel stressed. (VA1663)
Limited speaking opportunities	In a normal class, I can't have much English interaction, so I am shy and uncomfortable to speak English. (MD2077) My first difficulty was my anxiety. I rarely spoke English before this course. (TR0694)
Negative self-perceived English proficiency	I wasn't sure whether I could understand others and had enough vocabulary to speak. So, I felt anxious before the first session began. (TH2583) My English level was too low. I didn't dare to speak English with other people. I was afraid that I couldn't speak English. I

Reasons of EOCA reduction in OL	Bad pronunciation	was afraid I couldn't answer any questions from the teacher or other classmates. (TR1210)
		My pronunciation was not good (VA1663)
		I personally knew that my pronunciation was not good. My partner didn't understand me and vice versa. (CA1885)
	Idea scarcity	For example, in the last topic about business ideas, I felt anxious because I didn't know what to say. (CA1512)
		I was a bit worried because I didn't have enough ideas to share (VA1663)
Reasons of EOCA reduction in OL	Vocabulary deficiency	I am a bit anxious because my vocabulary is limited. (TR0694)
		I had many ideas, but I didn't have enough vocabulary, so I couldn't share many opinions. (TH0301)
	Improved pronunciation	I got my pronunciation corrected during the course, so I was not as shy as the beginning. (PH3110)
		I could talk more, and my pronunciation improved more than before the course. (CA1885)
Reasons of EOCA reduction in OL	Improved grammar	I didn't make the mistakes that I often made before. For example, after the word "want", I have to add "to", I don't make this mistake anymore. I am more confident to talk than before already. (TR0694)

Vocabulary expansion	I felt less anxious because I had more vocabulary to talk about a topic. (CA1885)
Increased speaking opportunities	I felt less anxious in the online course. Because the number of students in the class was small. I mostly did tasks with another classmate, so I had more chances to speak, which made me feel more easily to talk than in the traditional classroom. (TR1210) This method (TBLT) gave me chances to interact more. At first, I thought we just studied in a big group. But actually, I was assigned into smaller groups in a breakout room, so I could focus on speaking more. (TH0193)
Availability of task preparation time	I felt more confident when I had time to prepare my talk. (TH0193) Although my vocabulary was not good enough, I felt less anxious when I could speak more fluently after I had time to prepare my talk. (CA1885)
Interest in TBLT approach	I was a bit anxious at first but then I felt fun when studying, so I didn't feel anxious. I got familiar with the learning method; I liked this method, so I didn't feel anxious anymore. (TR1210) Because we must use English all the time in this course, we had to look up vocabulary to discuss together and present our

	ideas. This way encourages me to speak more. I think it's good for improving my speaking skills. I felt more confident as well. (TH0301) This learning method was effective because when I read or listened to a sample, I could have an overview of what I would talk about and outline my talk. I know how to introduce and give reasons for my opinions. (TH0301)
Reliance on digital assistance	I can search for whatever I don't know via the Internet. (CA1512) Less anxious because there were many things that helped me speak more confidently such as using Google or dictionary while preparing the talk. (PH3110) In online class, we can use Google to look up a word or a sentence while talking. (CA1885)
Screen-based interactions/Absence of physical interaction	I felt less anxious in the online course because I didn't have to face other classmates in person. (TH0193) I felt more comfortable because I just sat in front of the screen, not in a physical classroom. Nobody could affect me even when I made mistakes. (VA1663)

EOCA self-assessment in OL	Adaptability to learning method	I think my anxiety level has changed in a positive way. I felt more comfortable. I was familiar with the learning method, so I didn't feel anxious anymore. (CA1512)
	Absence of peer commentary	In the online class, classmates' microphones were muted. In a traditional class, when I am wrong, I get corrected by my teacher and also get indirect comments from my classmates, which makes me worry. (CA1512)
	High pre-course anxiety level	Before I couldn't talk at all, and I was so scared to talk. (TR0694). I remember I was worried and anxious before the first lesson started. I got too much stress. (VA1663) My English speaking anxiety level was high before the course. I didn't dare to communicate. (TH0193)
	Gradual anxiety reduction during the course	I can see that during the course, even though I made mistakes, I still kept talking, then you corrected me. It has become a habit which helped me kept talking even when I spoke wrong. (CA1885) I felt more confident after the first three sessions. (TR0694) After a few sessions, I didn't feel anxious anymore. I didn't feel anxious when I made mistakes in speaking, and I knew I could fix my mistakes later. (VA1663)

Dealing with unfamiliar factors in OL	Post-course confidence boost	I feel more confident after the course finished. (TH0193)
	Initial discomfort with new classmates	At first, I felt a bit shy since they were too new to me, I didn't know how to start the discussion. But later on, I didn't feel anxious anymore. (TH0193) Sometimes I felt anxious when I didn't know their levels. I was afraid that I couldn't speak as well as they did and would affect them. But when I actually talked to them, they were all friendly and I felt more confident. (TR1210)
	Adaptability to different classmates	I saw others like me, we helped each other so I didn't feel anxious. (TH0301) I felt normal because I have to study with different students in school already. (TH2008) I didn't feel anxious because studying with different classmates gave me the adaptability to work with new people. It is not good to work with somebody that we are too familiar with. Plus, each person has a different way of thinking. (MD2077)
	Adaptability to different teachers	I don't think I would feel anxious to study with different teachers. Because my goal is to be able to speak English so it's ok to study with any teachers. (CA1512)

			If the teacher was as friendly as you, I think I wouldn't have any problem. I would feel normal. (MD2077)
EOCA in TC			Higher anxiety in TC
			Speaking discomfort in traditional setting
			Shyness in TC
Online learning	Advantages of OL -	Convenience of online learning	It was more convenient. I could save my time and cost from travelling to a class. (MD2077)

experience and challenges	compared to TC	Because when I studied alone in my room, I felt like I could focus more on studying than in a traditional classroom. People talk to each other or use phones in normal class, and I use the phone for my personal purposes such as chatting or playing games and I don't focus on the lesson. (MD2077) Enhanced study focus I could discuss with my friends without being disturbed by other people. We could discuss face to face without being disrupted by other groups' noise. (CA1512) I was assigned into smaller groups in a breakout room, so I could focus on speaking more. In a traditional class, even when I am in a small group, I am still distracted by other groups. (TH0193)
		Increased study engagement Studying online makes me more active in studying. I can search for whatever I don't know via the Internet. In the era of technology development, we can spend more time on doing something useful like studying online instead of wasting time on surfing useless websites and Facebook. (CA1512)
		EOCA reduction in OL I felt less anxious when studying online. Talking directly with others seems to be more difficult than talking via screen. (TH0301)

		I felt less anxious because there were many things that helped me speak more confidently such as using Google or dictionary while preparing my talk. (PH3110)
Disadvantages of OL – compared to TC	Audio distraction from peers	The noise from other classmates when they didn't turn their microphone off. (TH0310)
	Loss of self-discipline	It might make me lazier in studying. Because I could use Google when I needed it. When you checked the old vocabulary, I could glance at my notes. (TR1210) I was lazier since there was nobody to control my study. (CA1512)
	Home environment distractions	When we were working in a group, someone had to do something (since he/she studied at home), so we had to wait for him/her and lost our focus. (TH0301)
Learning materials delivery	Ease of material download	It was easy to download. I got the materials fast. (TH0310)
	Visibility of learning materials	The learning materials were clear and easy to see. (PH3110) They were clear as if they were on my screen, not screen sharing. (VA1663)
Platform install & login	Simplicity of platform access	It was very simple. Just need 1-2 clicks of mouse to access the class. (VA1663)

	Internet connection	Stable Internet connection	I didn't have any difficulties when the Internet connection was good. (MD2077)
			Sometimes the Internet connection was unstable so I couldn't hear clearly. (CA1885)
		Challenges of unstable connection	My Internet connection was unstable, sometimes I got disrupted while studying. Due to my Internet problem, sometimes I couldn't hear the listening recordings clearly enough. (CA1512)
Perceptions of the TBLT approach	Effective teaching method	Effectiveness of initial task completion	I prefer doing the task myself first, then the teacher gave me feedback because I could prompt ideas myself or with my friends and I could try to find the right grammar to talk first. (PH3110) I liked the learning method that I could discuss the topic first. Because when I discussed with others, I knew what I needed to say and had more ideas to speak in front of the class and teacher later. (TR0694)
		Ineffectiveness of preliminary lectures	If the teacher presents the lecture first, I will be lazy to brainstorm and I will not try my best to do the task. (PH3110)
		Benefits of task samples	This learning method was effective because when I read or listened to a sample, I could have an overview of what I would

		talk about and outline my talk. I knew how to introduce and give reasons for my opinions. (TH0301) Before I performed my own talk, I had a sample to have an overview of what I needed to present, and I could apply the sample structure to my talk. (CA1512)
EOCA reduction		It gave me confidence to some extent. When I saw the sample, I knew what I needed to do. I could copy the good and interesting sentence structures in the sample. I felt more professional and more confident talking to others. (VA1663) Before watching or listening to the samples, I had had few ideas to talk about, and my talk hadn't been fluent. After seeing the samples, I found it easier to speak and my speaking skills were improved. This obviously helped me speak more fluently and I felt less anxious to speak. (TR1210)
Advantages of group/pair work (compared to working alone)	Boost in speaking confidence	I think working in groups or pairs was better for me because I could creatively produce better ideas when interacting with my friends. I think I was more confident than when I worked alone. (MD2077)
	Enjoyment in study	Working in groups was more fun. I had more ideas after the discussions and my friends also gave me more vocabulary. (TH0193)

	I liked working in pairs or a group. Because we must use English all the time in this course, we had to look up vocabulary to discuss together and present our ideas. This way encouraged me to speak more. (TH0301)
Collaborative idea generation	I felt more confident because I could know my friends' ideas. We could choose the best ideas to speak in front of the class. (TH2008) I think working in groups or pairs was better for me because I could creatively produce better ideas when interacting with my friends. (MD2077)
Peer assistance during difficulties	My friends helped me when I ran out of ideas and my talk could be much longer and more detailed. (VA1663) After the discussion, I felt less anxious because I could gain more knowledge or vocabulary to speak to the teacher. We helped each other when we worked in groups or pairs. Sometimes, there was something I couldn't come up with, but others could, so I could use their ideas. (TR0694)
Peer learning experience	I could exchange ideas with my friends. Sometimes they had better ideas than mine, and I could learn from their ideas. (PH3110)

Topics	Enhancement in speaking skills	When I could discuss in groups or pairs before presenting in the class, I felt more confident and had more ideas to share. Since I could discuss the task with my friends, I spoke more fluently in front of the class. (TR1210) When studying, I could be assigned to a private virtual room to speak English with my classmates. This, firstly, helped me improve my speaking skills. (CA1512)
	Engagement with stimulating topics	The topics were interesting, easy to talk about and also gave me more knowledge. For example, with the topic “café makeover”, if I didn’t like anything about a coffee shop, I knew how to discuss in English with my friends what I wanted to change. Or the topic about product or idea introduction, I knew how to introduce a new idea or a new product in English. (PH3110)
	Incentive from new topics	Although it was hard and it was a new topic to me, I learnt a lot of new vocabulary and the way to present my creative idea. (TR0694) These topics were comprehensive and could provide a lot of new sentence structures and vocabulary. (TH0193)
	Relevance to real-life communication	These topics were practical. For example, the topics about giving directions, discussing the café makeover, my interests

	and also my future plan. We talk about these topics daily. (VA1663) The topics were close to my life. (TR0694)
Utility of topics/ Preference for certain topics	I like the topic about asking for and giving directions because I think it is useful. The topics are quite familiar to my real life. (MD2077) These topics helped me improve my vocabulary in use because they were quite useful to me. (TH0301) I liked the topic about giving directions because it was the most useful to me. (TH2008) I liked talking about my future plan. Because I can add this into the introduction about myself when I meet a foreigner. This is really good. Maybe they will give me a job or introduce me to their friends who may help me with my future plan. (VA1663)
Future study topics	I like to study topics related to business, trading and how to introduce products to customers. (CA1885) About daily life, for example asking for prices, bargaining, or having small talk with people. (VA1663)

APPENDIX 12: Sheffield Hallam Ethical Approval

Study 1: Large-scale study on EOCA

23/08/2021

Sheffield Hallam University Mail - Converis - Ethics Review - Approval



PHUONG NGUYEN

Information redacted

Converis - Ethics Review - Approval

Information redacted

20 December 2018 at 12:32

Dear Phuong Thi Dieu

Title of Ethics Review: [Investigating Vietnamese Students' English Language Anxiety](#)

Ethics Review ID: **Information redacted**

The University has reviewed your ethics application named above and can confirm that the project has been approved.

You are expected to deliver the project in accordance with the University's research ethics and integrity policies and procedures: <https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice>.

As the Principal Investigator you are responsible for monitoring the project on an ongoing basis and ensuring that the approved documentation is used. The project may be audited by the University during or after its lifetime.

Should any changes to the delivery of the project be required, you are required to submit an amendment for review.

Wishing you success you with your study

Kind regards,
Ethics Research Support

*** This is an automatically generated email, please do not reply ***

QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

TITLE OF PROJECT

Investigating Vietnamese Students' English Language Anxiety

Introduction

I would like to invite you to take part in my PhD research project. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and ask questions about anything you do not understand. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

What is the purpose of research?

This study aims to investigate the English language anxiety experienced by Vietnamese university learners in English language classes. I am collecting data on a general sample of Vietnamese students to examine levels of English language anxiety, in relation to general anxiety.

Why have you asked me to take part?

You are invited to take part in this study because you meet the research sample selection criteria:

- You are a student from University of Economics, The University of Da Nang
- Your level of English is at pre-intermediate.
- You have been learning English at school for more than 7 years before attending university.
- At the university you have to learn 20% of specialised business modules in English.

Do I have to take part?

No - you will decide if you want to take part. You can decide not to answer particular questions on the questionnaires. There will be no adverse consequences in terms of your legal rights and your education, and there will be no impact on your assessment or class of degree, if you decide not to participate in the study.

What will I be required to do?

If you agree to take part, you will be invited to answer a questionnaire about your experience on foreign language anxiety in your English language classes. This questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You will not be asked to provide your name and instead will use a unique ID code. This code will allow me to identify your data, should you want to withdraw from the study. It will also allow me to identify your data, should you wish to take part in the next phase of my PhD research.

Where will this take place?

If you decide to take part in the project, I will give you the questionnaire to answer in your classroom.

How often will I have to take part, and for how long?

It will take you about 15 minutes to finish the questionnaire.

Are there any possible risks or disadvantaged in taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks or disadvantages to your participation. Data will be held in complete confidentiality and I will follow ethical and legal practice in relation to all study procedures. You will not give me your real name.

How do I give my consent for participation?

Your consent will be taken by you handing in your completed questionnaire, in the envelope provided.

Can I withdraw from the study?

You can withdraw from the study up to 2 weeks after taking part. You should contact me using the details below. You do not have to give a reason for withdrawal.

Will anyone be able to connect me with what is recorded and reported?

No one will be able to identify you or connect you with what is recorded and reported. You will not give your name on the questionnaire. I will only use your unique code as your identity.

The data provided will be stored securely in the Sheffield Hallam University Research Store. You will not be identified in any reports or publications resulting from this study.

Who will be responsible for all of the information when this study is over?

I will be responsible for all of the information when this study is over.

Who will have access to it?

Only I will have access to the data.

What will happen to the information when this study is over?

Your information will not be kept for longer than is necessary and is usually kept in an anonymised format in Sheffield Hallam University research data archive. Research data are stored securely for at least 10 years following their last access.

How will you use what you find out?

The findings of the project will be used for my thesis report, thesis viva presentation, academic conferences and publications.

How can I find out about the results of the study?

Once all data is collected and analysed, a summary of the study and the findings will be made available. For a copy of this summary, please contact me using the details below. Please note that the results will only be analysed for the group as a whole and the scores of individuals will not be made available

The next phase of my PhD research

The next phase of my PhD study will investigate the effectiveness of an online course using task-based language teaching approach in reducing Vietnamese university students' anxiety in English language classes and improving their oral communication skills. You can decide to participate in the online course or just stop at the questionnaire stage. If you want to get to know more about or participate in the online course, please contact me via email, using your unique code you create for the questionnaire. I will send you the online course participant information sheet.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Sheet.

Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions about the project.

Researcher Details:

Nguyen Thi Dieu Phuong

Sheffield Hallam University

Email: Information redacted

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if: • you have a query about how your data is used by the University • you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately) • you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data Information redacted Postal address: Information redacted	You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Ann Macaskill) if: • you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated Information redacted
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Study 2: Online TBLT course implementation

23/08/2021

Sheffield Hallam University Mail - Converis - Ethics Review - Approval



PHUONG NGUYEN

Information redacted

Converis - Ethics Review - Approval

Information redacted

10 April 2019 at 15:32

Dear Phuong Thi Dieu

Title of Ethics Review: [Investigating Vietnamese Students' English Language Anxiety and Oral Communication Skills: An Online Course](#)

Ethics Review ID: Information redacted

The University has reviewed your ethics application named above and can confirm that the project has been approved.

You are expected to deliver the project in accordance with the University's research ethics and integrity policies and procedures: <https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice>.

As the Principal Investigator you are responsible for monitoring the project on an ongoing basis and ensuring that the approved documentation is used. The project may be audited by the University during or after its lifetime.

Should any changes to the delivery of the project be required, you are required to submit an amendment for review.

Wishing you success you with your study

Kind regards,
Ethics Research Support

*** This is an automatically generated email, please do not reply ***

You can access Converis by clicking on this link <https://shu.converis.clarivate.com/converis/secure/login>

ONLINE COURSE PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

TITLE OF PROJECT

Investigating Vietnamese Students' English Language Anxiety and Oral Communication Skills: An Online Course

Introduction

I would like to invite you to take part in my PhD research project. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and ask questions about anything you do not understand.

What is the purpose of research?

This study aims to investigate the English language anxiety experienced by Vietnamese university learners in English language classes. In addition, the effectiveness of an online course using a task-based language teaching approach in reducing students' anxiety and enhancing their English oral communication skills will be studied.

Why have you asked me to take part?

You are invited to take part in this study because you meet the research sample selection criteria:

- You are a student from University of Economics, The University of Da Nang
- Your level of English is at pre-intermediate.
- You have been learning English at school for more than 7 years before attending university.
- At the university you have to study 20% of specialised business modules in English.

Do I have to take part?

No - you will decide if you want to take part. You can also withdraw at any time without giving a reason, or you can decide not to answer particular questionnaire or interview questions. There will be no adverse consequences in terms of your legal rights and your education, and there will be no impact on your assessment or class of degree if you decide not to participate in the study.

What will I be required to do?

If you agree to take part, I will then ask you to sign a consent form. You will be randomly invited to participate in the pilot online course or official course. In the pilot course, you will study with the same group of participants. In the official course, you will study with different groups of participants.

All the activities below are required if you participate in the project.

If you are invited to participate in the pilot course, you will be asked to:

- attend two one-hour online sessions per week for four weeks with three more participants and me as your instructor. This will take place in a virtual classroom that you can access by using your own computer. In this course, you will be asked to do some language tasks with other participants in English. Your discussions during the session will be video recorded with your consent.
- answer a mini questionnaire about your experience on anxiety in each online session at the beginning and at the end of the session.
- answer a post-course questionnaire at the end of the online course.
- attend an online interview with me. I will ask you some questions related to your experience on foreign language anxiety and the online course. You will answer the interview questions in Vietnamese. The interviews will be audio-recorded with your permission.

If you are invited to participate in the official course, you will be asked to:

- answer a pre-course questionnaire
- attend a one-hour online session per week for eight weeks with different participants and me as your instructor. This will take place in a virtual classroom that you can access by using your own computer. In this course, you will be asked to do some language tasks with other participants in English. Your discussions during the session will be video recorded with your consent.
- answer a mini questionnaire about your experience on foreign language anxiety in each online session at the beginning and at the end of the session.
- answer a post-course questionnaire at the end of the online course.
- attend an online interview with me. I will ask you some questions related to your experience on foreign language anxiety and the online course. You will answer the interview questions in Vietnamese. The interviews will be audio-recorded with your permission.
- answer the post-course questionnaire again in 8 weeks after the course finishes so that I can compare your foreign language anxiety level when you are attending the online course and when you are not.

Where will this take place?

You will participate in the project via online tools: Zoom platform for online course attendance and interview, and Google Forms for online survey.

How often will I have to take part, and for how long?

It will take you about 15 minutes to finish the pre-course and post-course questionnaire.

The mini questionnaire will take about 2 minutes.

In terms of the online course, you will attend two online sessions per week for 4 weeks if you participate in the pilot course. If you participate in the official course, you will attend one online session per week for 8 weeks. Each session will last for one hour.

The interview will last for about 20 minutes.

Are there any possible risks or disadvantages in taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks or disadvantages to your participation. Data will be held in complete confidentiality and I will follow ethical and legal practice in relation to all study procedures. All your identity and video recordings will be kept confidentially and will not appear anywhere including in my thesis. Data will be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 so that unauthorised individuals will not have access to them.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By participating in the online course, you will have the chance to practise English language use in some real-life situations with other people. This may help you overcome your foreign language anxiety and improve your oral communication skills.

When will I have the opportunity to discuss my participation?

You can contact me at any time via email or Skype to discuss your participation.

How do I give my consent for participation?

Your consent will be taken by you signing and handing in your consent form.

Can I withdraw from the study?

You can withdraw from the online course at any time during the course without giving a reason. You can also request for your data to be withdrawn 2 weeks after the final online session without giving a reason and without prejudice.

If you withdraw from the study this will mean the following for your participation and data:

All identifiable data collected will be withdrawn from the study. Data which is not identifiable to the researcher may be retained (because I cannot trace the information back to you). No further data would be collected or any other research procedures would be carried out with or in relation to you.

Will anyone be able to connect me with what is recorded and reported?

No one will be able to identify you or connect you with what is recorded and reported. You will not give your name on the questionnaires, only your ID code. During the online course, you will use a pseudonym that you choose for yourself instead of your real name. The video-recordings will be for me to distinguish who is talking only. Your image will not appear anywhere including my thesis reports. In the interview with me, we will use your ID code only. I will only use your unique code as your identity.

The data you provide will be anonymised and your personal data will be stored securely in the Sheffield Hallam University Research Store. You will not be identified in any reports or publications resulting from this study.

Who will be responsible for all of the information when this study is over?

I will be responsible for all of the information when this study is over.

Who will have access to it?

Only I will have access to the data.

What will happen to the information when this study is over?

Your information will not be kept for longer than it is necessary and is usually kept in an anonymised format in Sheffield Hallam University research data archive. Research data are stored securely for at least 10 years following their last access and project data.

How will you use what you find out?

The findings of the project will be used for my thesis report, thesis viva presentation, academic conferences and publications.

How long is the whole study likely to last?

The whole study will likely last for 3 years until 2021.

How can I find out about the results of the study?

Once all data is collected and analysed, a summary of the study and the findings will be made available. For a copy of this summary, please contact me using the details below. Please note that the results will only be analysed for the group as a whole and the scores of individuals will not be made available

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Sheet.

Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions about the project.

Researcher Details:

Nguyen Thi Dieu Phuong

Sheffield Hallam University

Information redacted

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if: • you have a query about how your data is used by the University • you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately) • you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data Information redacted Postal address: Information redacted	You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Ann Macaskill) if: • you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated Information redacted
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PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY:

**Investigating Vietnamese Students' English Language Anxiety and Oral
Communication Skills: An Online Course**

- | | YES | NO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read the Participant Information Sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study within the time limits outlined in the Participant Information Sheet, without giving a reason for my withdrawal or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to my study. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. I agree to be video recorded in the online course and to be audio recorded in the interview under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. I consent to the information collected for the purposes of this research study, once anonymised (so that I cannot be identified), to be used for any other research purposes. | ☐ | ☐ |

Participant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Participant's Name (Printed): _____

Contact details: _____

Researcher's Name (Printed): NGUYEN THI DIEU PHUONG

Researcher's Signature: _____

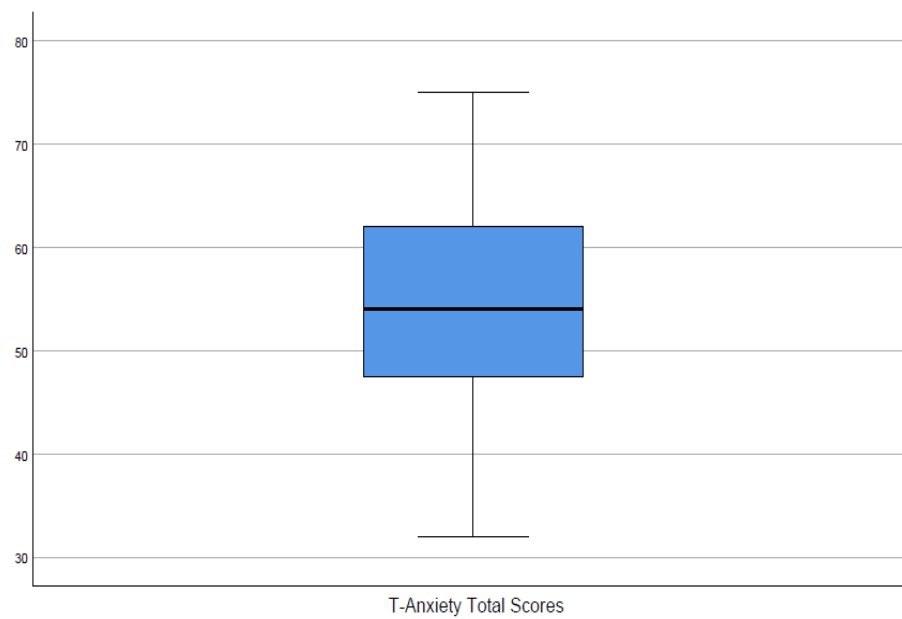
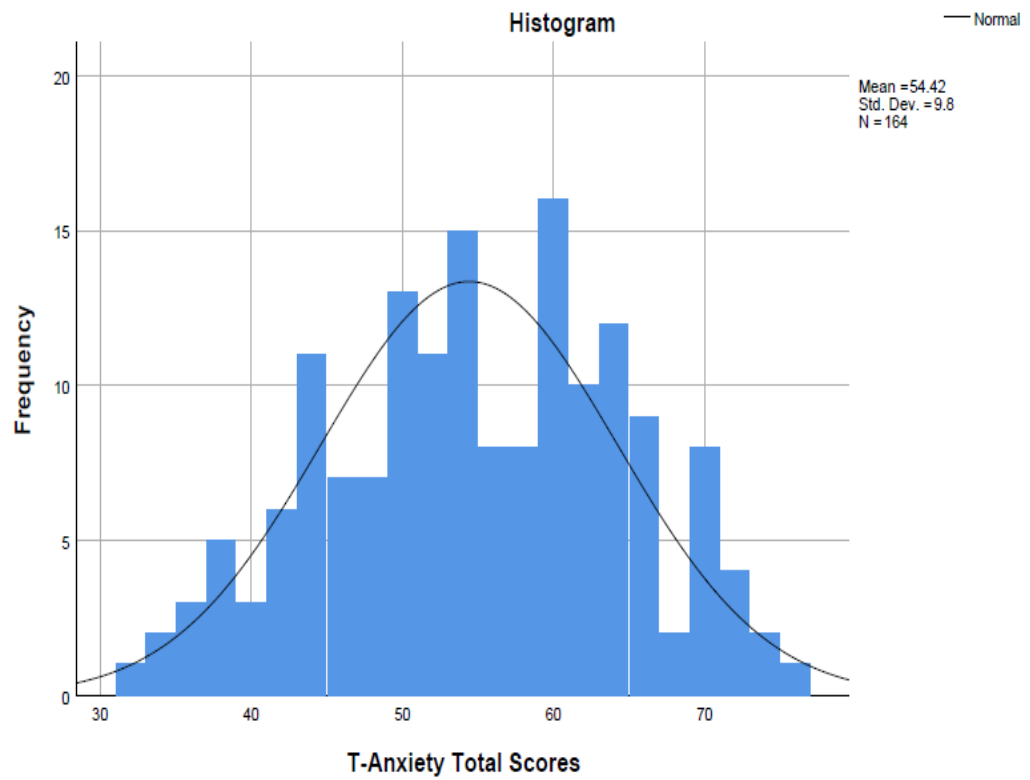
Researcher's contact details:
Nguyen Thi Dieu Phuong

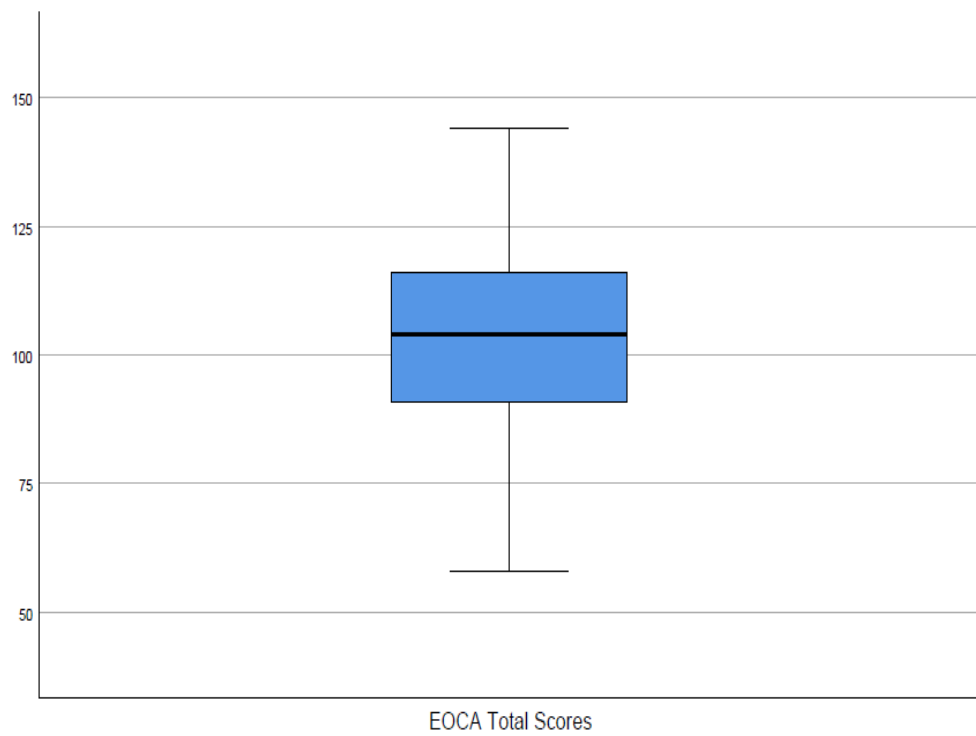
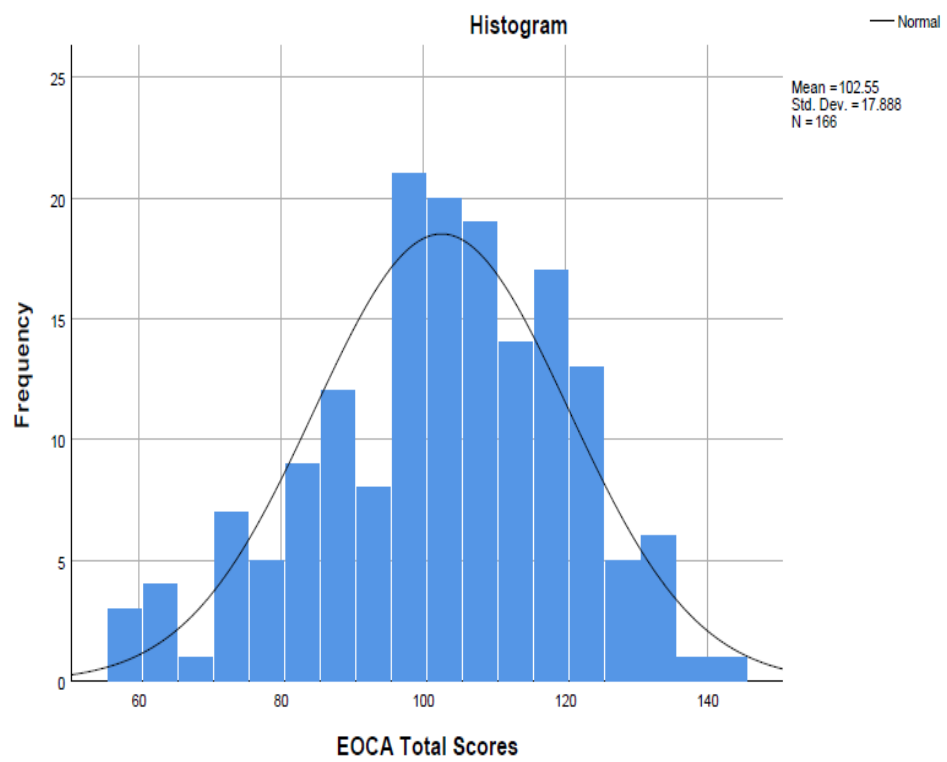
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Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

APPENDIX 13: Study 1 - Normal distribution of T-Anxiety and EOCA

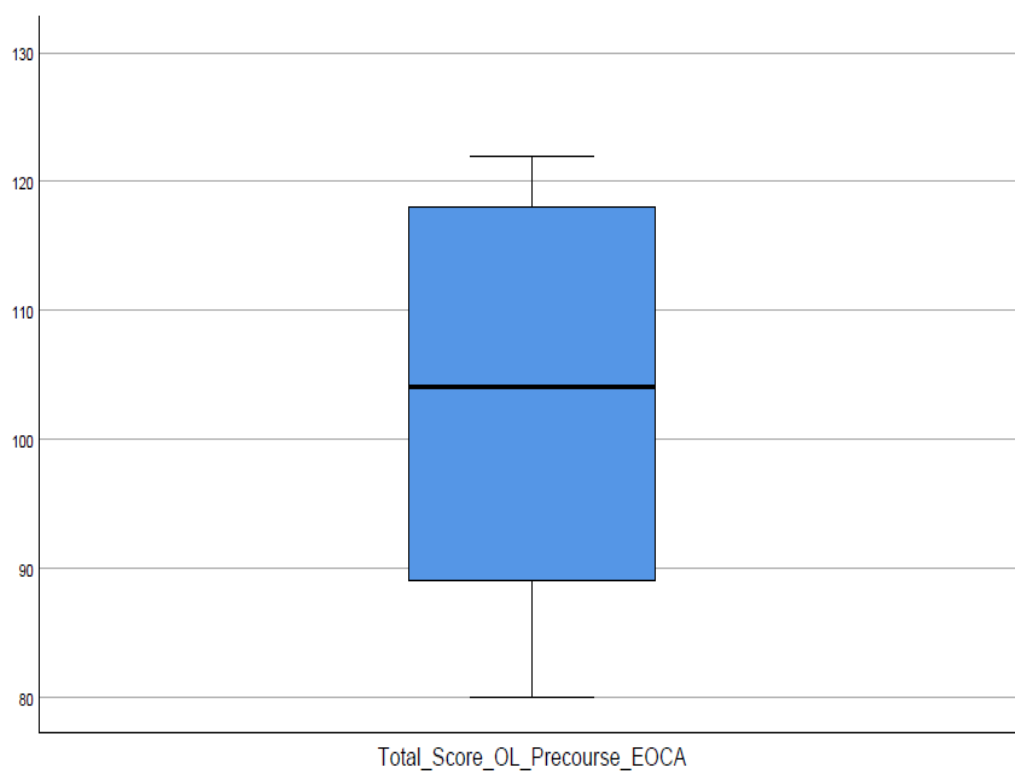
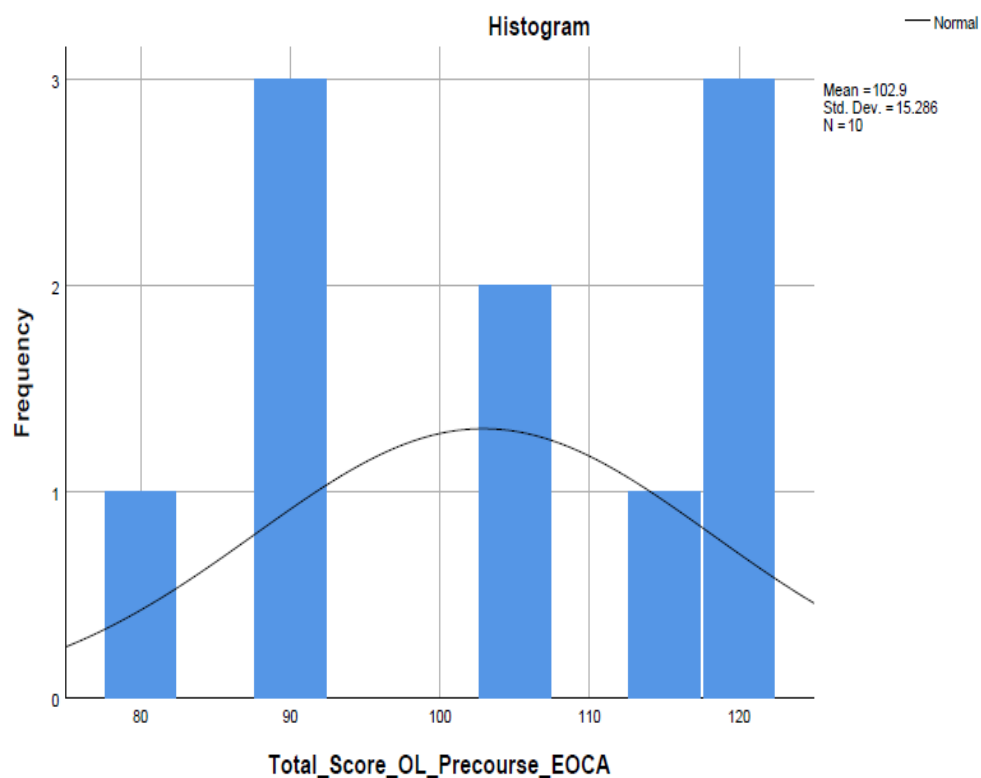
total scores



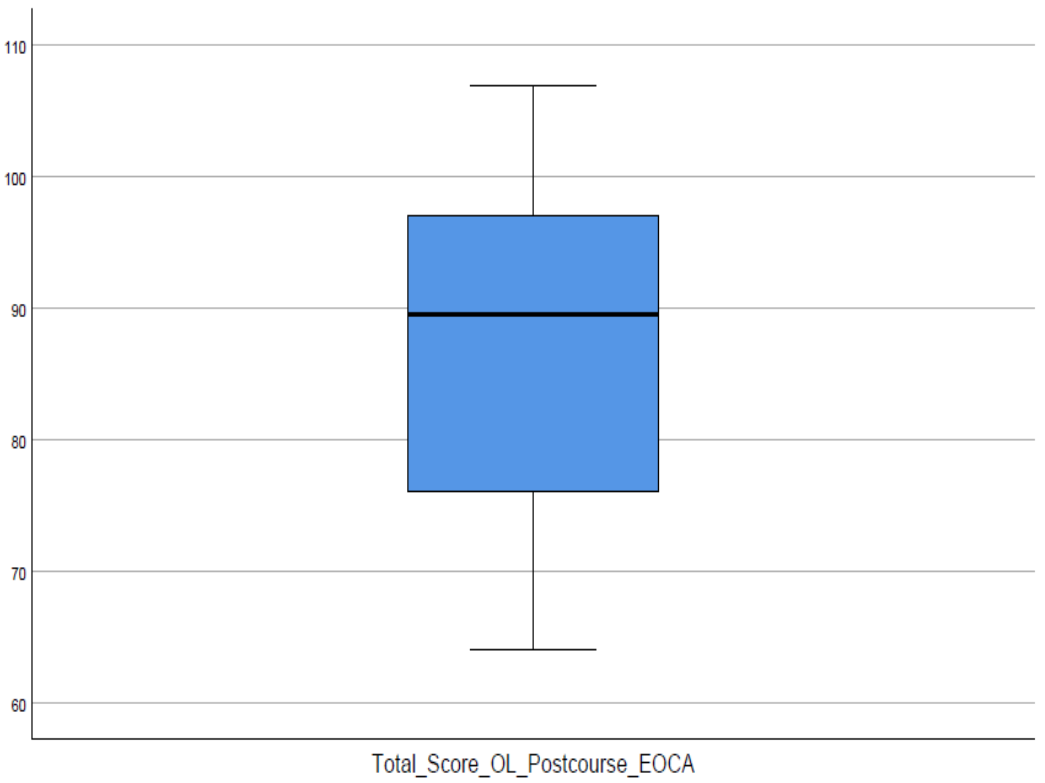
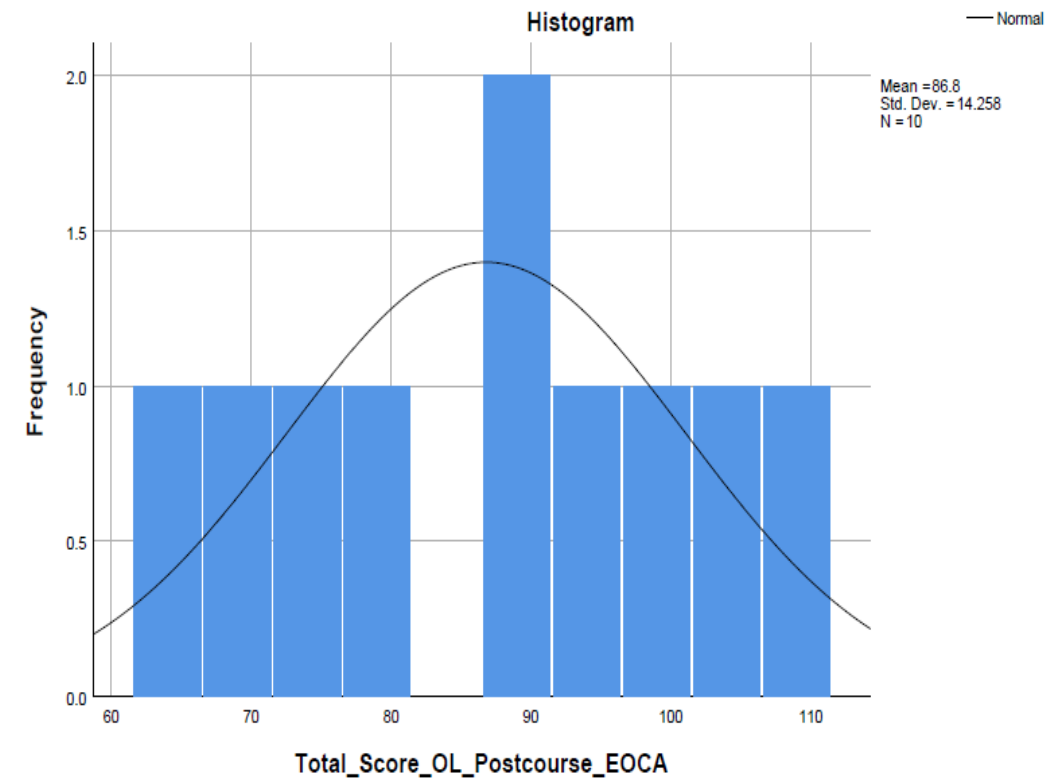


APPENDIX 14: Study 2 - Non-normal distribution of data

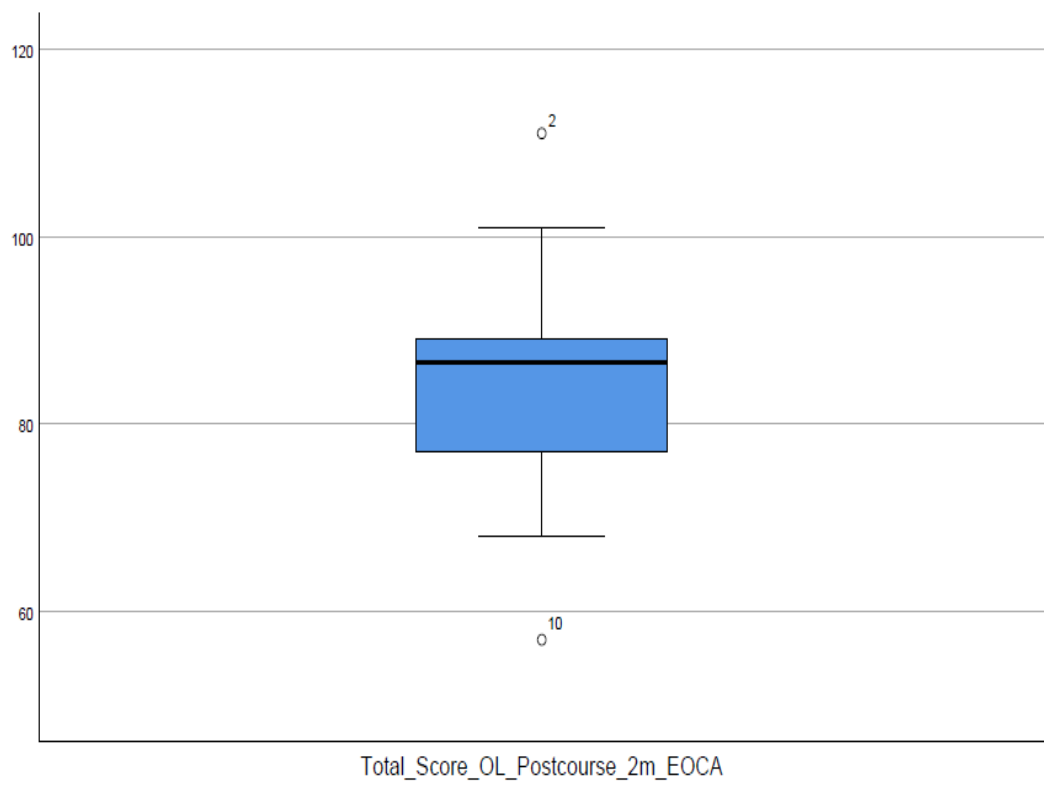
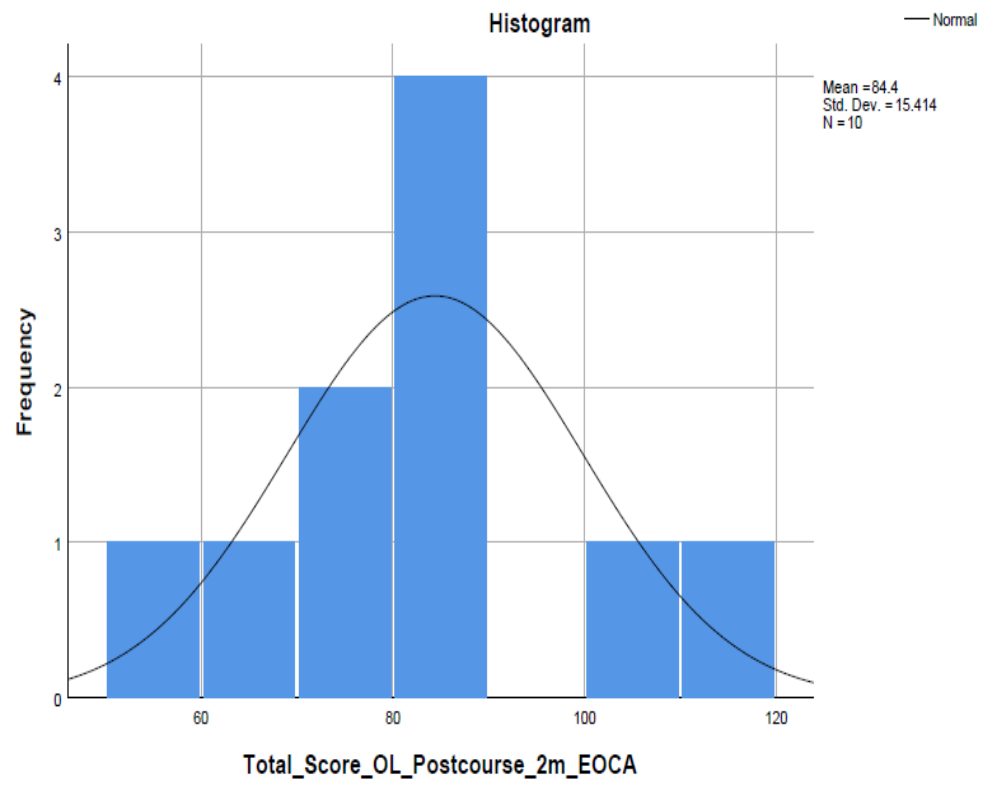
Pre-course EOCA total scores of the online course students



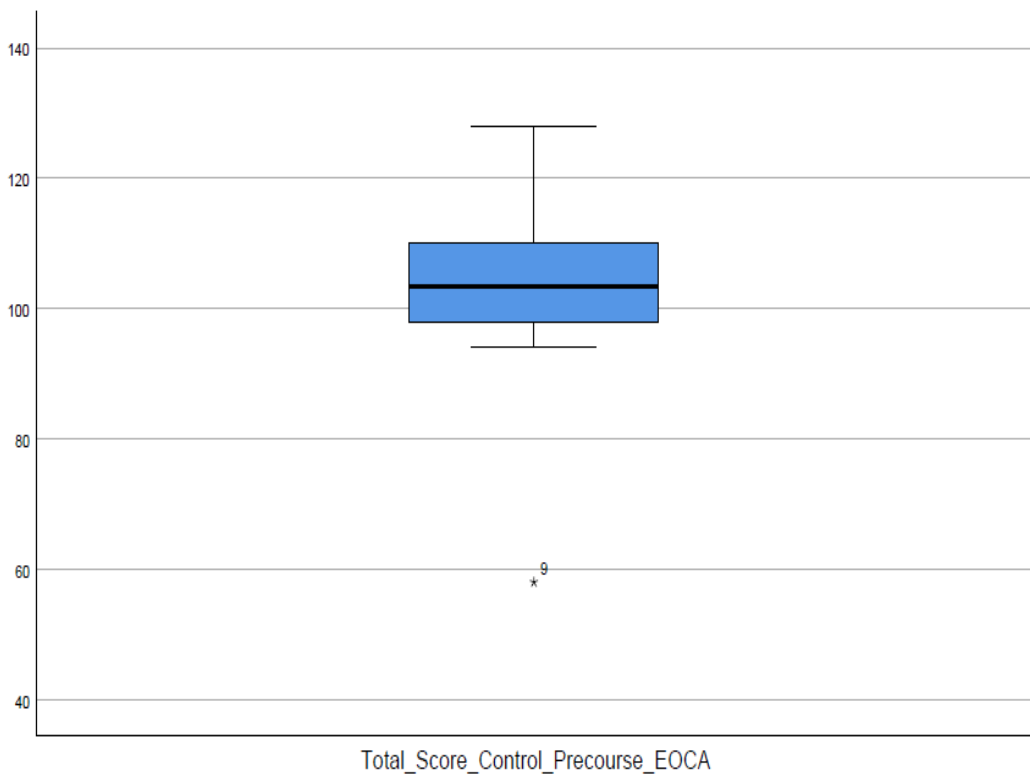
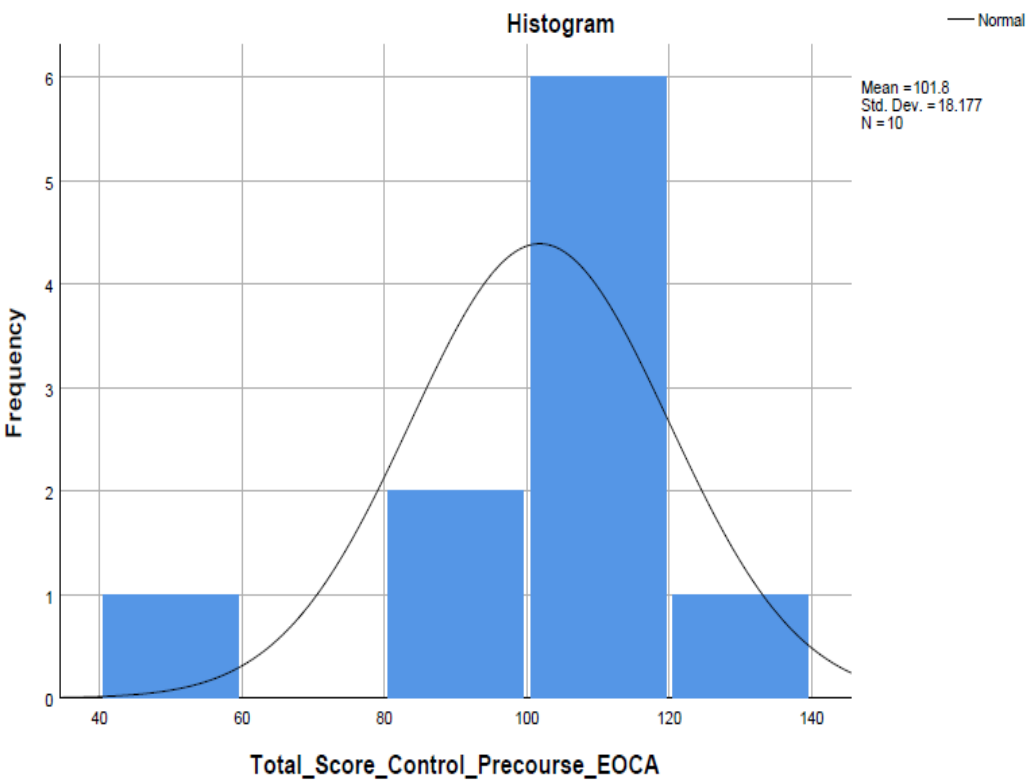
Post-course EOCA total scores of the online course students



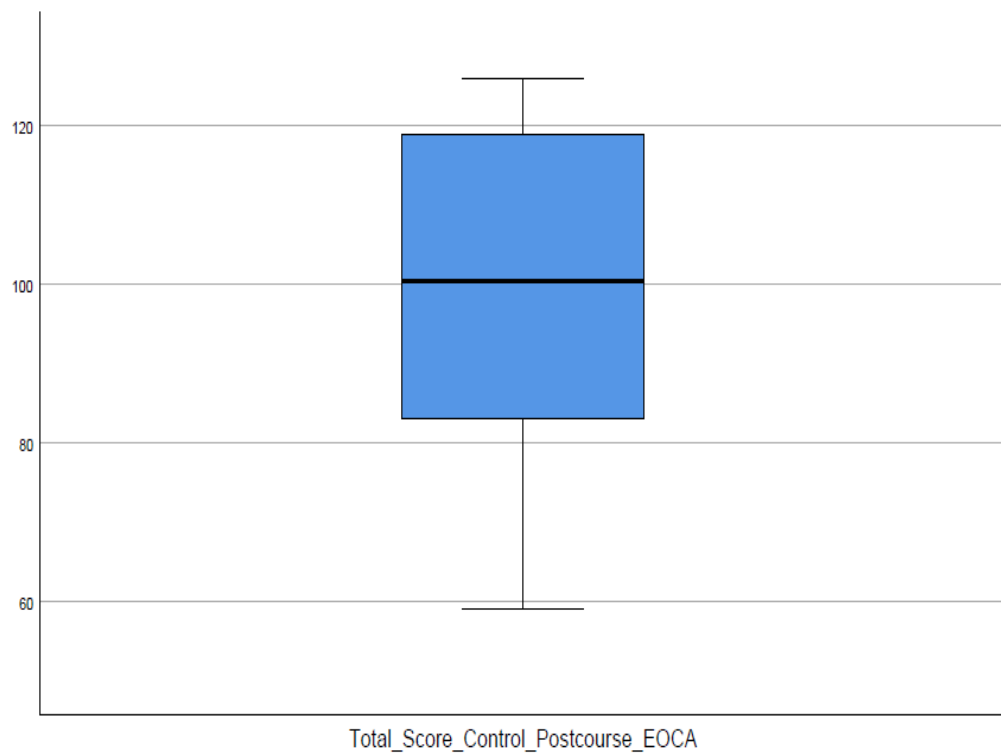
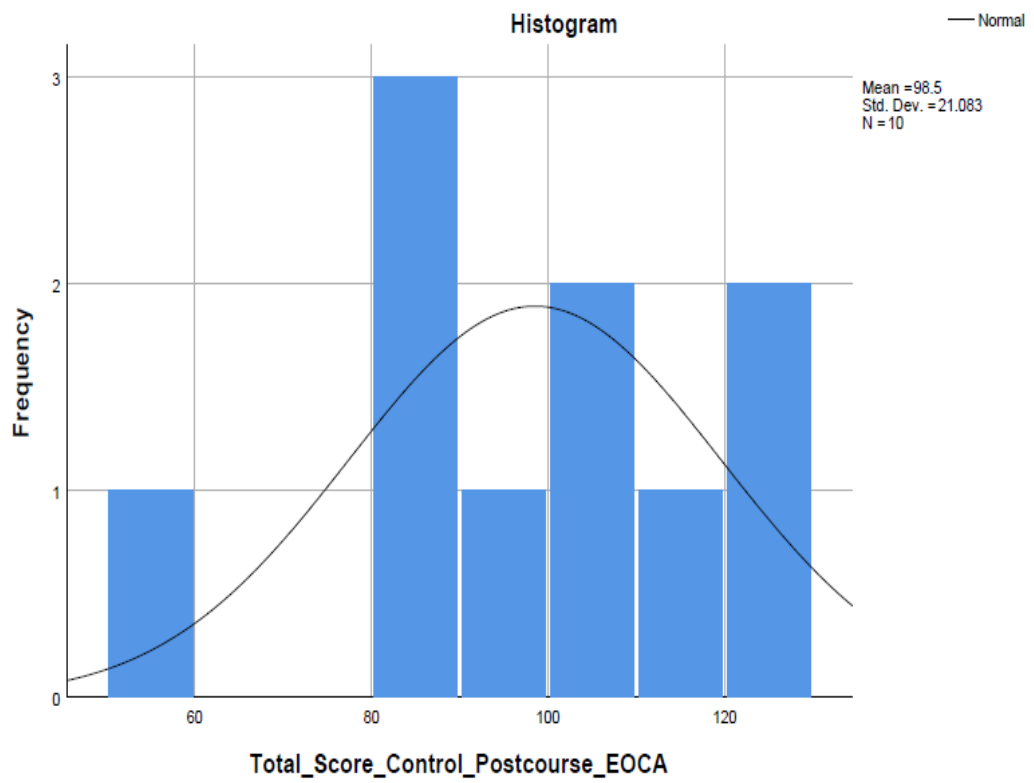
2mo post-course EOCA total scores of the online course students



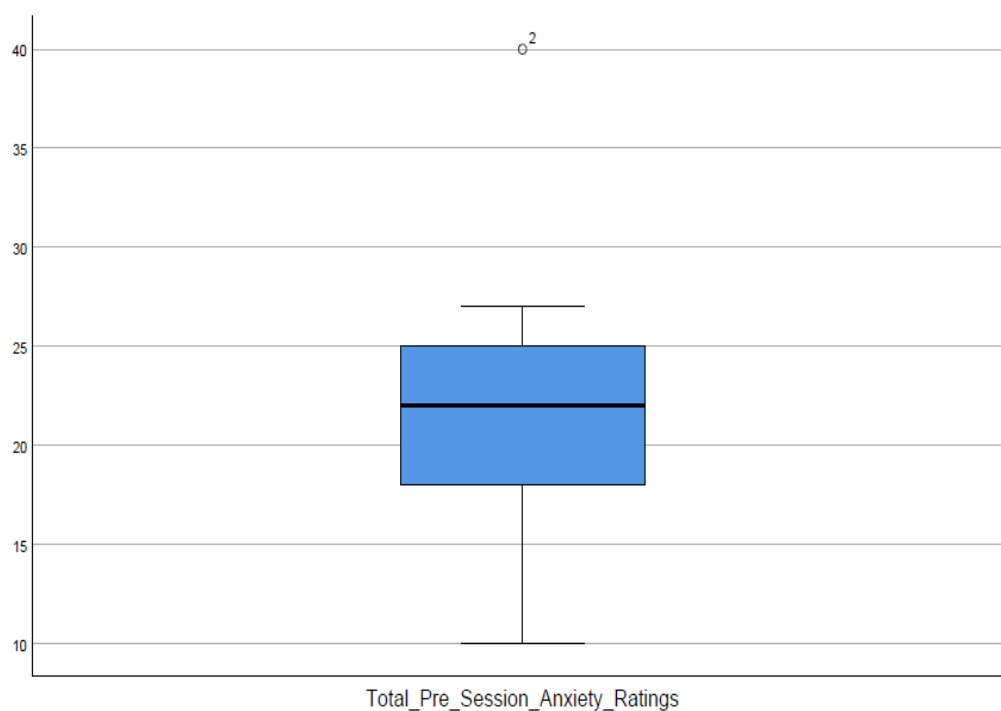
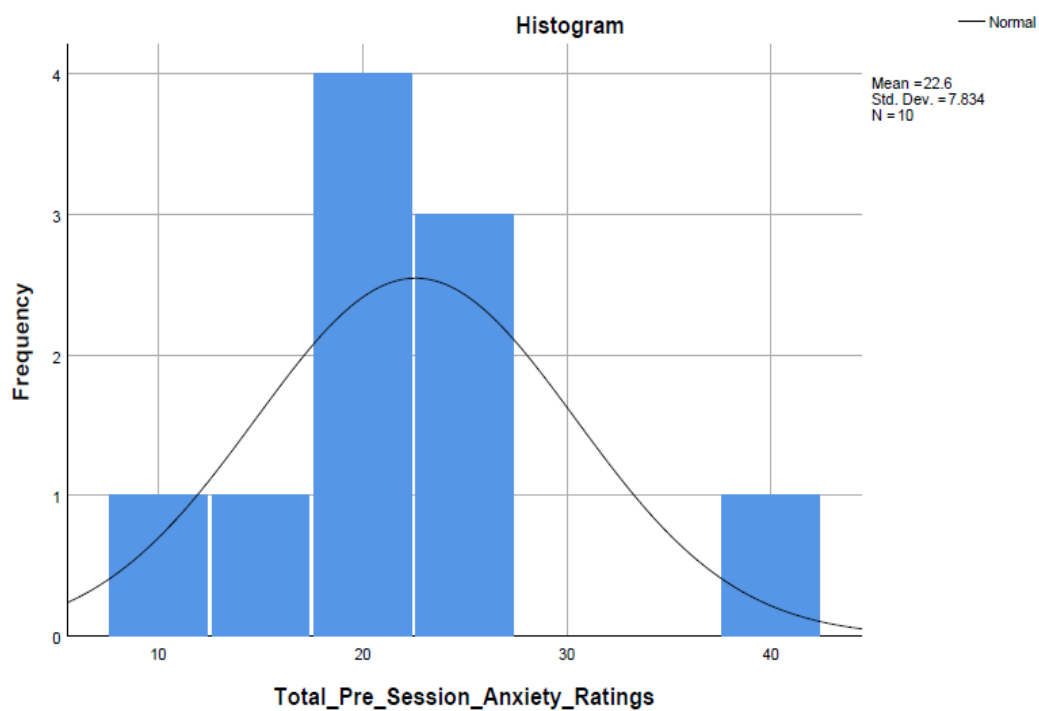
Pre-course EOCA total scores of the comparison (non TBLT) students

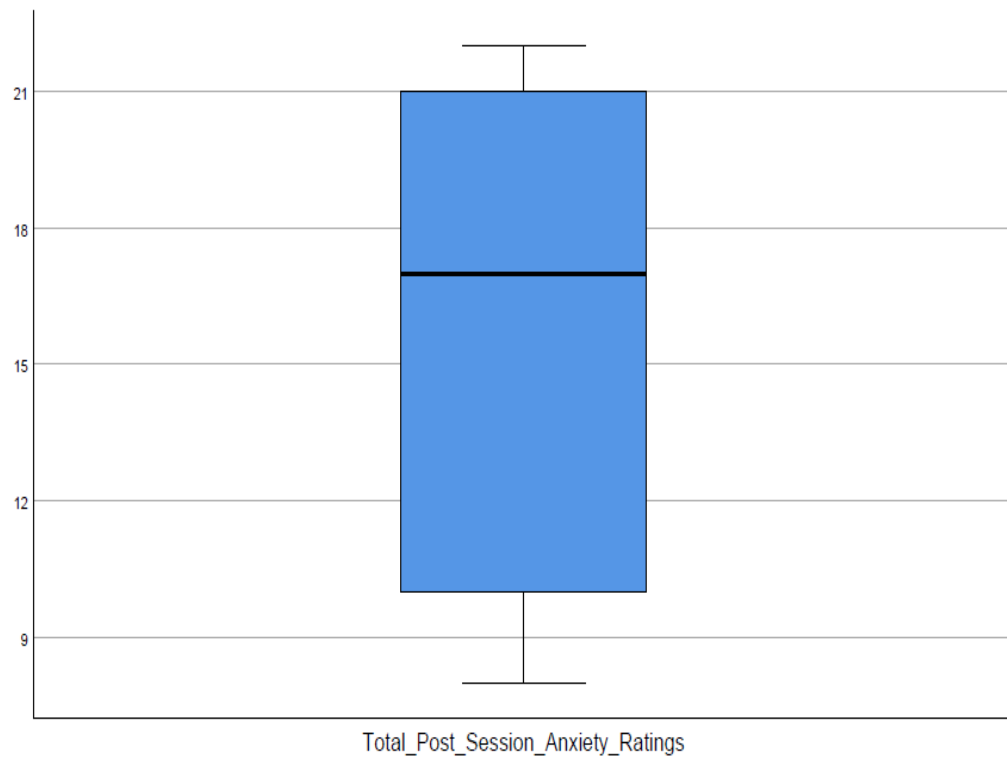
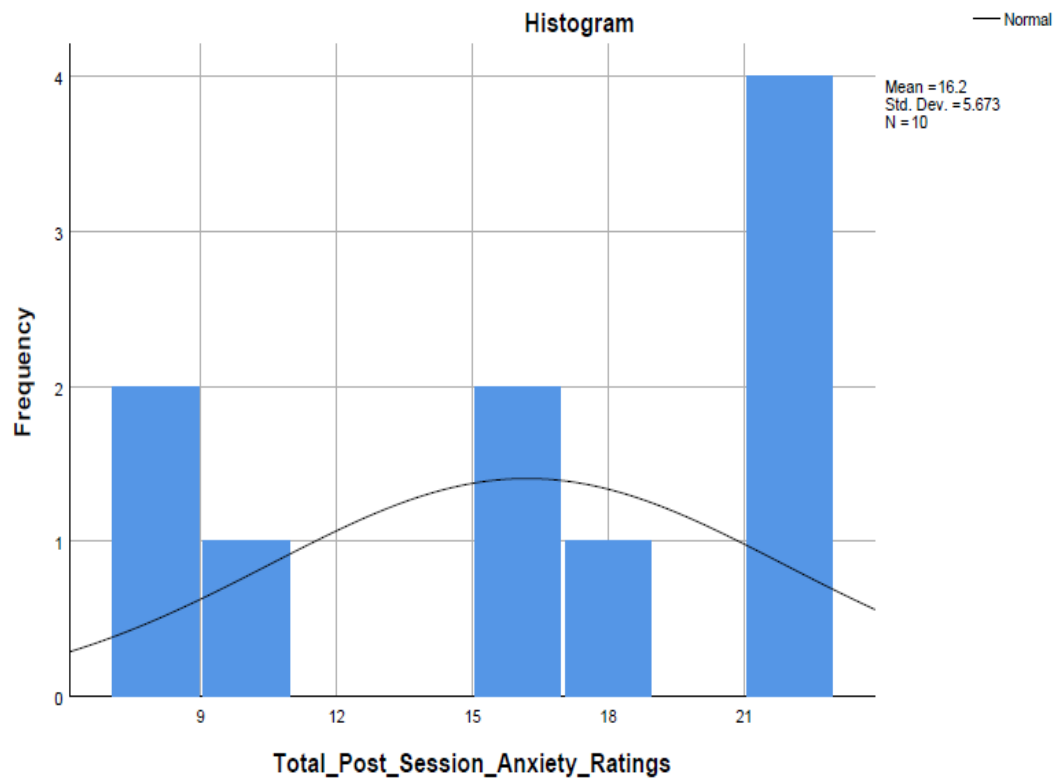


Post-course EOCA total scores of the comparison (non TBLT) students

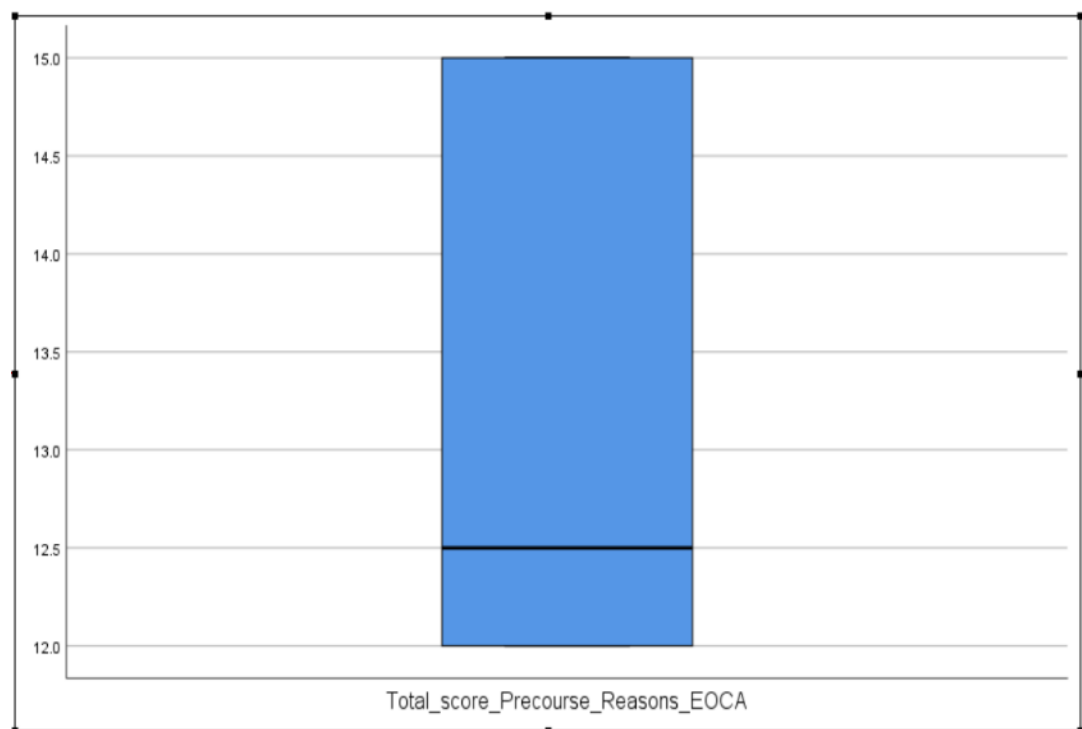
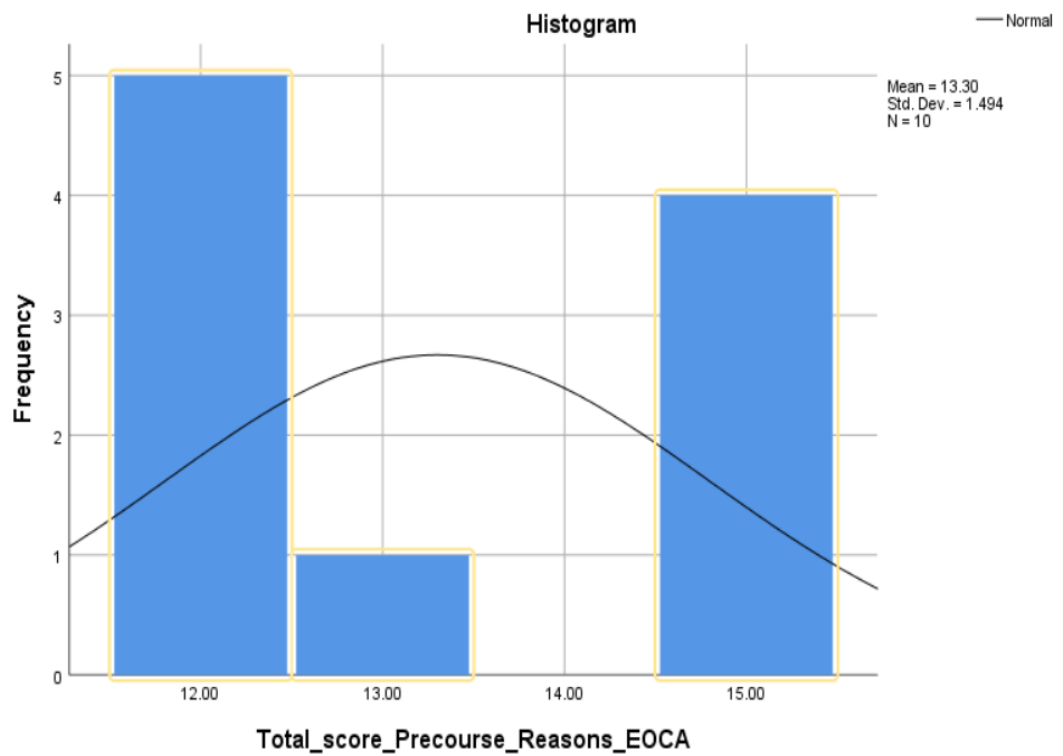


APPENDIX 15: Study 2 - Non-normal Distribution in total pre and post session anxiety scores of online students

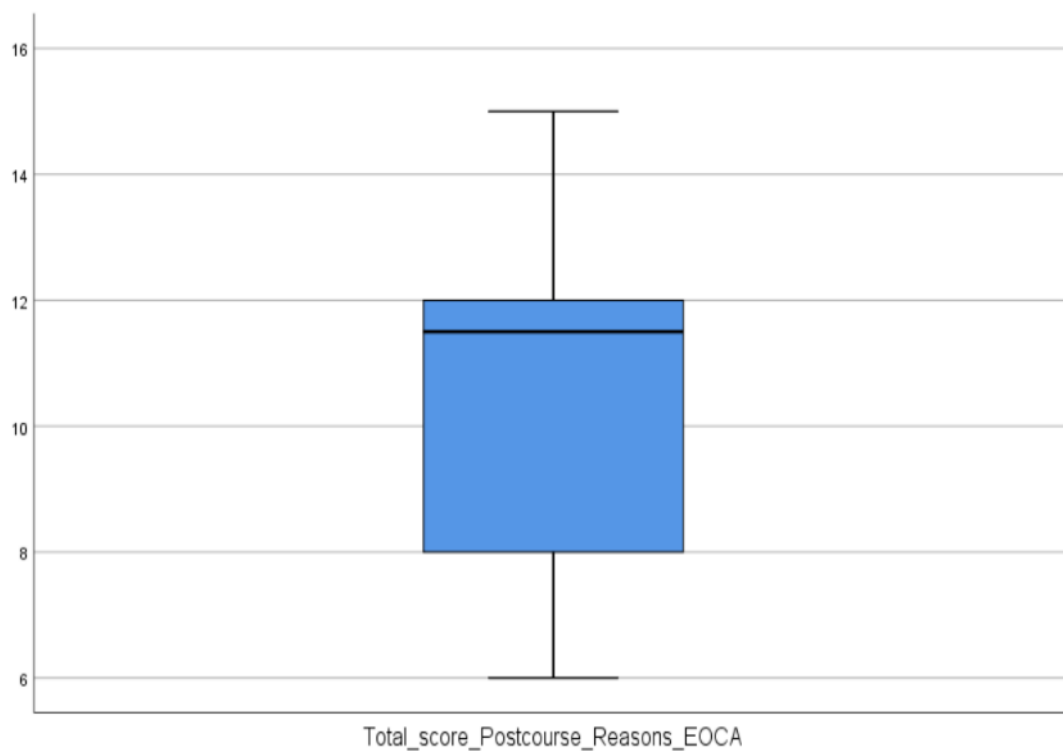
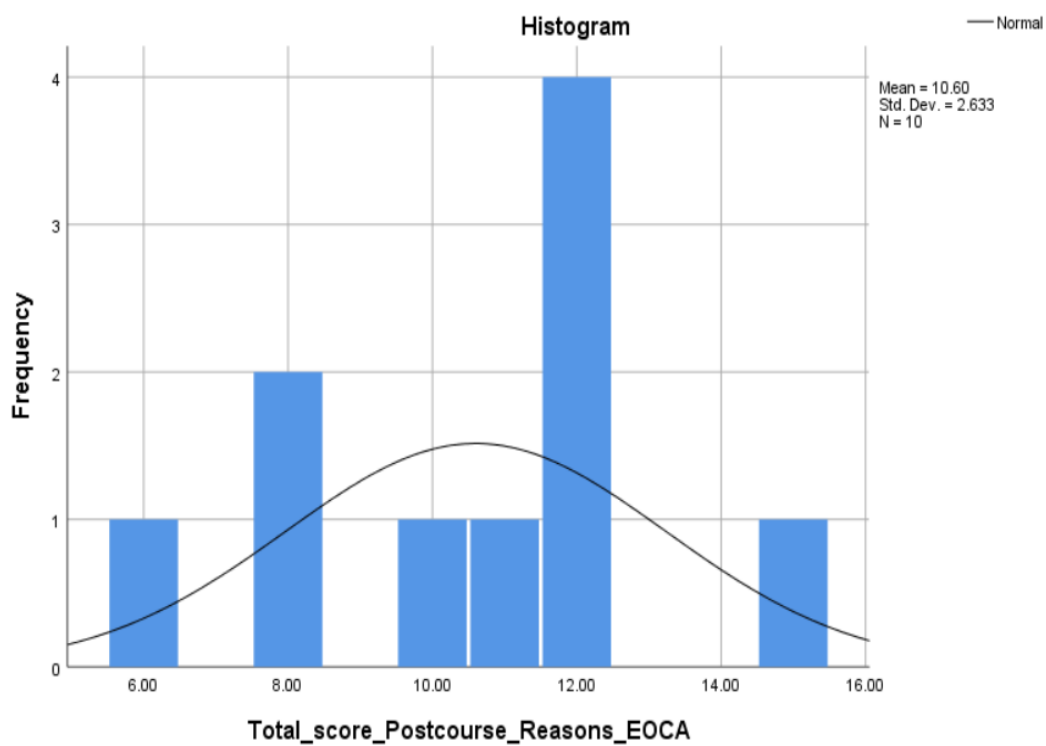




APPENDIX 16: Study 2 - Non-normal distribution in online course
students' total scores of the Three EOCA source items in section 3B –
pre-course



**Study 2 - Non-normal distribution in online course students' total scores
of the Three EOCA source items in section 3B – post-course**



**Study 2 - Non-normal distribution in online course students' total scores
of the Three EOCA source items in section 3B – 2mo post-course**

