

# Investigating EFL English-Majored Students' Perceptions of Interactive Teaching Methods in Language Classes

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**Abstract:-** This study investigates the perceptions of EFL English-major students at Nam Can Tho University regarding interactive teaching methods. Interactive methods, which include activities such as group work, discussions, role-playing, and peer feedback, are increasingly adopted in language education to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Grounded in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and sociocultural theory, the study explores both the benefits and challenges associated with these methods. A 20-item questionnaire, adapted from existing literature, was administered to 70 students to gather data on their experiences. The findings reveal that students recognize significant benefits of interactive methods, including increased motivation, improved language skills, and practical application of English. However, challenges such as difficulties in transitioning from traditional methods, staying focused due to distractions, managing group activities, addressing cultural influences, and ensuring equal participation were also identified. The study highlights the need for targeted support and professional development for educators, effective classroom management strategies, and culturally responsive teaching practices to enhance the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods. These insights contribute to the ongoing discourse on interactive teaching and offer practical recommendations for improving language instruction in EFL contexts.

**Keywords:-** *Interactive Teaching Methods, Language Learning, Student Perceptions, Communicative Language Teaching, Sociocultural Theory.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the use of interactive teaching approaches in language education has received a lot of attention. These methods, which stress student-centered learning and active engagement, are considered as an alternative to traditional lecture-based approaches. Interactive teaching approaches include group projects, conversations, role-playing, and peer feedback, all of which strive to create a more interesting and effective learning environment. The transition to these techniques is based on a variety of theoretical frameworks, including Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and sociocultural theory, both of which

emphasize the significance of interaction in language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a popular strategy that stresses interaction as both the means and the end aim of language acquisition. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), CLT aims to help students communicate effectively and fluently in real-world circumstances, making language instruction more relevant and practical. This approach is consistent with the growing realization that language competency is more than just knowing grammatical rules; it is also about utilizing the language successfully in a variety of circumstances.

Sociocultural theory, notably Vygotsky's (1978) work, provides additional justification for the use of interactive approaches. According to Vygotsky's thesis, social contact is essential for cognitive growth. He created the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the gap between what learners can do on their own and what they can do with assistance and participation from more experienced peers. This approach emphasizes the value of collaborative learning and peer engagement, both of which are essential components of interactive teaching techniques.

Research has shown that interactive teaching approaches provide a variety of benefits. For example, Dörnyei (2001) emphasizes that these strategies may considerably increase student motivation by making learning more interesting and pleasurable. Long (1996) also highlights the importance of interaction in providing learners with understandable information and chances for meaningful output, both of which are necessary for language learning. Lightbown and Spada (2013) state that interactive techniques can promote language competency by promoting active use of the target language in communicative circumstances.

Despite the acknowledged benefits, using interactive teaching approaches presents problems. Transitioning from conventional to interactive techniques can be challenging for both teachers and students. Teachers may need to learn new skills and tactics to properly manage interactive classrooms, but students may struggle to adjust to more active and involved roles. Classroom management difficulties, such as loudness and off-task conduct during group activities, can also be problematic (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Furthermore, cultural considerations might have an impact on the success of interactive approaches, since students from other cultures may have different expectations and preferences for teaching and learning styles (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Given these factors, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the attitudes of EFL English-major students at Nam Can Tho University toward interactive teaching techniques. This study aims to give a thorough knowledge of how different strategies influence students' language learning experiences by investigating both perceived benefits and obstacles. The findings contribute to the current discussion about the efficacy of interactive teaching techniques, as well as provide insights for instructors looking to use similar approaches in their own classes.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Theoretical Foundations of Interactive Teaching Methods

#### ➤ Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a widely recognized approach in language education that prioritizes interaction as both a means and an objective of language learning. This approach emerged as a reaction against traditional methods that focused heavily on grammatical accuracy and rote memorization. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), CLT aims to engage learners in authentic communication, emphasizing the functional use of language rather than the mere acquisition of linguistic structures.

CLT is grounded in the belief that language learning is most effective when students are actively involved in meaningful communication. This involves creating opportunities for students to use the target language in real-life situations, thereby enhancing their linguistic competence through practice and interaction (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The approach incorporates a range of interactive activities, such as role-plays, group discussions, and information-gap exercises, which are designed to simulate real-world communication and promote active engagement (Littlewood, 2004).

The theoretical basis of CLT is supported by research that highlights the benefits of interactive learning environments. For instance, Ellis (2003) argues that communicative activities provide learners with comprehensible input and opportunities for output, which are crucial for language acquisition. This view is reinforced by Long (1996), who emphasizes that interaction facilitates language learning by offering learners chances to negotiate meaning and receive immediate feedback.

In addition to enhancing language skills, CLT also contributes to learners' motivation and engagement. Dörnyei (2001) notes that interactive methods can significantly boost student motivation by making learning more enjoyable and relevant. This aligns with the findings of Nunan (2003), who suggests that interactive activities help create a dynamic and

stimulating learning environment, fostering greater student participation and interest in language learning.

#### ➤ Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Theory, developed by Lev Vygotsky, provides a theoretical framework that underpins many interactive teaching methods. Vygotsky (1978) posits that cognitive development is inherently social, with learning occurring through interactions with more knowledgeable others, such as teachers and peers. This theory introduces the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the difference between what learners can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance and support (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky's emphasis on social interaction as a critical component of cognitive development is supported by subsequent research in educational psychology. For example, Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) demonstrate that scaffolding—providing temporary support to learners—can significantly enhance their ability to perform tasks within their ZPD. This concept has been further developed by Lantolf (2000), who explores how language learning is mediated through social interactions and cultural tools.

The practical implications of Sociocultural Theory are evident in interactive teaching methods that promote collaborative learning and peer interaction. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), learning is most effective when it occurs within a community of practice, where students engage in shared activities and negotiate meaning collectively. This perspective highlights the importance of creating learning environments that foster social interaction and collaborative problem-solving.

Additionally, Vygotsky's theory underscores the significance of culturally responsive teaching practices. According to Moll et al. (1992), educators should be mindful of students' cultural backgrounds and incorporate culturally relevant materials and strategies to enhance the effectiveness of interactive methods. This aligns with the view of Kramsch (1993), who argues that language learning is deeply embedded in cultural contexts and that understanding these contexts is crucial for effective teaching.

In summary, Communicative Language Teaching and Sociocultural Theory provide robust theoretical foundations for interactive teaching methods. CLT emphasizes the importance of meaningful communication and practical language use, while Sociocultural Theory highlights the role of social interaction and cultural context in cognitive development. Together, these theories support the implementation of interactive teaching approaches that engage students actively and collaboratively, ultimately contributing to more effective language learning outcomes.

## B. Benefits of Interactive Teaching Methods

### ➤ Student Engagement and Motivation

Interactive methods of instruction have been demonstrated to greatly increase student engagement and motivation. Dörnyei (2001) investigates numerous motivating tactics for use in language classes, highlighting the importance of interactive approaches including group work, peer feedback, and communicative activities in maintaining student interest and motivation. These strategies, which actively include students in their learning process and provide chances for them to participate in meaningful interactions, can result in greater excitement and a more dynamic learning environment.

Lightbown and Spada (2013) provide additional evidence for this viewpoint by illustrating the importance of interaction in language acquisition. Their findings show that interactive activities not only aid in the learning of language skills, but also lead to increased student engagement. When students are actively engaged in communicative tasks, they are more likely to stay motivated and dedicated to their language learning objectives. According to the authors, interactive techniques enable students to utilize language in real-world circumstances, which boosts motivation and engagement.

### ➤ Improved Language Proficiency

The influence of interactive teaching approaches on language competency has been extensively demonstrated in the literature. Long (1996) emphasizes the importance of the linguistic context in second language learning, arguing that interactive approaches offer learners with both intelligible input and chances for production. According to Long, successful classroom interaction allows students to acquire input that is slightly above their present level of skill, which is critical for language learning. Furthermore, interactive activities provide countless opportunities for learners to practice and generate language, hence accelerating the development of their language abilities.

Language development relies heavily on the supply of intelligible input through interaction, as well as the chance for learners to generate language in a supportive context. Long's research emphasises the relevance of interactive teaching approaches in generating a rich linguistic environment that promotes language competency.

## C. Challenges and Constraints of Interactive Teaching Methods

The use of interactive teaching methods in the classroom might be hampered by a variety of classroom management and cultural issues. Littlewood (2007) investigates how conventional educational methods in East Asian contexts present considerable barriers to integrating communicative and task-based language instruction. In these situations, there is typically a strong emphasis on rote learning and a hierarchical teacher-student relationship, which might be incompatible with the participative and student-centered character of interactive approaches. The transition to interactive techniques necessitates challenging

entrenched educational standards and tailoring teaching strategies to cultural expectations and classroom dynamics.

Furthermore, Brown (2001) discusses the issues in classroom administration that occur when using interactive teaching approaches. He emphasizes that such strategies need a high degree of instructor competency in managing classroom interactions and ensuring that all students are fully engaged. Teachers must balance individual student requirements while encouraging good group work, which can be difficult in big or diverse courses. Furthermore, there may be practical challenges, such as organizing classroom seating to encourage interaction and controlling group activities to avoid interruptions.

In culturally diverse classrooms, variations in student attitudes toward contact and involvement might hamper the application of interactive approaches. Students from cultures that value passive learning may initially oppose interactive tactics, so teachers must give adequate assistance and progressively integrate these methods to encourage acceptance and successful use.

## D. Perceptions of Interactive Teaching Methods

The perspectives of both teachers and students are critical to the effective application of interactive teaching approaches. According to Nunan (2015), instructors' opinions about interactive techniques have a major impact on their use in the classroom. Teachers who see interactive tactics as advantageous are more likely to successfully incorporate them into their teaching practice. Nunan emphasizes that when instructors believe interactive approaches will improve student learning and engagement, they are more likely to devote time and effort in implementing these practices. However, teachers who are used to traditional, lecture-based techniques may find interactive alternatives difficult or time-consuming, which might limit their deployment.

Similarly, how students perceive interactive teaching approaches can have a significant impact on their efficacy. Breen (2001) investigates how students' attitudes toward interactive activities influence their learning outcomes. According to the study, students who have a good attitude about interactive techniques are more likely to participate actively and profit from them. In contrast, students who are dubious or uncomfortable with interactive activities may refuse to participate, limiting the usefulness of these strategies. Breen highlights the need of matching interactive approaches to students' expectations while also giving clear explanations and assistance to develop positive attitudes and involvement.

Overall, both instructor and student perspectives are critical to the effective use of interactive teaching approaches. Teachers must be supported via professional development and encouraged to adopt interactive tactics, while students must be equipped and motivated to actively participate in these methods. Creating a supportive atmosphere that addresses both instructor and student views can improve the efficacy of interactive teaching methods.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### A. Participants

The study involved 70 participants who are English-major students at Nam Can Tho University. These students were selected to provide insights into their perceptions of interactive teaching methods used in their English language classes. The selection aimed to ensure a representative sample of the student population, capturing a diverse range of experiences and opinions within the EFL context.

#### B. Instrument and Data collection

The questionnaire was developed based on key insights from the literature, particularly the works of Dörnyei (2001), Lightbown & Spada (2013), Long (1996), Littlewood (2007), Brown (2001), Nunan (2015), and Breen (2001). These authors provided foundational ideas regarding the benefits and challenges of interactive teaching methods.

Data were collected using a 20-item questionnaire, adapted from existing literature to fit the specific context of the study. The questionnaire was designed to assess both the perceived benefits and challenges of interactive teaching methods. It comprised two main sections. The first benefits section included 10 items focused on understanding students' views on how interactive methods contribute to their language learning, engagement, and motivation. The other section also included 10 items aimed at identifying difficulties and constraints experienced by students when engaging with interactive teaching approaches.

### IV. FINDINGS

#### A. Perceptions of Benefits of Interactive Teaching Methods

Table 1. Student's Perceptions Towards Benefits Of Interactive Teaching Methods

Items	N	Mean	SD
Interactive activities (e.g., discussions, debates) increase my motivation to learn English.	70	4.06	.79
Participating in interactive tasks helps me improve my English language skills more effectively compared to traditional methods.	70	4.10	.85
Group work activities help improve my speaking skills.	70	4.03	.81
Role-playing activities enhance my ability to use English in real-life situations.	70	4.03	.76
Peer feedback is beneficial for my understanding of English grammar and vocabulary.	70	4.03	.91

Students agreed that interactive events like discussions and debates improve their enthusiasm to study English, with a mean score of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 0.79. This shows that such activities are extremely successful at engaging students and increasing motivation. The low standard deviation suggests that responses were very consistent throughout the student group.

Participating in interactive assignments was judged to assist students enhance their English language abilities more successfully than traditional approaches, as seen by the highest mean score of 4.10 and standard deviation of 0.85. This substantial agreement emphasizes the efficiency of interactive exercises in language acquisition, while responses were slightly more variable than for other items.

Group work activities were similarly rated well, with a mean score of 4.03 and a standard deviation of 0.81. Students said that these activities helped them enhance their speaking

abilities, indicating the importance of collaborative learning environments in developing oral competency.

Role-playing exercises had an average score of 4.03 with a standard deviation of 0.76, suggesting that students found them useful for practicing English in real-life circumstances. The low standard deviation indicates a high level of student agreement on the usefulness of role-playing in language acquisition.

Finally, peer input was deemed advantageous for comprehending English grammar and vocabulary, with a mean score of 4.03 and a larger standard deviation of 0.91. While students largely agreed on the importance of peer feedback, the slightly larger variability indicates that experiences with peer feedback may differ more than with other interactive techniques.

#### B. Perceptions of Challenges of Interactive Teaching Methods

Table 2. Student's Perceptions Towards Challenges of Interactive Teaching Methods

Items	N	Mean	SD
The transition from traditional teaching methods to interactive methods has been difficult.	70	3.83	.91
I find it challenging to stay focused during interactive activities due to distractions.	70	3.84	1.01
I experience difficulties with group activities due to classroom management issues (e.g., noise, off-task behavior).	70	3.87	.86
Cultural factors influence the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods in my classes.	70	3.87	.74
Interactive methods sometimes lead to unequal participation in group activities.	70	3.90	.78

Students largely acknowledged that the transition from traditional to interactive teaching techniques presented considerable problems, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.83. The standard deviation of 0.91 indicates that some students found the transfer more challenging than others. This emphasizes the need of providing thorough assistance and training to both students and educators in order to allow a smoother transition and aid in the effective adaptation to new teaching practices.

The mean score of 3.84 indicates that students often struggle to keep concentration during interactive activities. The greater standard deviation of 1.01 suggests a substantial variation in how distractions affect different students. While interactive approaches are interesting, they can also create distractions from the learning process. This highlights the need for improved classroom management tactics to reduce distractions and assist students stay engaged during interactive sessions.

Students reported challenges with group activities, owing mostly to classroom management concerns such as loudness and off-task conduct. This is reflected in the average score of 3.87 with a standard deviation of 0.86. Managing group activities may be difficult, and these challenges can undermine the efficacy of interactive techniques. Effective classroom management approaches are required to handle these issues and guarantee that group activities are productive and conducive to learning.

Cultural characteristics were shown to have a substantial influence on the efficacy of interactive teaching approaches, with a mean score of 3.87 and standard deviation of 0.74. This shows that students' cultural environment may influence how successfully these strategies are accepted and executed. Understanding and implementing culturally sensitive teaching strategies is critical for mitigating these affects and improving the effectiveness of interactive teaching approaches in diverse classrooms.

The issue of uneven involvement in group activities was also addressed, with a mean score of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 0.78. Students said that interactive approaches might occasionally result in unequal contributions from group members, with some students interacting more actively than others. This difficulty highlights the need for ways to enable more fair involvement in group work, such as designating specified duties or implementing planned group activities to ensure that all members contribute equally.

The outcomes of this study provide important insights into the attitudes of EFL English-major students at Nam Can Tho University toward interactive teaching techniques. The findings show that students perceive and value the benefits of these strategies, such as greater motivation, improved language skills, improved speaking abilities, practical application of English in real-world settings, and the significance of peer evaluation. However, the study also identifies significant problems that must be solved in order to fully realize the promise of interactive teaching approaches.

One important effect observed is increased motivation from interactive activities. Activities like talks and debates tend to engage students more successfully than traditional techniques, which is consistent with Dörnyei's (2001) results on motivating tactics in language classrooms. Similarly, Long's (1996) study, which stressed the function of interaction in language learning, lends credence to the belief that interactive assignments efficiently increase language abilities. The persistent positive reactions to group work, role-playing, and peer feedback support the theoretical underpinnings of interactive approaches, particularly those based on sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978).

Despite these benefits, students have encountered substantial problems. The difficulty in moving from traditional to interactive techniques highlights the importance of organized assistance and professional development for both educators and students. Distractions make it difficult to focus during interactive activities, emphasizing the significance of efficient classroom management techniques. This conclusion is consistent with prior study, which found that interactive settings, while interesting, might occasionally lead to off-task behavior (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Classroom management difficulties, such as loudness and off-task conduct during group activities, were also identified as challenges. These challenges can detract from the potential benefits of interactive approaches, implying the need for improved tactics for managing group dynamics and promoting fruitful cooperation. Furthermore, the impact of cultural influences on the efficacy of interactive approaches emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive teaching practices. This conclusion is consistent with previous research that highlights the importance of cultural context in educational efficacy (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

The issue over uneven involvement in group activities is especially relevant. This difficulty demonstrates that, while interactive approaches might promote cooperation, they must also be carefully facilitated to guarantee that all students are actively involved. Strategies such as designating particular tasks within groups and implementing planned activities might assist solve this issue and promote more egalitarian participation.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on the attitudes of EFL English-major students at Nam Can Tho University about interactive teaching techniques. According to the findings, students notice considerable benefits from these strategies, such as greater motivation, better language abilities, enhanced practical application, and useful peer input. However, the study also notes some hurdles, such as difficulty moving from conventional techniques, remaining focused, managing classroom dynamics, dealing with cultural influences, and guaranteeing equitable participation in group activities.

To fully realize the potential of interactive teaching methods, these challenges must be addressed through targeted educator support and professional development, effective classroom management strategies, culturally responsive teaching practices, and structured group activity facilitation. By doing so, educators may build more engaging and effective learning environments that capitalize on the benefits of interactive approaches while limiting their drawbacks.

Future study should look at particular solutions for addressing these problems, as well as the long-term effects of interactive teaching approaches on language competency and student engagement. Furthermore, a more in-depth investigation of the influence of cultural elements may give additional insights on how to customize interactive approaches to varied student groups. Overall, this study adds to the expanding body of literature on interactive teaching approaches, highlighting their potential to improve EFL instruction when used properly.

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