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DEVELOPING ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

Major: Education Studies

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DOCTORAL THESIS ABSTRACT

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INTRODUCTION

1. Reason for Choosing the Topic:

Nowadays, our country is actively developing its economy, science, technology, and expanding cooperation with other countries regionally and globally in various fields. Many foreign investors and international tourists have chosen Vietnam as their destination. Therefore, Vietnam urgently needs a large workforce not only proficient in their expertise but also capable of effective communication and fluent use of foreign languages, especially English. Consequently, training and enhancing English communication skills for students and labor force have become a top priority for educational institutions and society as a whole.

Innovating the forms of education and teaching methods to improve the quality of education, awaken and leverage the potential of learners, and develop comprehensive education to produce a dynamic, creative workforce adaptable to challenging situations is a necessary activity with high practical significance for Vietnamese education.

Community service learning (CSL) connecting with the community originates from the perspective of linking theoretical learning with practical experience, connecting knowledge with action, and integrating educational institutions with the community. CSL is a new form of teaching and learning that allows students to experience, connect study materials, and apply knowledge effectively in real-life situations. Therefore, CSL can be considered a teaching method that meets the current need for innovation in teaching methods and forms in the Vietnamese education system.

Regarding the goal of developing English communication skills for the general population and students in particular, the Government and the Ministry of Education and Training have implemented various solutions to improve the quality of English teaching and learning throughout the educational system in Vietnam. However, there are still limitations in teaching and learning English for specific purposes, as many educational institutions focus more on acquiring knowledge rather than honing language skills. The curriculum, teaching methods, and learning approaches do not sufficiently emphasize the development of language skills for learners, particularly in the context of university education.

Currently, there is a lack of comprehensive and in-depth research on the status of English language proficiency among students, especially those in technical fields at universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Therefore, the research topic "Developing English Communication Skills through Community service learning for technical Students" holds both theoretical and practical significance.

2. Research Objectives:

The research aims to propose a process and form of organizing community-engaged learning activities to develop English communication skills for students. This will contribute to improving the quality of English teaching in technical universities.

3. Research Tasks:

The research will perform the following tasks:

- Theoretical exploration of the development of English communication skills through CSL connecting with the Community at universities.

- Analysis and evaluation of the current status of English communication skills among technical students in Ho Chi Minh City and the development of these skills through CSL.

- Proposing specific CSL forms with a 6-step process to develop English communication skills for technical students in Ho Chi Minh City.

4. Research Subjects and Scope:

- Content: The research focuses on studying the development of English communication skills through CSL for first and second-year engineering students in basic English courses.

- Subjects and Location: The study involves 64 English teachers and 957 regular students majoring in engineering at the following institutions in Ho Chi Minh City:

  - Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City (IUH)

  - Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (BKU)

  - Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH)

- Experimental Area: The experimental phase will be conducted at the Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City.

5. Scientific Hypotheses:

The thesis establishes the following hypotheses:

- English communication skills of technical students are limited and only reach an average level.

- Diversifying CSL activities during English courses will enhance English communication skills for technical students.

6. Research Approaches:

The study employs the following approaches:

- Systematic approach

- Practical approach

- Analytical and synthetic approach

- Mixed approach

7. Researching Approach:

7.1. Theoretical Research approach:

Involves exploring existing theories related to language acquisition, and CSL.

7.2. Practical Research approach:

Includes surveying using questionnaires, conducting interviews, observations, and pedagogical experiments.

7.3. Data Processing approach:

Utilizes statistical and qualitative analysis techniques.

8. Research Methods:

8.1. Theoretical Research Method:

- Involves theoretical exploration of issues related to the development of English communication skills for engineering students, particularly through CSL activities.

8.2. Practical Research Method:

   8.2.1. Survey Method using Questionnaires:

   Conducting surveys through the use of questionnaires to gather data on the current state of English communication skills among engineering students.

   8.2.2. Interview Method:

   Conducting interviews to obtain in-depth insights and opinions from relevant stakeholders, such as students, educators, and administrators.

   8.2.3. Observation Method:

   Observing and analyzing the actual implementation of CSL activities and their impact on the development of English communication skills.

   8.2.4. Pedagogical Experimentation Method:

   Implementing pedagogical experiments to test the effectiveness of various teaching methods, specifically those related to CSL.

 8.3. Data Processing Method:

   - Involves the application of statistical and qualitative analysis techniques to process and interpret the collected data.

9. Thesis Defense Standpoint:

9.1. English Communication Skills:

   - Emphasizes that English communication skills are fundamental, important, and necessary. However, the proficiency of engineering students in this skill is currently at an average level. The development efforts are limited, primarily occurring within the classroom space, lacking diverse and enriching activities to encourage active student engagement in learning and skill development.

9.2. Development through CSL:

   - Argues that the English communication skills of engineering students will be enhanced by organizing diverse forms of CSL during the teaching of basic English courses.

10. Contributions of the Thesis:

10.1. Theoretical Contributions:

   - The thesis contributes to supplementing theoretical issues related to the development of English communication skills, especially for engineering students, through CSL activities.

   - Introduces basic concepts such as community-engaged learning and the development of English communication skills through CSL for engineering students, building on existing research both nationally and internationally.

   - Develops a process and forms for organizing CSL activities to enhance English communication skills for engineering students.

10.2. Practical Contributions:

   - Identifies the current state of English communication skills, and their development for engineering students in universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Proposes measures to develop English communication skills through Community-Engaged Learning for engineering students during the teaching of basic English courses.

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- The research outcomes have practical value for universities, serving as reference material for educational administrators and instructors in higher education institutions when teaching basic English and English communication skills.

11. Thesis Structure:

- Beside the introduction, conclusion, recommendations, list of publications, references, and appendices, the thesis is divided into 5 chapters:

- Chapter 1:Overview of research on the development of English communication skills through community-service learning for engineering students.

- Chapter 2:Theoretical foundations of the development of English communication skills through community-service learning for engineering students.

- Chapter 3:The current status of developing English communication skills for engineering students through Community-service Learning activities in universities in Ho Chi Minh City.

- Chapter 4:Organizing community-service learning activities to develop English communication skills for engineering students.

- Chapter 5: Pedagogical experimentation.

CHAPTER 1. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ON DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

1.1. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ON ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1.1.1. Role of English Communication Skills in the Era of Globalization

According to Sarwar (2000:32), English is used as an international language serving various fields and communication. Mc. Kay (2002) highlights that a prominent feature of an international language is its large number of speakers, both as a native and a second language, and as a lingua franca. Recent data from Ling and Brown (2005) indicates that English is spoken in over 75 territories and countries worldwide, with more than 1-1.5 billion using it as a first or second language and around 0.5 billion learning it as a foreign language. The global status of English is widely acknowledged, and investments in English language education are evident in various countries in the region, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

1.1.2. Research on Concepts, Classifications, and Functions of English Communication Skills

Various authors worldwide present different concepts of English Communication Skills (ECS) from educational, psychological, and sociological perspectives. According to Chaney and Burk (1998, p. 13), Brown (1994), Burn and Joyce (1997), ECS is an interactive process among individuals aimed at constructing and conveying information through the language system and non-linguistic signs in different contexts. Authors like Brown (1994), Nunan (1999), Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggest that based on the form of communication, English communication skills can be categorized into two basic types: monologue and dialogue.

According to numerous studies, ECS can be further classified into three specific functions. (1) ECS is performed as an interaction among individuals (Brown, 2001); (2) According to Ur (1996), the ECS process

helps transmit information; (3) ECS as expression, this function refers to speaking in public to share information (Nunan, 1999).

1.1.3. Research on Factors Influencing the Development of English Communication Skills

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Thornbury (2000:11), learners' communication abilities are shaped daily through long-term and persistent learning processes, influenced by factors such as pronunciation, vocabulary, structure and grammar, sociolinguistic knowledge, discourse knowledge, and strategic knowledge. Nunan (1999) emphasizes that learners' English communication skills are a synthesis of various equally important factors.

1.2. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ON DEVELOPING ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR STUDENTS

English Communication Skills play a crucial role in connecting learners to the real world through spoken language, facilitating the transfer of information, opinions, and emotions between speakers and listeners in educational, working environments, and daily life. However, as mentioned by Le Van An (2006), "the proportion of Vietnamese students graduating from universities and colleges who can proficiently use English is very low, especially in weak communication skills." Therefore, enhancing communication skills for students is a long and challenging process, not only in Vietnam but also in many countries using English as a foreign language, such as Japan, Thailand, Singapore, China, Middle Eastern countries, etc. (Arifin, 2017; Zhang, 2009). Numerous research studies have proposed solutions to improve English communication skills globally and in Vietnam.

1.2.1. Research on Content, Curriculum, Teaching Materials, and Training for English Communication Skills

The curriculum and teaching materials are considered useful tools for both teachers and students. When researching English language teaching in the classroom, Breen and Candlin (1980), Munby (1997), and Hutchinson (1997) assert that an appropriate English language teaching curriculum is a key to unlocking English language skills for both teachers and students. The curriculum should be tailored to the goals of learning and teaching, suitable for classroom conditions, and aligned with the cultural background of learners. Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggest that in English language teaching classes, language skills, appropriate sentence structures, should be provided to students, along with a focus on vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing knowledge.

1.2.2. Research on Classroom Environment, Teaching Methods, and Evaluation of English Communication Skills for Students

Given the crucial role of English teachers in developing students' English communication skills, many researchers worldwide and in Vietnam have proposed useful solutions for teachers during the teaching process. These include applying modern teaching methods, actively involving learners, making learners the center of the learning process, and focusing on the learner in English communication skills classes. Traditional teaching methods, such as teacher-centered instruction, translation-based instruction, silent teaching, vocabulary-focused teaching, and reading comprehension-focused teaching, are no longer suitable, especially in English communication skills classes for students. Instead, positive teaching methods and

approaches that aim at learners, promote learner development, and focus on communication skills are being researched and applied.

In Malaysia, Ismail Mohamed, Shah Ahmad, Othman Normala (2006) proposed two suitable English communication skills teaching methods for Malaysian students: task-based learning and content-based instruction. Both methods place students at the center of the learning and teaching process, providing students with opportunities to participate in diverse learning activities organized by teachers. In Thailand, since the early 2000s, many research studies at universities and research institutes in Thailand have focused on the theory and application of learner-centered teaching methods, autonomous learning, independent learning, cooperative learning, experiential learning, and communicative language teaching to enhance the quality of English language education (Khamkhien, 2006). In Japan, researchers like Taguchi (2005) and Katayama (2006) have conducted numerous studies on Japanese students' English communication skills and language teaching approaches. Liao (2004) in China, Chung-Huang (2009) in Taiwan, Ashari, and Zarrin (2014) in Iran proposed, in addition to positive teaching methods, teachers should apply various teaching techniques or combine multiple teaching methods to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and develop English communication skills for students. Some of these techniques include using games to attract students, conversational activities, role-playing, pair work, group work to simulate real situations, personal and group presentations, using songs, listening CDs, and videos to make students more interested in learning, enhance listening skills, and real-life observations. In Vietnam, Bui Hong Dung (2010), Lewis and McCook (2002) argue that teachers need to pay attention to and organize many activities to help students practice and develop English communication skills.

During research, many authors observed that the proportion of using English in English language classes also affects the outcomes of teaching and the development of learners' language skills. Dinh Thi Bich Ngoc and Tran Thi Dung (2020); Trinh Boi Ngoc and Pham Thi Thuy Duy (2021); Tran Ngoc Mai, Nguyen Hoang My Thanh, and Huynh Ngoc Trang (2019); Nguyen Hoang Tuan and Tran Ngoc Mai (2015); Pham Thi Hong Nhung and Nguyen Buu Huan (2021) all emphasize that the English language should be used in teaching, explaining, and communicating in class between teachers and students and among students to create a consistent language learning environment.

The quantity of students in each English class, in general, as well as in speaking classes, has a significant impact on creating the classroom atmosphere and the effectiveness of student training. In the works of authors such as Harmer (1991), Ur (1996), Kam, H. W. (2002), Trịnh Ngọc Bội, Phạm Thị Thúy Duy (2021), and Đỗ Thị Như Phương (2012), it is affirmed that a large number of students in each class poses challenges in teaching and learning for both teachers and students. This situation hinders the teaching, real-life experiences, and practical knowledge development of students.

1.2.3. Research on the application of technology in the teaching and communication skills training process for students

Some researchers argue that one of the benefits of using technology is the increased motivation for learning, especially in language acquisition. Lee (2000) and Galavis (1998) suggest that various activities and games introduced through technology in the classroom can enhance student engagement and motivation. Furthermore, innovations in technology are appealing to students, making their learning experiences more

interactive and motivating, resulting in more effective learning. Another advantage of technology is its ability to encourage collaboration and teamwork in learning activities. According to Galavis (1998), new technologies allow students to gather information and interact with resources such as images and videos. Braul (2006) asserts that the internet serves not only as a reference source but also as a means of communication and collaboration.

1.2.4. Research on the roles of instructors, students, and learning motivation in developing English communication skills

With the continuous development of information technology, scientific knowledge can be obtained from various sources such as books, newspapers, and the internet. Therefore, the role of the teacher is no longer solely to provide scientific knowledge; students can engage in self-learning and exploration with the guidance and support of the teacher through self-study and research. Consequently, the role of a TA (Teacher's Assistant) has become more flexible, adapting to different roles depending on the content of the course, lesson objectives, organized learning activities, and the students' characteristics. Common roles of a TA, as mentioned by Tudor (1993) and Harmer (2015), include being an organizer of activities, class controller, supervisor and evaluator of the class, developer of teaching materials, and participant in student learning activities.

Interests, needs, and learning motivation are significant factors influencing the learning process and training of learners. Willems (1987) and Gardner (2001) argue that learning motivation is a central factor in determining success in learning a language. The learner's motivation determines the outcome and effectiveness of educational activities because learning for an exam is different from learning to understand a problem, which is different from learning to improve knowledge and skills.

1.3. RESEARCH ON COMMUNITY-SERVING LEARNING AND THE APPLICATION OF COMMUNITY-SERVING LEARNING TO DEVELOP COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR STUDENTS

1.3.1. Studies on the concept and characteristics of community-serving learning

Community-serving learning (CSL) is a practical approach developed in the United States in the early 1990s. It combines the learning process within the school with the practical experiences of students participating in real-world activities, benefiting the community. By engaging in projects and activities, students have the opportunity to reflect and apply the knowledge and skills they have learned to real-life tasks. From these experiences, they develop and enhance the necessary knowledge for their future professions and lives.

Many scholars worldwide express various concepts about CSL. Overall, researchers agree that CSL is a new and integrated approach to teaching and learning, incorporating meaningful activities for the community into the teaching and learning process (Jacoby and colleagues, 1996; Dogan, 2013). Three important factors that researchers focus on for defining CSL are the educational department and instructors, students, and the community (Figure 1.2). Therefore, three prominent characteristics of CSL are emphasized:

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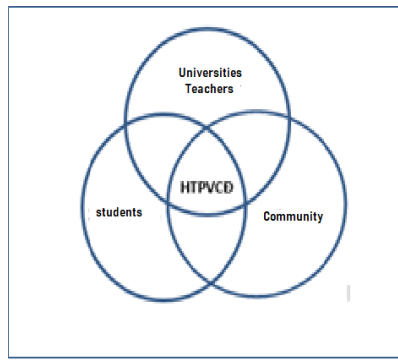
1.3.2. Studies on the Benefits of Community-Serving Learning

According to Bringle and Hatcher (1995), CSL is often integrated into a course or a series of courses through a project with both teaching and community-serving objectives. When applied effectively, teaching through CSL brings numerous benefits to students, departments, communities, and universities, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the education process and promoting innovation and creativity in teaching and learning (Hargreaves 2002, p.73).

Firstly, benefits for students include: (1) Advancement of learning objectives; (2) Increased individual and job responsibilities; (3) Social responsibility towards the community; (4) Development of future career opportunities.

Secondly, benefits for departments and universities include: (1) Enhanced quality of student education, strengthening the position and reputation of the department and university within the community; (2) Formation of new teaching methods and applications through new relationships between departments, universities, and communities; (3) Opportunities to connect with other departments and universities participating in community-serving education in different fields, establishing broad collaborations in academic and scientific research.

Thirdly, benefits for the community include: (1) Satisfaction of community needs, addressing requirements and solving community issues; (2) Strengthening relationships between the community and universities, opening up prospects for training and applying scientific and technical knowledge.

1.3.3. Studies on the Methods and Organizational Forms of Community-Serving Learning

Authors such as Jones (1997), Edward Crawley, Johan Malmqvist, Sören Östlund, and Doris Brodeur (2007) assert that CSL projects are practical, hands-on, and highly applicable learning processes for students, involving projects and activities such as design and implementation projects, research situations, and activities that benefit the community.

Authors like Mikolchak, M. (2006), Ash, and P. H. Clayton (2009), Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1999) propose that CSL should follow these steps: (1) Identify community issues that need resolution; (2) Integrate community issues into the curriculum as student internship topics. These topics must align with the course content, student levels, and knowledge; (3) Organize students into groups to work on projects under the guidance of instructors. During the project, students apply their course knowledge to solve community issues; (4) The results of the project are used by the community.

Lê Văn Hảo, Đinh Đồng Lưỡng (2019), Trần Thị Bích Hòa (2019) state that Vietnamese universities have begun to implement CSL in various courses and majors, with activities ranging from extracurricular and voluntary programs to integration into specific courses. Common activities include (a) Volunteering to assist the community (e.g., Green Summer Campaign); (b) Offering short courses for specific community groups (e.g., English courses for children, workers, and students conducted at An Giang University); (c) Establishing clubs (e.g., English club for students, Law study club); (d) Collaborating with local communities and businesses (e.g., cooperation with professionals, scientists, and the community to share experiences and knowledge in essential areas).

1.3.4. Studies on the Application of Community-Serving Learning in Various Fields and Specific Courses

According to Gitlow and Flecky (2005), MOE (2019), Ahmat, Sharom and Abdullah, Mohd Akhir (1999), Nugroho and Sucahyo (2013), Xing and Ma (2010), many countries around the world, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and the United States, have applied CSL in diverse fields and disciplines, including agriculture, medicine, architecture and design, education, technology, and the environment. CSL has brought numerous benefits to universities, departments, students, and communities that the projects or activities aim to serve.

1.3.5. Research on Community-Serving Learning to Enhance English Communication Skills for Students

Globally, CSL is considered a new approach in positive and effective education and has been researched and applied in the education systems of many countries, including the United States, Australia, the Netherlands, and Canada. In Vietnam, some universities are effectively implementing CSL in teaching and learning.

Huỳnh Thanh Tiến, Võ Thị Kim Hoàng, Huỳnh Thanh Việt (2018) proposed integrating related specialties into groups to carry out effective CSL projects (Figure 1.4).
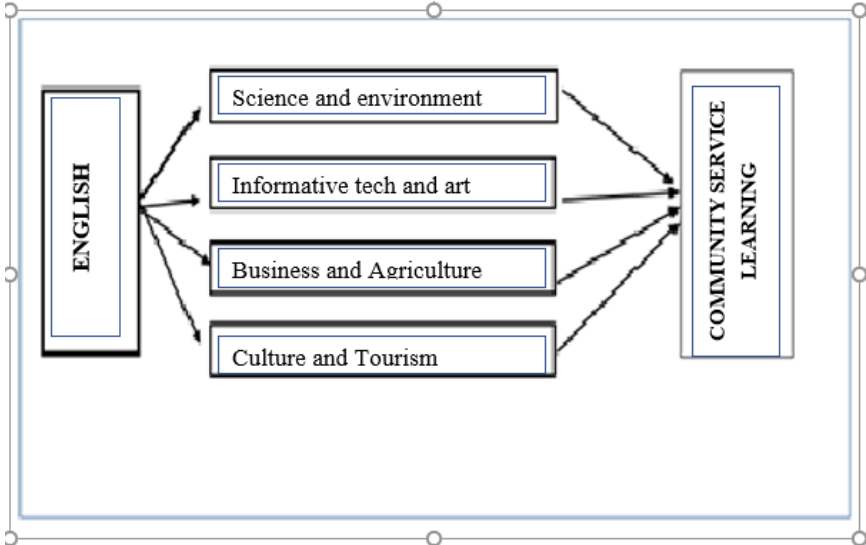
Summary: Research on Community-Serving Learning in Vietnam is not as extensive as globally. However, these studies have laid solid foundations for future application and integration into university

curricula because Community-Serving Learning brings many benefits to institutions, training departments, communities, and the participating students themselves. Most studies have not directly focused on developing specific skills for students participating in Community-Serving Learning activities. Many investigations are at the initial exploratory stages or focus on understanding "students' attitudes when engaging in Community-Serving Learning activities.

Most global and Vietnamese studies only address students as a general group, lacking in-depth research on students in specific engineering fields. There is a lack of specialized research on Community-Serving Learning in the field of English language training for engineering students, especially the application of Community-Serving Learning in the teaching and learning process to enhance general language proficiency for students and engineering students in particular.

CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 1

Through the synthesis and analysis of domestic and international literature related to the topic "Developing English communication skills through community-serving learning for technical students," the researcher has drawn several conclusions as follows:

Firstly, English language proficiency is one of the essential skills for students in general and engineering students in particular.

Secondly, there are numerous research works on the current situation and solutions to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching English in general and language proficiency in particular. However, these are limited to innovative solutions within the classroom, without addressing real-world experiences outside the classroom. Therefore, this provides a basis for the continued exploration of the topic.

Thirdly, Community-Serving Learning is a new form of education and training that is widespread in many countries worldwide but has not been widely applied in Vietnamese universities. Some universities have explored and applied this approach in certain courses through Community-Serving Learning activities.

Fourthly, research in Vietnam and globally has not delved deeply into the application of Community-Serving Learning in English language education, especially in developing English language proficiency for engineering students through Community-Serving Learning.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL FOUNDATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH COMMUNITY-SERVICE LEARNING FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

2.1. BASIC CONCEPTS
2.1.1. English Communication Skills
2.1.2. Community-service learning

2.1.3. Development of English Communication Skills for techincal students

The dissertation defines the development of English communication skills for technical students as the process of organizing teaching and learning activities to enhance the ability to use English language and knowledge to exchange information and express emotions in the engineering context.

2.1.4. Developing English Communication Skills through Community-Service Learning for technical students

Based on the concepts and analysis, the dissertation identifies that developing English communication skills through community-service learning for technical students is the process where instructors organize activities for students to apply English language and knowledge in CSL activities, aiming to positively change English communication skills.

2.2. English Communication Skills of Technical Students

2.2.1. English Language Proficiency Requirements for Technical Students

Most universities design their training programs with English language courses as common, basic, and compulsory subjects for students in general and technical students in particular during the first two years. According to the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training (Circular 17/2021), English language courses typically consist of 12 to 18 credit hours. The English language proficiency requirement for engineering students is generally equivalent to Level B1 (Grade 3) based on the National Foreign Language Framework for Vietnam issued by the Ministry of Education and Training.

2.2.2. Forms and Means of English Communication by Students

2.2.2.1. Indirect Communication

2.2.2.2. Direct Communication

In this dissertation, the focus of the study is on direct verbal communication skills in English.

2.2.2.3. Means of Communication: (a) Language Communication, (b) Non-language Communication

2.2.3. Elements and Criteria for Assessing English Communication Skills of Technical Students

Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a communicative competence model consisting of three components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. According to the Canale and Swain model (1983), communicative competence includes grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Savignon (2001) suggested replacing grammatical competence with language competence or language knowledge to make this component more comprehensive, while sociolinguistic competence remains focused on sociocultural factors.

Building on these frameworks, the dissertation proposes a table of English communication skills components, including language knowledge, sociocultural knowledge, discourse skills, and strategic skills, with ten subcomponents and their specific manifestations.

In addition to selecting five levels of English communication skills expression, the dissertation constructs measurement indices to evaluate English communication skills based on the combination with the components forming English communication skills. An English communication skills assessment rubric (Speaking skills) is proposed as a two-dimensional table. The first dimension presents evaluation criteria, including four main components (Language Knowledge, Sociocultural Knowledge, Discourse Skills, and Strategic Skills) with ten measurement indices. The other dimension represents the five levels of skill

development ranked from low to high, corresponding to scores from 0 to 10, which are applied for grading and evaluating English communication skills (poor: 0 to below 3.5 points; weak: 3.5 points to below 5; average: 5 points to below 6.5 points; good: from 6.5 points to below 8 points; excellent: 8 points to 10 points) (Refer to Appendix 3: English Communication Skills Assessment Rubric).

2.3. DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

2.3.1. Learning Characteristics of Engineering Students

2.3.1.1. Learning Process Integrated with Technical Content

2.3.1.2. Learning Process Linked to Practical Application and Problem Solving in Professional Practice

2.3.1.3. Learning Process Requires Students to be Active, Creative, and Self-Study

2.3.1.4. Learning Process Requires Students to Hone and Apply Multiple Skills

2.3.2. Content Development of English Communication Skills for Technical Students in Basic English Courses

According to the British Council (2001), Liz Taylor and Alastair Lane (2007), John and Liz Soars (2010), Tim Falla and Paul A. Davies (2015), John Hughes, Helen Stephenson, and Paul Dummett (2019), to achieve the B1 proficiency level (according to the Vietnamese Foreign Language Framework), students need to practice English communication skills with diverse discussion topics (Table 2.6) and engaging communication activities such as group discussions, pair exercises, group discussions, conversations, etc., to meet language knowledge, sociocultural knowledge, discourse skills, and strategic skills requirements.

Common Discussion Topics: (1) Self-introduction, (2) Family, (3) Leisure time, (4) Hobbies, (5) Days off, (6) Shopping, (7) Favorite activities, (8) Sports, (9) Movies, Arts, (10) Music, (11) Education, (12) Reading, (13) Jobs and professions, (14) Environment, (15) Companies, (16) Computers, Internet, (17) Technical processes, (18) Travel, etc.

2.3.3. Forms of Developing English Communication Skills for Technical Students

Common teaching forms applied to effective English communication skills instruction are:

2.3.3.1. Direct Classroom Organization:

2.3.3.2. Self-study and Self-practice outside of class:

2.3.3.3. Online Learning and Practice:

2.3.3.4. Experiential Learning Forms: (a) Joining English clubs, (b) Exchange and intern with foreigners, (c) Community service learning

2.4. DEVELOPING ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH COMMUNITY-SERVICE LEARNING FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

2.4.1. Community-Service Learning

2.4.1.1. Characteristics of Community-Service Learning

Community-service learning is increasingly applied in various courses at Vietnamese universities due to its many advantages. According to Bringle and Hatcher (1996), Jacoby (1996), community-engaged learning is an experiential learning process where students participate in organized and goal-oriented activities to meet the needs of the community. It provides students with practical experience from the community, preparing them for future real-world internships. Students have the opportunity to apply

knowledge from a course to real-life situations, contributing to the community, enhancing their learning experiences, and improving their internship skills (Manathunga, 2007).

CSL is an excellent opportunity for students to reinforce and deeply understand the knowledge they have learned, practice and enhance soft skills such as teamwork, problem-solving skills, communication skills, and planning skills. Participating in community activities not only contributes to solving community problems but also ensures the academic goals of students (Skinner and Chapman, 1999).

According to Guo (2013), Sandaran (2008), Enos and Morton (2003), CSL is a collaboration between educational institutions, teachers, students, and a specific community.This collaboration brings many benefits to all participating parties, contributes to promoting and introducing the university's brand, bringing education system to community.

2.4.1.2. Benefits of Community Service Learning

  a. Benefits for Students Participating in Community Service Learning Activities

  b. Benefits for the Community

  c. Benefits for Instructors and Educational Institutions

Throughout the research on these benefits, emphasized throughout this thesis, the focus is on the advantages for students in professional training and soft skills development through community service learning, contributing to the achievement of the set objectives.

2.4.1.3. Common Forms of Community Service Learning

According to Kerrissa Hefferman (2001), Butin.D.W (2010), Delve, C.I., Mintz, S.D., Stewart, G.M. (1990), Jacoby, B (2015), commonly used models of organizing community service learning include:

  (1) Learning in a community setting (Service learning)

  (2) Discipline-based learning

  (3) Problem-based learning projects

  (4) Implementation of practical learning projects within the community (Capstone project)

  (5) Learning through internships and service activities (Service Internships learning)

  (6) Community-based research learning

  (7) Specialized projects

  (8) Volunteer activities

Choosing community service learning as a teaching project, combined with community service, organized as part of a course, brings many advantages in terms of organization, maximizing the benefits of community service learning and helping students have a realistic learning environment.

2.4.2. Developing English Communication Skills through Community Service Learning for Technical Students

2.4.2.1. Significance of Developing English Communication Skills

Developing English communication skills for engineering students to meet the requirements of enhancing the quality of education and international integration is one of the essential demands of educational institutions. Community service learning changes the role of instructors from the center of teaching to mentors, supporters, planners, observers, and aids in solving tasks and issues outside the classroom.

2.4.2.2. Principles of Developing English Communication Skills

Applying community service learning to develop English communication skills brings many benefits to students, instructors, departments, and educational institutions. However, when implemented, the following principles need to be ensured:

(1) Community service learning activities must be organized through a scientific process, ensuring learning objectives and skills development for students.

(2) The selection of the community and the issues to be addressed should be aligned with the learning goals, knowledge, and skills of the students. The timing and participation of students in community service learning should ensure consistency, feasibility, and benefits for both students and the community.

(3) Content related to learning and foundational knowledge of the subject or discipline should be integrated into community service learning activities to help students reinforce their learned or ongoing knowledge and apply it in real-life situations. It also helps develop skills useful for students when engaging with the community.

(4) Students are the main participants in community service learning. They actively research and decide on problem-solving for the community's issues.

2.4.2.3. Organizing Community Service Learning Activities to Develop English Communication Skills

According to Bringle and Hatcher (1995, 1999), Jacoby (1996), Rocheleau (2004), Mikolchak (2006), Andrews (2007), Ash, and Clayton (2009), there are four basic stages in organizing community service learning:

(1) Understanding the community needs: Instructors and students investigate the needs of various communities by observing and studying real-life situations.

(2) Planning community service learning: Based on observations and understanding of the community, instructors and students select a community with issues suitable for learning objectives and plan community service learning activities accordingly.

(3) Implementing community service learning: Following the established plan and tailored to the community, community service learning activities are deployed to contribute to the community.

(4) Feedback: After the community service learning activities, instructors need to gather feedback from the community regarding students' performance and the effectiveness of community service learning. Instructors also need to listen to students' feedback for reflections and adjustments for future activities.

The organizing process consists of four general stages and can be applied to various fields of study and subjects. However, it does not cover the content development process and the preparations needed before deployment. Additionally, the feedback stage does not emphasize evaluating the effectiveness of community service learning, assessing students' participation, the degree of achieving the set learning objectives before conducting community service learning, and the development of English communication skills. Therefore, the thesis proposes an organizing process that is specific to the English teaching context. In addition to the four basic stages, several stages have been added to specify the content development phase and pre-deployment preparations. Also, the feedback stage highlights the evaluation of the effectiveness of community service learning, the assessment of students' participation, the degree of achieving learning

objectives set before community service learning, and the development of students' English communication skills (the proposed process is detailed in Chapter 4 of the thesis).

CONCLUSION CHAPTER 2

The theoretical research method was used to analyze, synthesize, systematize, and generalize the relevant documents related to English communication skills, the development of English communication skills, community service learning, and the development of English communication skills through community service learning for engineering students. The following results were achieved:

  - Constructed component concepts:

  - Constructed the English communication skills component table, consisting of four elements: language knowledge, socio-cultural knowledge, discourse skills, and strategic skills; ten subcomponents and specific manifestations of each subcomponent.

CHAPTER 3
THE CURRENT STATUS OF DEVELOPING ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITIES IN HO CHI MINH CITY

3.1. RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

3.1.1. Overview of the Research Area

- Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry (IUH)

- Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (BKU)

- Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education (HUTECH)

3.1.2. Research Purpose

The research aims to understand the current state of English communication skills among engineering students and the development of these skills through community service learning activities at universities in Ho Chi Minh City.

3.1.3. Research Tools

- Tool Group 1: Survey Questionnaire - The thesis constructs a survey questionnaire based on theoretical research on English communication skills, the development of these skills, and community service learning, targeting both instructors and students.

- Tool Group 2: Observation Criteria - The thesis develops criteria for observing and evaluating students' activities during English classes at three universities. Recording devices, such as audio and video equipment, are prepared to capture student activities. Interview questions for instructors, students, and administrative staff are also developed to gather additional insights.

- Tool Group 3: English Communication Skills Assessment - The thesis employs the Vstep speaking test format, aligned with the Foreign Language Competency Standards (6 levels) established by the Ministry of Education and Training, to measure students' English communication skills before, during, and after community service learning activities.

3.1.4. Research Methods

- 3.1.4.1. Survey Method with Questionnaires

- 3.1.4.2. Interview Method

- 3.1.4.3. Observation Method

- 3.1.4.4. Pedagogical Experimentation Method

- 3.1.4.5. Data Processing Method

3.1.5. Research Subjects

3.1.5.1. Survey Subjects - Due to the objective impact of Covid-19, the study surveys engineering students and English instructors at the three universities.

3.1.5.2. Interview Subjects - The study involves observing community service learning activities, interviewing five instructors at each university, interviewing ten students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry, and interviewing six direct management officials overseeing the community service learning activities.

3.2. THE CURRENT STATUS OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITIES IN HO CHI MINH CITY

3.2.1. Evaluation by Instructors and Students of English Communication Skills

3.2.1.1. Student Survey Results

Out of 957 completed student surveys from the three universities, 821 students self-assessed their English communication skills at an average level. However, 57 students rated themselves at a weak level, indicating an inability to communicate effectively. Only 62 students considered themselves moderately proficient, and a mere 17 students were confident in their good communication skills. The instructor evaluations are presented in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 Instructor Evaluation of English Communication Skills of Engineering Students

Students' communication skill	Number of teacher	Percentages
Very good	0	0%
Good	3/64	4,7%
Avarage	54/64	84,3%
Yếu	7/64	11%

The results in Table 3.7 illustrate that, according to instructor evaluations, the overall average for the components of English communication skills (KNGT) of students is 3.592. Among these, seven components achieved an average rating. These include Pronunciation of students, the articulation of ideas in communication, cultural and social factors, the level of fluency, the learning process, gestures and body language, non-verbal cues, and time management in communication. Only two components, vocabulary, and grammar, attained a satisfactory level.

Table 3.7. Instructor Evaluation of Components of English Communication Skills

Elements	Total	Min	Max	Average	standard deviation
Words, structures	64	3	4	3.91	.294
Grammar	64	3	5	4.02	.454

Pronunciation, intonation	64	3	4	3.59	.495
Idea, content	64	3	4	3.41	.495
Culture elements	64	3	4	3.19	.393
Fluency	64	3	4	3.61	.492
Interaction	64	3	4	3.72	.453
Communication process	64	3	4	3.69	.467
Non-verbal	64	3	4	3.19	.393
Time management	64	3	4	3.59	.495
				3.592	

3.2.2. Extracurricular Activities for Enhancing English Communication Skills for Engineering Students

From the survey results, it is evident that 347 students (constituting 36.3% of the respondents) acknowledge that they only practice English communication skills within the confines of the classroom, following the guidance of instructors. Students rarely have the opportunity to practice outside the classroom, diminishing the effectiveness of the learning and application of English communication skills. This limitation arises due to the scarcity of time dedicated to in-class practice, the large number of students, and the infrequent organization of skill-enhancing activities by instructors. As a result, students have limited opportunities for practical application and improvement.

Table 3.10. Extracurricular Training Activities for Students Outside the Classroom

Activities to practice outside class	Number of students	Percentages
Answer questions in course book	851	89%
Listen to CD and repeat	327	34%
Practice the conversation	185	19%
Practice with friends (in pair/ group)	167	17%
Join English clubs	138	14%
Communicate with foreigners	93	9,7%

3.2.3. Factors Influencing the Training Process of English Communication Skills for Engineering Students:

- Language Proficiency
- Perception of Communication
- Learning Aptitude
- Duration of Teaching and Learning

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- Assessment Methods

- Class Size

- Teaching Approaches of Instructors

3.3. CURRENT STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

3.3.1. Teaching Activities of Instructors

The survey results indicate that communicative skill development activities are rarely organized during English language classes. About 78% of instructors participating in the survey reported infrequent organization of skill-enhancing activities, while only 22% mentioned occasional implementation during English language classes. Some common activities: vocabulary learning, Grammar exercises, Reading and translation, do exercises, group work, plaing games, role-play....

3.3.2. Evaluation Methods for English Courses at Universities

According to students, the prevalent assessment methods for English courses at universities include grammar exercises, vocabulary exercises, and multiple-choice tests. Among these, the "multiple-choice" format was selected as "very frequent" by 100% of surveyed students. Additionally, 97 students (10.2%) believe that instructors often "emphasize grades without providing analysis and advice for students to improve learning," while 860 students (89.8%) indicated that instructors very frequently "prioritize grades without analyzing or offering advice for students to improve learning."

3.3.3. Challenges Faced by Engineering Students and Recommendations from Instructors to Improve English Communication Skills

Most challenges identified by both instructors and students significantly impact the process of developing English communication skills. The high agreement level includes issues like "lack of vocabulary, inappropriate use of grammar and non-standard pronunciation." Students also identified challenges such as a lack of interactive knowledge during communication, low confidence, and a lack of training environments.

3.4. CURRENT STATE OF DEVELOPING ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

3.4.1. Awareness and Implementation of Community Service Learning at Universities

Survey Results and Instructor Interviews

While all instructors acknowledged the importance of community service learning in higher education, survey results indicated that 47 instructors (73.4%) had limited knowledge, stating they hadn't thoroughly researched or gained extensive information on community service learning. Another 17 instructors (26.6%) acknowledged hearing about it but had not explored it further. None of the instructors felt confident in their in-depth knowledge of this new approach in English language education. The application of community service learning varied across institutions (see Figure 3.10). Fifty-nine instructors (92%) admitted that community service learning was not applied in their English language courses, and only 9 instructors (14.1%) reported its initial implementation in other courses at the university level. All 64 instructors (100%) expressed an interest in learning more to potentially integrate it into their English language courses in the future.

3.4.2. Selection of Community Service Learning Formats to Enhance Communication Skills for Engineering Students

All surveyed instructors (64/64) believed that community service learning activities could be integrated into English language courses to enhance students' English communication skills. Three community domains were unanimously suggested for organizing activities: small residential communities with foreign residents, communities of students from various departments, universities, and vocational training centers for nurturing and educating children. Forty-seven instructors (73%) thought that organizations and businesses utilizing English could be suitable, and 51 instructors (79.7%) suggested considering international tourist communities visiting Vietnam for organizing community service learning activities to improve English skills for engineering students.

3.4.3. Content Selection and Implementation of Community Service Learning Processes to Develop Communication Skills for Technical Students

Results from interviews with instructors regarding the implementation of community service learning processes indicated that most instructors found the six-step process to be suitable and detailed for implementing such activities.Results from instructor interviews regarding the selection of community service learning content to develop communication skills for engineering students showed a shared belief that English language learning content could be applied to community service learning to provide more opportunities for practice and improvement.

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CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 3

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The practical examination and assessment of the current state of English communication skills, the development of skills, and the application of community service learning in the teaching and learning processes at three universities have yielded valuable results for the project. These survey results serve as a foundation for proposing scientifically sound measures to enhance English communication skills for engineering students, aligning closely with reality and meeting the needs and capabilities of students. Moreover, the statistical figures on the current state through both instructor and student surveys, along with the comparison of instructor and student perspectives, provide clear evidence for the project's hypotheses.

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CHAPTER 4.
ORGANIZING COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING ACTIVITIES
TO DEVELOP ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS
FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

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4.1. ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES

4.1.1. Principle of Ensuring Scientific Rigor

4.1.2. Principle of Ensuring Relevance

4.1.3. Principle of Ensuring Practicality

4.1.4. Principle of Ensuring Diversity and Richness

4.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP) CONTENT FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

4.3. THE PROCESS OF ORGANIZING COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING TO DEVELOP ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS: The process consists of 6 stages and 16 steps.

Inheriting the 4-step organizational process from previous researchers, the dissertation proposes a process tailored to the characteristics of teaching and learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in engineering disciplines. The suggested process comprises six stages and sixteen steps to develop English skills for engineering students (Figure 4.1). Stage 3 is added to specify the activities of constructing content and English lessons to facilitate the organization of community service learning and achieve the stated objectives. Since the aim of the dissertation is to enhance English skills for students, the content of community service learning activities needs to be specific, closely aligned with this goal, and requires a dedicated stage in the organizational process. Additionally, Stage 6 is added to help instructors evaluate the effectiveness of community service learning with the course's objectives in mind, assess students' participation, and measure the effectiveness in teaching and developing skills for students. Moreover, the evaluation stage assists instructors in measuring whether the language skills have developed as intended, providing insights for adjustments in future implementations.

It can be stated that the 4-step organizational process by previous researchers is more general and broadly oriented. When applied to implementing community service learning in English teaching in general, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in particular, it may cause confusion for both instructors and students. The proposed 6-step process in this dissertation is more detailed and specific for community service learning activities to develop English skills for engineering students. Especially, Stage 3, content construction, is added to the process for instructors and students to develop content that serves both community service learning and achieves the goal of English skills development. This stage facilitates instructors and students in the organization process, emphasizing the organizing and guiding role of instructors, while highlighting the active, positive, creative, and cooperative involvement of students in preparing and organizing community service learning activities.

4.4. PROPOSED COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

The suggested community service learning activities below can be organized separately as extracurricular activities for students or integrated into technical subjects as part of the course activities. In addition, the basic English courses 1, 2, 3, 4 are typically planned for the first 2 years of students' undergraduate studies, focusing mainly on building their English language foundation and general knowledge rather than in-depth technical knowledge.

4.4.1. Activity 1: Organize English classes or English communication clubs in the community.

4.4.2. Activity 2: Establish a knowledge communication club in English for students from various departments and universities.

4.4.3. Activity 3: Organize volunteer activities and community service at technical exhibitions, science and technology fairs involving companies and foreign partners.

4.4.4. Activity 4: Organize internships in foreign technical companies.

CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 4

Developing language skills and real-life experiences through the various forms of organizing community service learning is a novel approach at the university level. Community service learning brings numerous benefits to students in terms of learning, personal growth, and the acquisition of practical skills for future work. However, to create community service learning activities aimed at developing English skills for engineering students, ensuring alignment with the characteristics of learning, and meeting the requirements of the course, curriculum, etc., is a complex process that requires considerable effort, collaboration, and guidance from education and language experts.

The proposed community service learning activities for developing English skills for engineering students, as outlined in this chapter, generally do not demand extensive knowledge and expertise from students. They mainly apply the existing English language knowledge and skills learned in foundational English courses at the university.

CHAPTER 5. PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIMENT

5.1. EXPERIMENT OBJECTIVES

The pedagogical experiment involves applying the Community Service Learning (CSL) model and the six-step process developed in Chapter 2 to develop English skills for engineering students. The objectives are (1) to assess the changes in students' English language skills before and after the experiment, determining the effectiveness of the CSL model in the process of teaching English skills, and (2) to apply the developed six-step organizational process to conduct two forms of CSL activities (CSL1,2) and explore its applicability to various CSL formats.

The experiment's results will serve as reliable evidence for the hypothesis: "Students will have more internship opportunities, better real-life experiences, and improved English skills in engineering fields when instructors organize CSL activities during the teaching of technical courses." Furthermore, the results will motivate instructors to confidently apply CSL in teaching technical courses at universities, aiming to provide students with more real-life opportunities, practical experiences, increased enthusiasm for learning, and enhanced English language skills.

5.2. BASIS FOR SELECTING PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIMENT ACTIVITIES

Due to the limited duration of one semester, approximately 15 weeks, and the prolonged Covid-19 situation, two CSL activities were chosen for experimentation: CSL Activity 1: Organizing an English Communication Club for students at the Center for Social Work and Vocational Education for Adolescents in the City; and CSL Activity 2: Participating in an English club at IUH for knowledge exchange and communication about technical topics.

While the activities proposed in Chapter 4 are feasible and beneficial for students, the extended Covid-19 conditions in Ho Chi Minh City made it challenging to organize activities at large vocational colleges or business vocational schools. Therefore, the selected CSL activities were deemed suitable for

experimentation, receiving high approval and enthusiastic collaboration from vocational colleges, encouragement from the training department, and active participation from students.

5.3. PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIMENT CONTENT

To develop all four components of English skills for students, including language proficiency, cultural and social competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (see Chapter 2), the pedagogical experiment focused on honing Cultural and Social Competence and Discourse Competence due to time constraints. Therefore, the assessment of students' English skills before and after the experiment will concentrate on changes in these two components.

The content of English 2 course, which aligns with the experiment's objectives, will be selected for integrating the CSL model into the teaching process.

5.4. EXPERIMENT DURATION

The experiment took place from September 2022 to December 2022.

5.5. PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIMENT DESIGN

A controlled experimental method involving two research groups was utilized: the Treatment Group (TG) (consist of 44 students) and the Control Group (CG) (consist of 42 students). The students' majors are: information, environment, electricity.....

The control group and the experimental group followed the curriculum of the English 2 course with identical content, requirements, and class hours at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology. The student lists for both groups were generated from the course registration software at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry, with 42 students in the control group and 44 students in the experimental group. (see Appendix 13: student lists for both groups). However, in addition to the course content specified in the English 2 course outline, the experimental group received guidance, practical training, and real-life experiences with the instructor on Saturday mornings and participated in community service learning activities on Sunday mornings.

5.4. PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIMENT ORGANIZATION PROCESS

5.4.1. Experimental Process for Activity 1: Organizing the development of English communication skills through community service learning at the Center for Social Work and Vocational Education for Adolescents in Ho Chi Minh City.

5.4.2. Experimental Process for Activity 2: Organizing a communication club, sharing knowledge, and technical experiences in English for the student community at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry.

5.5. EXPERIMENT RESULTS

At the beginning of the semester, students in both groups took an English proficiency test, referring to the content and topics studied in English 1 when constructing the test in the V-step format. After the experimental activities 1 and 2 with the experimental group, from August 2022 to December 2022, all students in both the experimental and control groups were assessed for proficiency and skills using the Vstep Speaking skills test according to the Vietnam National Competency Framework.

5.5.1. Correlation of English communication skills between the experimental and control groups before the experimental impact

The initial proficiency scores (Test 1) for both the experimental and control groups before the community service learning activities were as follows: The evaluation results showed that the control group, consisting of 42 students, had an average proficiency score based on the evaluation criteria of 5.03, while the experimental group, consisting of 44 students, had an average proficiency score of 4.98. The score difference between the two groups was 0.05, indicating a very small difference between them. This suggests that the proficiency levels of the two groups were similar, with no significant difference before the experimental impact.

Overall, the proficiency of students in both groups was average, and quite consistent between the two groups, with no significant difference. Most students in both groups achieved average scores for interaction, fluency, pronunciation, indicating that students need more practice to hone and further develop their English proficiency.

5.5.2. Correlation of English communication skills between the experimental and control groups after the first experiment

The proficiency scores (Test 2) for both the control and experimental groups after the completion of the first community service learning activity were as follows: The Test 2 results for the control group, consisting of 42 students, showed an average proficiency score based on the evaluation criteria of Test 1 as 5.03, and the average proficiency score based on the evaluation criteria of Test 2 as 5.28, with a score difference of +0.25. Thus, after a period of teaching and real-life experiences in the English 2 course, the English proficiency of students in the control group also showed positive development, with an average increase of +0.25 points.

The experimental group, consisting of 44 students, had an average proficiency score based on the evaluation criteria before the experiment as 4.977, and the average proficiency score based on the evaluation criteria after the completion of the first community service learning activity as 5.55, with a score difference of +0.575. Therefore, after completing the first community service learning activity, the English proficiency of students in the experimental group exhibited positive changes, though the increase was not substantial, with each student's average score increasing by 0.57 points, serving as a significant encouragement for the teaching and real-life experiences. Comparing the scores of the two groups also indicated that the experimental group had a higher increase in scores than the control group, with an average increase of 0.32 points. (see Table 5.10).

Table 5.15. Comparison of Average Proficiency Scores Before and After the Second Experimental Activity

	Test 1	**Test 2**	**Increasing**
TG students	4.98	5.55	+ 0,57
CG students	5.03	5.28	+ 0.25

5.5.2. Correlation of Communication Skills between the Experimental Group and the Control Group after the Second Community Service Learning Activity

The proficiency test results of students after the second experimental activity indicate that the average proficiency score for the 44 students in the experimental group is 6.75, while the average proficiency score

25

for the 42 students in the control group is 6.05. Therefore, after the second experimental activity, the average proficiency scores for both groups increased compared to the scores from Tests 1 and 2.

Table 5.15. Comparison of Average Proficiency Scores Before and After the Second Experimental Activity

	Test 1	Test 3	Increasing
TG students	4,98	6,75	+ 1,77
CG students	5.03	6.05	+ 1.02

In general, the average English proficiency scores of students showed an increase after the period of studying English 2 and following the two Community Service Learning Activities (HTPVCĐ). However, the average increase in proficiency for the experimental group was higher than the control group by 0.75 points. After completing Experimental Activity 1, the students' scores increased by 0.575 points, but after finishing Experimental Activity 2, the score improvement was 1.77 points, indicating that the preparation and organization of the Community Service Learning Activities provided students with more opportunities for real-life experiences and English proficiency development.

5.5.3. Comparison of Changes in the Social-Cultural and Discourse Factors Before and After the Experiment for Students in the Experimental Group

Due to the short duration and the experimental setting not replicating a classroom environment, the thesis did not focus on assessing the English proficiency elements such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, non-verbal communication, time management, etc. Instead, it concentrated on evaluating two factors, "Social-Cultural" and "Discourse," during the organization of the Community Service Learning Activities for students. The assessment focused on measuring changes in components of these two factors: (1) Content and Context-Appropriate Communication Style, (2) Fluency in Communication, and (3) Interaction Skills. The English proficiency of students at each assessment (Tests 1, 2, 3) was evaluated by the instructor in terms of these factors, and then scores for individual components were separately analyzed and compared for differences between assessments.

Table 5.14 shows that, after the period of studying English 2 and the pedagogical experiment, the components (1) Content and Context-Appropriate Communication Style, (2) Fluency in Communication, and (3) Interaction Skills of the English proficiency of students in the experimental group underwent significant changes, with respective increases of 0.48 points, 0.64 points, and 0.76 points.

The results demonstrate that the pedagogical experiment led to significant improvements in the development of English proficiency for students across three factors: (1) Content and Context-Appropriate Communication Style, (2) Fluency in Communication, and (3) Interaction Skills.

CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 5

The experimental process of organizing Community Service Learning Activities (CSL) to validate the hypothesis was carried out rigorously, scientifically, and in accordance with the theoretical foundations of English proficiency (communication skill) and the theoretical basis of CSL.

Two CSL activities were chosen to be suitable for students, ensuring the goal of enhancing English proficiency for students. These activities aimed to provide practical experiences outside the English classroom, thereby generating interest and enjoyment for students participating. They also created additional opportunities for students to reinforce and review their knowledge and skills through thorough preparation, model practice, and organization at the Community College.

The experimental results showed positive changes in students' perception of English proficiency, real-life experiences, and the application of CSL in English language learning. Students perceived English and English proficiency more positively, enjoying the CSL activities and expressing a desire for more similar activities in the future. Additionally, the experimental process helped students gain insights into the forms of CSL and provided an opportunity for students to contribute to the community. Comparing the results of English proficiency tests before and after the experiment revealed an increase in average proficiency scores, with significant development observed in cultural-social and discourse skills. Although the degree of proficiency improvement was not high, it served as an encouragement for students in the process of real-life experiences and English proficiency development. This demonstrated the usefulness and effectiveness of CSL activities for students in various fields of study.

However, the time allocated for organizing CSL activities was limited, and the number of participating students was small, which are limitations that need to be addressed in future research. Furthermore, the chosen CSL activities for experimentation with community colleges, children, and students from other majors at IUH created a familiar and confident environment for students but also revealed some limitations. These limitations include the failure to create sufficient challenges for students, a lack of effort on the part of students, and a lack of surprise in the activities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CONCLUSION

- English language training, in general, and English proficiency, in particular, are essential and beneficial for students in various fields of study during their academic and post-graduation careers.
- The research revealed that the English proficiency of students is only at an average level. Students often do not invest much time and effort into English proficiency, especially in real-life situations outside the English classroom.
- The study also identified shortcomings in teaching methods, assessment practices, and the lack of focus on English proficiency in the curriculum, affecting the teaching and learning of English proficiency.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

For Universities:
- Conduct numerous training programs, workshops, and guidance sessions on the application of CSL in education and training to orient students towards experiential forms of education.
- Implement policies that encourage teachers to apply CSL in teaching, research, and student service activities.

For Teachers:

- Allocate time to learn about CSL, enabling a comprehensive understanding of experiential education and its benefits for students.

- Incorporate small-scale CSL activities during appropriate semesters or breaks to promote self-directed learning and volunteerism among students.

For Students:

- Recognize the importance of English language proficiency and view it as a crucial skill rather than just a normal subject in the university curriculum.

- Engage in proactive learning strategies and participate in various learning activities within and outside the classroom to develop English proficiency and essential soft skills.

For Community Organizations and Enterprises:

- Collaborate with educational institutions to create favorable conditions for students to participate in CSL activities, internships, and practical training.

- Support and actively engage with students during CSL activities, providing valuable opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills.

For Future Research:

- Expand the range of CSL activities to include diverse forms of education and challenges for students.

- Explore and evaluate the impact of additional factors of English proficiency, such as language acquisition strategies and strategic communication skills, through CSL activities.

The recommendations aim to promote the application of CSL in universities, fostering the development of English proficiency among students and addressing the identified limitations in current teaching practices.

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1. **Truong Tran Minh Nhat, Duong Thi Kim Oanh**. (2023). The role of community service-learning on the development of technical students' essential soft skills: Case Study at Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Research Journal in Advance Humanities, Vol. 4, No. 2.
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3. **Truong Tran Minh Nhat**. (2023). Applying Community Service Learning to Improve Technical Students' English Communication Skill: Case Study at Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, VietNam. Eastern journal of languages, linguistics and literatures. Vol 4. No 1.2023. (trang 154-171). DOI : 10.53906/ejlll.v4i1.187.

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