

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH

2023, Vol. 4, No. 1, 256 – 262

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.04.01.23>

Research Article

A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis of English Education Studies Regarding Development of Taiwanese Students' Skills in the University Level

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Article history:

Submission January 2023

Revised January 2023

Accepted January 2023

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ABSTRACT

Technology is crucial to language learning particularly the English language and entails enormous potential. It is also clear that the evolution of technology in the present times has a significant impact on how well foreign language learners acquire their new language. As a result, the current study's objective is to give a meta-synthesis of research findings on student development activities published in prestigious academic journals. Eight 2020–2022 studies examined English language learning innovations. For a systematic review, the studies were grouped using the Critical Skills for Evaluation Program (CASP) checklist and PRISMA 2020 flow diagram. Thematic analysis identified four primary themes were: (1) Using multimedia technology for speaking, (2) Designing and delivering writing courses, (3) Internet-based listening and reading pedagogy, (4) Attending cramming classes. The study's meta-theme, dimensions of a student development activity, emerged. It is advised that teachers and students consider the following aspects of the student development activity in their regular English language study.

Keywords: *Computed-assisted language learning, Cram school, English speaking ability, Video instruction, Second language writing*

Introduction

People use language as a communication tool daily. English has been acknowledged as a crucial communication tool as globalization spurs innovation and competition worldwide (Zhang & Liu, 2018). More than half the population speaks two languages. In practically all nations, acquiring the English language is es-

sential for formal education and career opportunities. In Taiwan, a country where English is a second language, university students struggle with speaking, listening, reading, and writing because they perceive English as being impractical for many of them, which lowers their motivation to learn (Wang, 2004)

How to cite:

Maravilla, W. H. G., Maming, J. B., & Toring, K. N. (2023). A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis of English Education Studies Regarding Development of Taiwanese Students' Skills in the University Level. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. 4(1), 256 – 262. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.04.01.23

Vocabulary starts language. Most of the TOEIC exam requires 3000–4000 words (Kiyomi and Oghigian, 2009). Huang (2004) discovered that Taiwanese learners may have a vocabulary of under 2000 words, making it impossible that they would accomplish the TOEIC and some other difficult English exams. English teachers used games to help prepare students for the TOEIC test and collegiate English language requirements. Taiwanese pupils prioritize English over vocabulary. English writing is particularly challenging, especially for poorer achievers who typically have lower levels of learning motivation and interests (Yunus, Salehi, & Embi, 2012). Before and during the coronavirus outbreak, schools around Taiwan implemented computer technology in their writing courses to help Taiwanese students become more proficient writers in English.

Numerous scholars have also asserted that, of all other language competencies, speaking is the most important for every language (Chien et al., 2020). However, speaking English can be particularly difficult for those learners of non-native speakers. Due to the intricacy of the skills needed for speaking English, many EFL students are reluctant to speak out because they worry about being judged for their errors (Loan & Tuyen, 2020). Different speaking activities have been incorporated into language educational contexts to support students' language learning and address EFL learners' needs for ample speaking practice. These activities include video creation (Chen, 2019), storytelling (Fu et al., 2021), and video dubbing (Manurung & Pohan, 2019), which offer authentic language-use opportunities for learners to undergo constant meaningful language input and output practices (Li, 2019).

Workplace English for professionals are crucial topic particularly in the understanding of language for intentional purposes that demands more attention from language scholars and educators (Bosher, 2015). Language for professional purposes has recently been acknowledged as an important component of language acquisition. It usually concentrated on the speaking and listening abilities required to communicate with patients and their families from different countries in clinical settings. Despite these priorities, it is crucial for example

nurses to accurately interpret and use English in written materials, including prescriptions, admission notes, patient histories, and more (Lu, 2018). However, in the context of research, English writing skills training for nurses, especially nursing note-writing, has long been disregarded (Tai, 2015). Most importantly, multi-media technology, in the form of videos, has rapidly increased in popularity in teaching foreign languages in the twenty-first century since movies frequently include real device rich aural information (Mayora, 2009); (Ketcha, 2019).

Further to institutional changes in how English language training is conducted, parents outside of colleges also want their children to acquire the ability to communicate in English quickly. However, because Taiwan can be considered non-native speakers of English language, students rarely have the opportunity to practice their English outside of the classroom, so they enroll in cram schools to sharpen their English. Students attend English cram schools to increase their English abilities for specific purposes. Cram school teachers must determine if pupils' learning attitudes are strong enough to increase language acquisition particularly in English and its influences and motivations.

The education industry must undergo ongoing improvement to guarantee the caliber of its outputs if it is to advance, continue, and continue. In completing the current meta-synthesis, we were particularly interested in activities that would help students and teachers choose the optimal teaching strategies to apply in their courses. This systematic research aims to investigate the features of various student development activities that can boost their interest in English language instruction.

Methods

A meta-synthesis methods were used in this study to interpretively combined findings from various connected studies (Walsh & Downe, 2005). It is the systematic review and integration of findings from qualitative investigations (Lachal et al. (2017)). In this meta-synthesis analysis, the researchers have established criteria particularly what will be included and excluded. Papers from the Google Scholar and Eric Database that dealt with

student development initiatives at the university level were selected. The timeframe was deliberately intended to run from 2020 to 2022. Additionally, the descriptors or phrases "student development," "English skill," and "university" were entered into the software. The previously listed keywords were selected to draw articles. Following that, the screened data was organized using a flow diagram created with PRISMA 2020.

The Inclusion and exclusion standards give the reviewer a foundation from which to make sound judgments (Meline, 2006). According to the protocol's inclusion criteria, the studies that were included were chosen: (a) Articles

released in 2020–2022. It must also be written in English, contain studies pertaining to students' English growth, and meet the requirements of the program for developing critical evaluation abilities (CASP).

The emerging themes were determined using the thematic analysis procedure described by Clarke and Braune (2013). It is a qualitative data analysis technique that entails reviewing a data collection and looking for themes that run across the data. The six-step theme analysis protocol is as follows: Understanding the data, creating initial codes, seeking for themes, evaluating themes, representing themes, and interpreting outcomes are the first five steps.

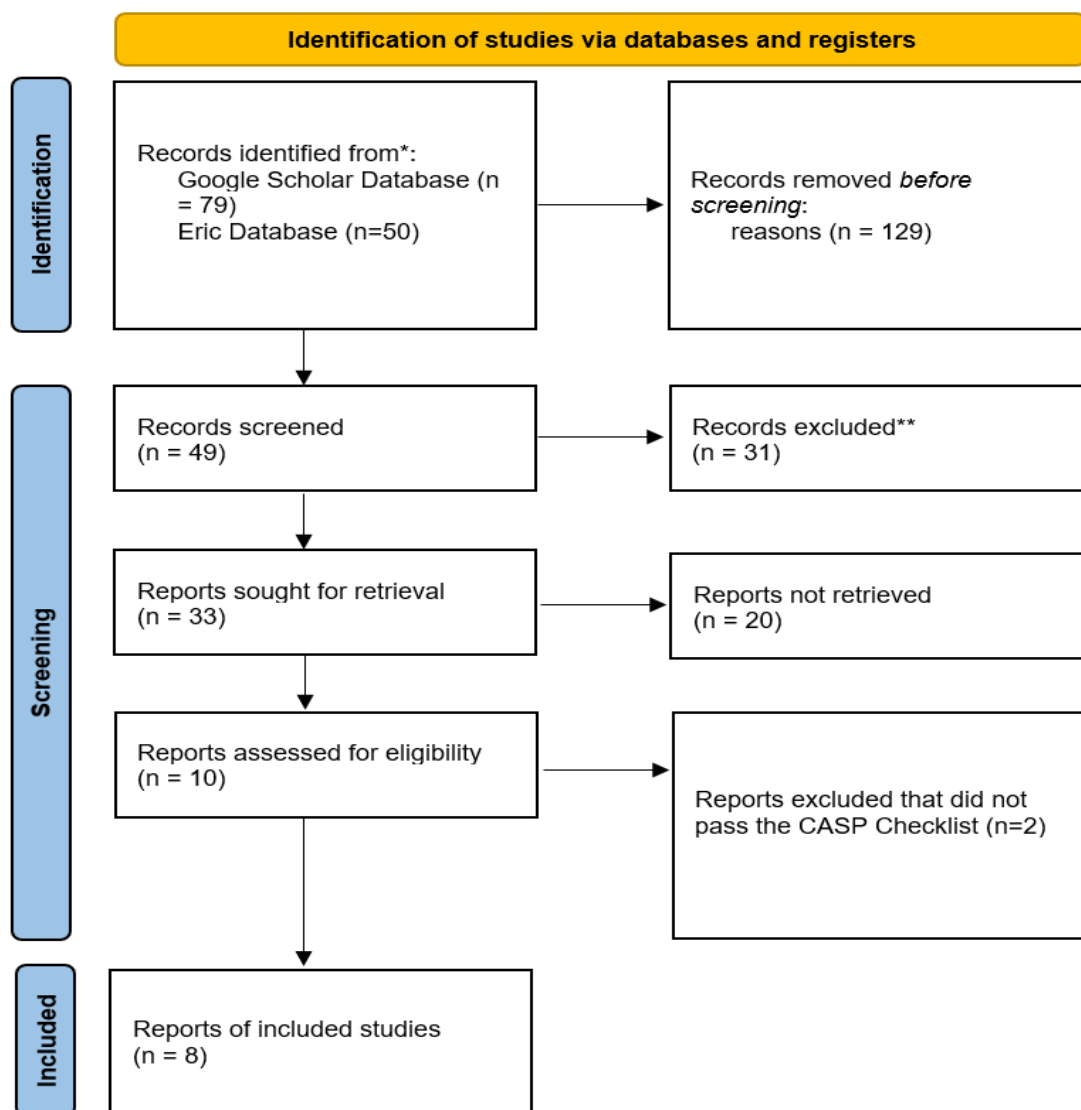


Figure 1. The predetermined inclusion criteria were used to screen the chosen papers

Results and Discussion

Eight (8) researches were considered in the meta-synthesis, and the basic codes were generated using the student development

programs run in several Taiwanese colleges. The study's topic and the produced initial codes utilized for theme analysis are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Studies that were investigated

Article	Author's and Year of Publication	Generated Codes for the Student-Development Programs components in the studies
1	Chen et al., 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video based Instruction • Teaching of connected speech to students • Immersing language learners to multimedia instructional environments.
2	Chang 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease Taiwanese university English writing difficulties • Blogging
3	Cheng 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game-Based Learning • Quizlet • TOEIC Vocabulary • Students' learning motivation
4	Wu 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TED Talks • Listening Comprehension • Authentic online videos • Communicative Skills
5	Jao et. al, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video dubbing apps • Scaffolding • Accuracy and fluency • Innovation and competition around the world • Coaching and Modeling
6	Lo et. al; 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English cram school • Learning motivation • Learning attitude • Learning well-being
7	Chen et. al 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops on inbox proficiency • E-mail writing through Facebook • Computer assisted language learning • Students work together to exchange ideas
8	Tsai et. al 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note-writing • Writing tasks • Online writing platform • Feedback

The initial codes for the various student development activities were developed, as indicated in the table, to look for themes. The themes that emerged were: (1) Using Multimedia Technology for Speaking, (2) Creating and Delivering Writing Courses, (3) Internet Teaching Pedagogy in Listening and Reading, and (4) Cram School. The meta-theme of the study is found to be aspects of the student development program. Below are discussions of the four (4) themes and one (1) meta-theme:

Theme 1: Implementing Multimedia Technology for Speaking

One of the topics that have received the most attention in both research and educational contexts is video-enhanced training (Chun, 2016; Davis & Vincent, 2019; Y. J. Lin & Wang, 2018). Videos frequently include aids depicting the real object (Mayora, 2009), rich aural content like denouement, visage, gestures, and other perceptible cues), and are rich with cultural references (Canning-Wilson & Wallace, 2000; Galbraith & Rodriguez, 2018; Ketcha, 2019; Y. J. Lin & Wang, 2018). Using video technology to teach speaking can improve students' self-confidence, motivation, long-term listening comprehension, vocabulary learning, and pronunciation skills.

With the help of video dubbing, also referred to as lip-synchronized dubbing, students can voice-over video characters' dialogue (Lertola, 2019). Since the features of video dubbing give students a chance to mimic the intonation, pronunciation, and speed of native English speakers, it has been pushed for integration into language classrooms to support learners' English-speaking development (Burston, 2005; Chiu, 2011; He & Wasuntarasophit, 2015; Mandasari et al., 2017). (Burston, 2005; Pamungkas, 2019). There have also been many documented advantages of video dubbing to improve learners' English-speaking abilities, including improved phoneme recognition, phonology, and vocabulary understanding (Hamada, 2016; Li, Computer Assisted Language Learning 5, 2019; Martinsen et al., 2017).

Instead of a learning theory, Herrington and Oliver proposed the idea of authentic learning, which can be used as a model for curriculum design (Herrington, 2015). With real-world

tasks and issues, authentic learning enables students to investigate, debate, and meaningfully develop ideas and relationships (Herrington & Oliver, 2000). Using instinctive objects in the learning environment is advantageous to any learning endeavors, according to Gauriento and Morley (2001), who also repeated this idea. In other words, when teachers apply real-world challenges, difficulties, and applications, learners are more likely to boost their motivation.

From the perspective non-native English speakers and teachers, TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) has numerous advantages as a source of authentic listening materials. According to Park and Cha (2013), TED movies have four distinct advantages: intriguing material, a unique "interactive transcript" function, quick downloading, and straightforward access. The perspectives and attitudes of Korean EFL students regarding authentic listening materials (TED Talks) were highly favorable, according to other instructors (Gagen-Lanning, 2015; Kim, 2008; Watkins & Wilkins, 2011).

Theme 2: Designing and Delivery of Writing Courses

Since it came out, blogs have been helpful in education because they are easy to use, user-friendly (Fageeh, 2011; Noytim, 2010), and provide a constructivist teaching atmosphere where students can communicate and discuss their thoughts with their peers and readers to make learning more fun, make them feel like they belong, and improve their performance (Habul-abanovi, 2015). EFL writing instruction is also communicative, helpful, and team-based because students can work together to improve their language skills (Aydin, 2014).

Because it makes learning activities like a conversation, individual responses, reflections, questions, suggestions, and so forth more accessible, Facebook is a fantastic platform for L2 pedagogy. Additionally, it offers options for group learning, knowledge sharing, synchronous and asynchronous interactions, and collaborative writing. Numerous experts have recently been interested in using Facebook to improve students' writing skills. According to research by Rodliyah (Year), utilizing Facebook

helped students improve their vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and fluency while providing engaging practice that lets them connect with and learn from their peers.

Technology-assisted teaching and learning of writing skills have grown in importance in the field of second language acquisition. Technology-mediated instruction (TMI), which facilitates composing processes, has been hotly debated in recent decades due to the ongoing development of learning technologies. According to many reports, TMI can be more successful than conventional paper-pencil approaches at simultaneously raising students' writing proficiency and engagement levels. TMI may allow learners to read and share their written works, which furthers the socializing process. Although during TMI, pupils appear to be quiet and independent, the learning environment generated by ICT is ideal for encouraging group interaction and collaborative learning.

Theme 3: Internet Teaching Pedagogy in Listening and Reading

Gamification is a part of the educational process where play and gaming material aim to increase players'/learners' knowledge and skills. Liu and Chu (2010) showed how play learning could motivate students to speak and listen more than non-gaming techniques. According to Peterson Erhel and Jamet, gamification can boost long-term learning and motivation (2013). Quizlet, is an example of gamification learning tools that may stimulate TOEIC vocabulary students. Quizlet, which employs games to teach ideas, could also help these students pass the TOEIC, boost their confidence and thrive in their continuing English language studies. Quizlet may help urban remedial writing high school students learn vocabulary, according to Dreyer (2014). Franciosi (2017) showed that Quizlet games can greatly improve the usability of freshly taught English vocabulary.

Based on this perception, second-language learners' grammar instruction involves actively producing concepts rather than just receiving knowledge that has already been established by "the other." TED Talks serve as a mediational artifact, and sign language serves as a means of instrumental communication during

linguistic mediation. Students can cooperate in a classroom setting if the signs and tools used in the learning mediation are developed more spontaneously. Students are aware of the mediational artifacts. (2006) Gutiérrez. Computers and TED Talks are utilized as mediational tools when speaking with students to enhance their listening comprehension more effectively.

Theme 4: Attending Cram School

According to Grosjean (2010) majority of the individuals uttered languages beyond of his own. In practically all nations, acquiring language particularly the English one is essential for formal education and career opportunities. Parents wish their children to become fluent in English as quickly as feasible. However, because Taiwan is not an English native speaking nation, students hardly ever get the chance to use their English outside the classroom. Some students lost interest in their English studies.

Taiwanese English cram schools are popular. Taiwan Government Statistics estimated to 3,500 cram schools. Most elementary to college students frequented English cram courses to learn English outside of school. English immersion programs are preferred by Taiwanese parents. English cram schools are attended before and after elementary school and university. First, they want professional certificates to show their English skills. These certifications aid employment and school applications. English cram schools offer many certification test preparation courses. Taiwan's focus on international trade necessitates business English. Business English training simulates business meetings, letters, jargon, and other situations.

Taiwanese students continue to favor studying overseas as an option. This cram schools dedicated for English language, provide short-term training so that they can quickly learn helpful English abilities before traveling overseas. Finally, as English is a requirement for university and high school admission exams, students attend English cram schools to increase their proficiency in the language.

Meta-Theme: Dimensions of Student Development Activities.

All levels of students are uneasy about the advent of technology. There were many

approaches used to deal with the matter. To aid universities and colleges in improving their students' English language proficiency, several student development programs were put into place. The implementation of multimedia learning, the design, and delivery of writing courses, the usage of Internet Teaching Pedagogies, and attendance at Cram Schools are the main focuses of the student development program undertaken by educational institutions. A student development program's dimensions are made up of these emerging topics.

Conclusion

To address the recent demand of education, numerous student development initiatives have been developed. In the area of English language instruction, meta-synthesis has been used to explore fresh ideas for productive ways to improve students' abilities. Additionally, it has shown fresh connections between well-known concepts. It has inspired second language learning experts, including educators, researchers, and politicians, to reevaluate some of our basic presumptions. Speaking with English language learners has inspired us to pay attention to both the context and method of learning as well as the results.

Meta-synthesis is also often regarded as the best attempt to use the various techniques for combining diverse works into unified themes. We freely agree that the themes don't necessarily represent ground-breaking strategies for teaching second languages. If teachers and students want to use these strategies, they will probably need to adapt them to their own contexts and goals. Some people can even experience an insurmountable disparity between their own opinions on language teaching and these procedures. Such modifications are probably the result of a meta-synthesis. According to McCormick, Rodney, and Varcoe (2003), the results of the meantime ta-synthesis do not clearly and unmistakably point to social and educational activities. Therefore, it is

recommended that these factors be considered while creating a student development program in respective institutions.

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