

Language attitudes in Vietnam: The dominance of English and emerging trends in foreign language preferences

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History

- Received: 15-07-2024
- Revised: 04-3-2025
- Accepted: 21-3-2025
- Published Online: 31-3-2025

DOI :

<https://doi.org/10.32508/stdjssh.v9i1.1039>



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ABSTRACT

This study explores the attitudes of Vietnamese learners towards English as their foreign language, focusing specifically on their motivations, learning methods, and future language preferences. The research aims to enhance the understanding of how the contemporary Vietnamese attitudes influence the choice of English, considering its historical development in Vietnam. The data collected from a survey of more than 700 participants reveal that English remains the dominant foreign language in Vietnam, driven by motivations, including career advancement, job opportunities, and educational requirements. Most respondents prefer self-study and language schools, demonstrating a proactive approach to language acquisition. The study also identifies a notable shift in language preferences, with growing interest in other languages like Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. These languages are gaining popularity due to cultural influences, evolving career prospects, and the increasing impact of Asian countries in the region. This trend suggests a potential diversification in foreign language learning in Vietnam, with English's dominance being challenged by these emerging languages. The findings highlight the need for educational institutions, curriculum developers, and policymakers to adapt language education strategies to reflect current learner attitudes and the changing landscape of foreign language preferences. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of aligning language education with learners' needs and motivations to foster more effective learning outcomes. By understanding the current attitudes toward English and other foreign languages, educators can better design curricula and teaching methods that resonate with students' goals and preferences. Future research should build on these findings by incorporating diverse data collection methods, such as interviews and observations, to provide a deeper exploration of the complex factors influencing language attitudes and choices in Vietnam. This study proposes insights to inform language education policies and practice, supporting alignment with the needs of Vietnamese learners in a changing global context.

Key words: language attitudes, English in Vietnam, social factors, foreign language education

INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, the trend of learning foreign languages has grown significantly, with English being recognized as one of the most effective tools for communication. The notions of "English as an international language" and "English as a global language" have become increasingly prominent^{1,2}. Many English learners around the globe acknowledge the crucial role that English fluency plays in their education and careers. To adapt to the integration and globalization processes, Vietnamese people, particularly the younger generation, have adopted a positive attitude towards learning English. This study aims to investigate the attitudes of Vietnamese learners towards English, in terms of their motivations, learning strategies, and future language preferences. The focus is on the present-day perspectives and aspirations of learners, thereby providing a fresh look at how English is perceived in a rapidly evolving society.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In recent years, the trend of learning English has undeniably surged in Vietnamese society. Numerous English language centers have been established, making English teaching positions, both for Vietnamese and native speakers, highly sought after in the Vietnamese job market. This study aims to uncover the primary reasons behind the dominance of English as a foreign language in Vietnam, the methods Vietnamese people use to learn English, and whether another foreign language could potentially replace English. To achieve these objectives, the study will address the following research questions:

- What factors influence the attitudes of Vietnamese learners towards English as the dominant foreign language?
- What methods are most commonly used by Vietnamese learners for studying English and

Cite this article : Nga Hoang Yen P. **Language attitudes in Vietnam: The dominance of English and emerging trends in foreign language preferences.** *Sci. Tech. Dev. J. - Soc. Sci. Hum.* 2025; 9(1):1-10.

other foreign languages?

- What are the future language preferences of Vietnamese learners?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of terms

Attitude was first recognized as a fundamental concept in psychology by Allport³, who later defined it as "a learned disposition to think, feel, and behave towards a person in a particular way"⁴. While Allport emphasized the significance of attitude in psychology and extended the concept to encompass thought and behavior, Thurstone initially concentrated on the pros and cons of emotional responses related to attitude⁵. To further elucidate the study of attitude, Agheyisi and Fishman⁶ and Appel and Muysken⁷ introduced two theoretical approaches: the behaviorist view and the mentalist view. The behaviorist view asserts that attitudes can be identified through observing people's responses to specific languages in social contexts. In contrast, the mentalist view considers attitudes as an internal mental state that may trigger certain behaviors, or as "an intervening variable between a stimulus affecting a person and that person's response"⁸.

Attitude became a key concept in sociolinguistics with Labov's exploration of how language change is influenced by the "prestige" and "stigma" assigned by speech communities to specific linguistic features⁹. Crystal defined language attitudes as people's feelings about their own or other languages¹⁰. Bradac proposed that through initial interactions, people gradually form attitudes towards language. He suggested that linguistic features play a crucial role in shaping listeners' "beliefs" and "evaluations" of speakers, significantly influencing behavior in low-familiarity contexts¹¹. Fasold expanded the concept of language attitudes by including attitudes towards various speakers of a specific language, which affect behaviors related to language maintenance and planning efforts⁸.

In this study, "attitude" is conceptualized through Allport's definition, viewed through a dual lens of behaviorist and mentalist theories. This aligns with Labov's sociolinguistic framework, focusing on how social factors shape language attitudes, including the prestige or stigma of linguistic features within communities^{4,6,8,9}. The research thus aims to capture the complex interplay of cognitive and emotional factors in learners' attitudes toward English and other foreign languages in Vietnam.

Previous research on language attitudes

The study of language attitudes dates back to Aristotle, who claimed that the type of language used by speakers influenced their credibility¹². Researchers in Britain and the USA, such as Cantril and Allport¹³, Pear¹⁴, and Taylor¹⁵, supported the hypothesis that people can make reliable judgments about speakers' personalities based on verbal expression. Lambert et al.¹⁶ conducted a pivotal study to investigate listeners' evaluational responses to different language varieties. Their primary objective was to observe responses to English and French critically. They used recordings of four bilingual speakers reading a passage in both languages and had native French and English speakers rate these recordings using matched-guise rating scales. The results showed a preference for the English recordings, which were rated higher on kindness and intelligence and were found more attractive by respondents. This investigation is valuable for several reasons. First, it was one of the earliest studies to use the "matched-guise" technique to control for speaker idiosyncrasies^{11,17}. Second, the use of standard rating scales allowed participants to show their attitudes toward different guises. Third, the researchers deliberately used a formal French passage to minimize the influence of message content on participants' responses. More recent studies have tended to use more naturalistic messages, such as social interactions and daily conversations, to explore the impact of accent or dialect variation^{18,19}.

Lambert et al.²⁰ conducted a significant study with a more sophisticated design, involving Jewish and Arab adolescents. Participants listened to tape recordings in Hebrew (using Ashkenazic and Yemenite dialects) and Arabic by bilingual speakers, and rated the speakers' voices on six-point scales. Jewish participants responded negatively to the Arabic recordings, while Arab participants gave low ratings to the Hebrew guises. The study revealed low correlations between standard measures of attitudes and matched-guise ratings, indicating that these methods captured different domains of attitudes. The matched-guise technique revealed stereotyped attitudinal and perceptual responses that were not as evident through standard attitudinal measurement procedures. These early contributions, spanning the 1960s to 1970s, typically employed the matched-guise technique to compare the impacts of culturally different language or dialect variations. Another method to gauge attitudes towards a language involved surveys or questionnaires. For example, Trudgill and Tzavaras²¹ used a questionnaire to observe a generational decline in the number of Arvanites (Greek

speakers of an Albanian dialect) who spoke Arvanitika. Their findings indicated that younger speakers anticipated the assimilation of their language and sociocultural group into mainstream Greek society. In the 1980s, language-attitudes research generally focused on between-group differences. Hog²² and Mulac and Lundell²³ shifted the focus from geographical differences to social roles, investigating the "attitudinal consequences" of gender-specific language use. Early research primarily described distinct attitudes towards various languages, accents, or dialects, but paid less attention to explaining results and advancing linguistic theory. Consequently, while these early studies were useful, their findings risked becoming outdated due to evolving attitudinal trends¹¹.

Holmes highlighted that attitudes towards a particular language are significantly influenced by historical, political, and social factors²⁴. She proposed an underlying assumption about three layers of attitudes towards a sociocultural group. The first level involves people's attitudinal reactions to a social group, the second considers evaluative responses to the group's specific language, and the third focuses on attitudes towards individual speakers of that language. Holmes also noted that "intelligibility is affected by attitudes," meaning that people find it easier to comprehend languages, accents, or dialects they appreciate. Positive attitudes towards native speakers could enhance the success of learning a foreign language²⁴. Van Herk introduced a new perspective on "language attitudes" in his recent study. He suggested that people often categorize languages into "normal" (their own or the language they wish to acquire) and "wrong/odd" (the language of others) based on their attitudinal traits. However, contemporary linguists have shifted these terms to "appropriate" and "inappropriate," broadening the study of attitudes to include different accents and dialects within their geographical contexts²⁵.

Language attitudes towards English

English as a global language

The concept of English as a global language has been extensively discussed, with scholars such as Jenkins, House, and Seidlhofer offering significant perspectives on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), a term that emphasizes English's role as a shared language facilitating intercultural communication among speakers of diverse linguistic backgrounds^{1,26-30}. Jenkins views English as an "international language," underscoring its utility beyond native-speaking contexts, while House and Seidlhofer highlight its role as a "lingua franca," a common communication tool for

speakers worldwide who may not share cultural or linguistic heritage^{1,28-30}.

Other scholars support this perspective; for instance, Meierkord describes English as "a medium of intercultural communication"²⁶, and Firth refers to it as a "contact language" for individuals who lack a common native tongue²⁷. Johnson expands on this by noting that English has become "the language of globalization, international business, politics, and diplomacy," as well as "the language of computers and the Internet"³¹.

Crystal further explains the global dominance of English through two primary factors: geographical-historical and socio-cultural. The former traces English's worldwide spread to historical events, such as British colonial expansion, which established English as a primary or secondary language in many regions. Today, English is prevalent in areas across the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans, further supporting its status as a global language². The latter factor relates to socio-cultural dynamics, where English is associated with economic growth and technological advancement, becoming essential in business, education, and technology worldwide. Consequently, English has become a "lingua franca" recognized across both English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries, serving as a bridge for intercultural exchange and fostering global understanding^{1,2}.

Johnson asserted that English proficiency was crucial for global development and personal advancement. She highlighted that many international companies adopt English to ensure effective communication and inclusivity within their teams. Recognizing the competitive edge an English-speaking workforce provides, countries like India, China, and various European nations were implementing bilingual education programs from early childhood through higher education. Another factor contributing to the global popularity of English was its association with modernity and American pop culture, perceived as "a glamorous elite culture" in contemporary societies. Thus, English continued to expand globally, serving both as a "global vernacular" in business and reinforcing the cultural influence of American and British lifestyles across diverse cultures³¹.

English as a dominant foreign language in Vietnam

According to Wright, the foundations of foreign language learning in Vietnam could be traced to Chinese, French, and English³². Denham posits that

“Vietnam’s linguistic history exemplifies the close relationship between languages and politics,” with political factors shaping both the medium of instruction and the foreign languages taught in Vietnamese schools and higher education institutions³³. Historically, Mandarin Chinese and French were the primary foreign languages in Vietnam, closely tied to political influences. However, fluency in these languages was generally limited to the middle and upper classes. The National Centre of Social Sciences and Humanities noted that during a thousand years of Chinese rule, Mandarin Chinese played a dominant role in Vietnam’s political and sociocultural spheres, including administration, education, literature, and rituals. During French colonization from 1859 to 1954, many Vietnamese scholars translated works into French, and some even went to France to study its language and culture. This period saw the adoption of French vocabulary in Vietnamese, and French language skills became a valuable asset^{34–36}.

In contrast, English was introduced to southern Vietnam during the American presence, becoming widely adopted as many southern Vietnamese from various social classes worked for the American government or military^{37,38}. English dominated foreign language education in southern Vietnam from 1958 to 1968³². However, after American troops withdrew in 1975, the importance of English declined, and fewer people learned it³⁹. Instead, Vietnamese people began to learn Russian due to political ties with the Soviet Union⁴⁰.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the introduction of the “Doi Moi” policy, as well as the normalization of relations with the US in the 1990s, English once again became the most popular foreign language in Vietnam^{33,41}. Strategic plans for the periods 1991–2000 and 2001–2010 emphasized learning foreign languages, especially English, as key to Vietnam’s goals of integration and globalization. These efforts created numerous opportunities for young Vietnamese to study, work, and live in better conditions. However, there was significant pressure on Vietnamese individuals to meet the demands of society, particularly in terms of English proficiency for international education and work environments.

English in Vietnamese employment

English plays a critical role in enhancing employment opportunities for Vietnamese workers both domestically and internationally. Vietnam’s accession to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1995 and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007 marked significant milestones, boosting the country’s position in the global labor market. The

Ministry of Finance projected that by 2010, there would be 100,000 Vietnamese working overseas. This increase underscores the rising demand for English-speaking professionals in Vietnam. Proficiency in English is now a key criterion in the hiring processes of many international companies as well as some state-owned enterprises in Vietnam⁴⁰. Additionally, with the rapid growth of the tourism industry, often referred to as the “smokeless industry,” employees are encouraged to improve their English skills promptly. Since Vietnam joined the WTO as its 150th member in January 2007, the influx of foreign tourists has surged, necessitating well-trained staff capable of effective communication in English, the global lingua franca.

English in Vietnamese education

English is equally vital in the Vietnamese education system, being a fundamental requirement for admission to various educational institutions from schools to universities. Vietnamese students aspiring to study abroad or enroll in joint-training programs need English proficiency to secure entry visas and university admissions. This necessity has heightened Vietnamese learners’ awareness of the importance of English⁴⁰. The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) launched the “Language Strategies in Vietnam’s Schools” project in the early 2000s, officially designating English as the mandatory foreign language in schools and universities. Since the project implementation, English has been included in the national curriculum from primary to high school. By the end of grade 12, students are expected to have acquired basic English skills, enabling them to introduce themselves, share cultural information, and communicate effectively with English speakers⁴². The increasing demand for English proficiency since the “Doi Moi” economic reforms has created a high demand for experienced English teachers at all educational levels. Recently, numerous English language centers and international schools have been established in Ho Chi Minh City to meet the growing demand for English learning across various age groups^{39,43}.

Furthermore, English is now widely taught and used nationwide, second only to Vietnamese⁴⁴. Its prominence is driven by its role in international cooperation, economic development, and modernization⁴¹. Vietnamese EFL learners believe English is a dominant global language that plays a vital role in Vietnam, but they also recognize that English education in Vietnam is heavily focused on exam preparation rather than communication skills. However, learners are optimistic that English will become a second language in Vietnam in the near future⁴⁵.

METHODS

To address ethical considerations during data collection, this study will analyze data from a pre-existing survey titled *Foreign Language Learning Behaviors in Vietnam*, conducted by Q&Me, a market research service provided by Asia Plus Inc. in Vietnam, in June 2021. This data is publicly accessible on the Q&Me website: qandme.net. By investigating and analyzing this dataset, the key issues related to this study will be identified and compared with findings from previous research.

Participants

To provide a representative overview of foreign language learning in Vietnam, 728 participants from various provinces and cities were selected to participate in this online survey. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 45 years old. The sample consisted of 451 male respondents (62%) and 277 female respondents (38%). Participants came from diverse academic backgrounds, including university (49%), high school (29%), vocational (13%), secondary (5%), and postgraduate education (5%).

Instruments and data collection procedure

Questionnaires are an effective tool for collecting data from large groups simultaneously, covering a range of items⁴⁶. Consequently, the data for this research was gathered using a questionnaire designed to measure the percentage of Vietnamese individuals studying English or other foreign languages and to explore their preferred methods of language learning. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section collected the demographic information, including gender, age, location, and academic background. The second section explored participants' attitudes towards learning foreign languages, particularly English, and their opinions on effective language learning methods. Q&Me Vietnam Market Research Service, with over 500,000 dedicated members ready to complete various surveys, was used to select 728 participants aged from 18 to 45 from different regions in Vietnam. Participants were invited via email and app notifications from Q&Me. Upon agreeing to participate, they received a link to the online survey, which they could complete using a computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet. The survey included various types of questions, such as yes-no questions, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions, in a format referred to as a chat survey. Participants could easily respond by ticking boxes or typing their answers and submitting them online. Q&Me collected, analyzed, and posted the survey results on their online analysis platform and website.

RESULTS

Research question 1: What factors influence the attitudes of Vietnamese learners towards English as the dominant foreign language?

The following questions were designed to gather information on Vietnamese people's attitudes towards learning foreign languages, which languages they are currently studying, and their motivations for doing so. Regarding respondents' popular foreign language, the results showed that English emerged as the most popular foreign language, with 86% of participants studying it, followed by Japanese (16%) and Chinese (15%). There was also a noticeable interest in newer languages such as Korean (11%) and German (3%), while French and Russian, once popular, were studied by only 4% and 2% of participants, respectively (see Figure 1).

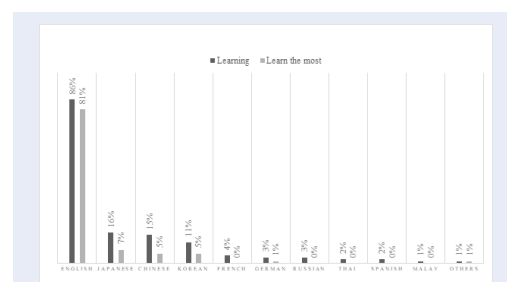


Figure 1: Popular Foreign Languages (Source: Author)

The motivations for learning foreign languages varied among Vietnamese learners. Most respondents aimed to master English and other foreign languages for job opportunities (60%) or career advancement (49%), highlighting the professional benefits of language proficiency. Additionally, 44% were motivated by an interest in communicating with foreigners, while 32% saw learning a foreign language to enhance their travel experiences. Cultural interest also played a role, with 22% of learners driven by a fascination with the culture of the target language. Other motivations included fulfilling curriculum requirements (18%) and having friends from the country (17%) (see Table 1).

Research question 2: What methods are most commonly used by Vietnamese learners for studying English and other foreign languages?

To understand how Vietnamese learners study English and other languages, 728 participants were asked about their methods. The results showed that the most popular approach is self-study, with 49% of respondents choosing this method. Free online courses

Table 1: Motivations to Learn Foreign Languages

What are motivations to learn that foreign language?	Number of people	Percentage (%)
a. To gain the good job	436	60
b. As the language is required in my work	356	49
c. Interested in communicating with foreigners	320	44
d. Interested in traveling abroad	232	32
e. Interested in the culture of the country	160	22
f. Required as part of curriculum	131	18
g. I have friends of the country	123	17

Source: Author

are also widely used, with 35% of participants opting for them. Going to language centers (29%) and paid online courses (27%) are other common methods. Learning from friends and joining language communities are equally popular, each chosen by 23% of the respondents. Additionally, 21% of participants learn English as part of their official school curriculum, while smaller proportions learn from family (12%), classes provided by their companies (9%), or with the help of tutors (7%) (seeFigure 2).

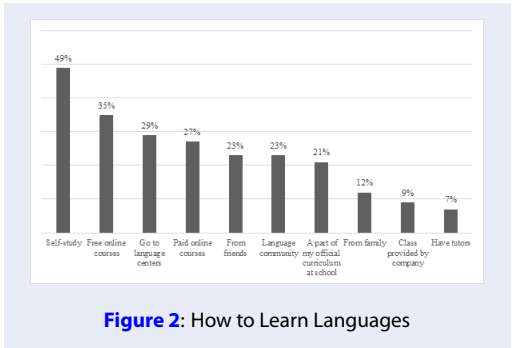


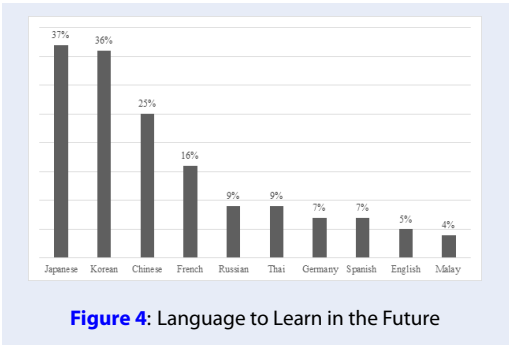
Figure 3 highlights the learning methods used by Vietnamese learners for the four most popular foreign languages: English, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese. The data reveal that self-study is the most preferred approach across all language groups, with a notable percentage of learners in each category adopting this method.

- English learners: Of the 588 respondents studying English, 50% preferred self-study, making

- it the most popular learning method. Other frequently used methods included free online courses (36%), paid online courses (28%), and attending language centers (28%).
- Japanese learners: Among 49 respondents learning Japanese, 45% favored self-study, followed closely by attending language centers and free online courses, both at 29%. Other methods, like learning through a language community and from friends, also showed considerable participation.
- Korean learners: Of the 33 respondents studying Korean, 42% chose self-study and attending language centers. However, the most preferred method was free online courses at 45%, reflecting a strong inclination toward digital learning platforms among Korean learners.
- Chinese learners: Among the 39 respondents learning Chinese, 59% opted for self-study, the highest rate among all the languages surveyed. Language centers and free online courses were equally popular at 33%, demonstrating a balanced approach between independent and structured learning.

Research question 3: What are the future language preferences of Vietnamese learners?

To predict the future of foreign language learning in Vietnam, participants were asked about their next language choice. The results indicate that Japanese is the most preferred language, with 37% of participants expressing interest in learning it, followed closely by Korean at 36%. Chinese is also a popular choice, with 25% of respondents selecting it as their next language to learn. French is preferred by 16%, while both Russian and Thai are chosen by 9% each. German and Spanish each attract 7% of the participants, and English is selected by 5%. Malay is the least preferred, with 4% of respondents interested in learning it (seeFigure 4).





DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the factors influencing the dominance of English as a foreign language in Vietnam and assess whether other languages could challenge its prevalence in the future. The findings reveal that while English remains the most popular foreign language, a notable shift towards Asian languages such as Japanese, Korean, and Chinese is emerging. This trend suggests that learners are increasingly motivated by cultural influences and evolving career prospects associated with these languages. The positive attitudes towards English are largely driven by practical needs, including career advancement, educational opportunities, and international communication, supporting the findings of Dang T. H. and Nguyen Q. T., which indicated that students believe English education in colleges and universities enhances job prospects⁴⁷. However, the study shows that Vietnamese learners also value self-directed learning methods, such as self-study and online courses, which reflect a proactive and flexible approach to language acquisition. This preference for independent learning aligns with global trends, where technology-enabled learning plays a crucial role in language education.

The growing interest in languages like Japanese, Korean, and Chinese highlights a diversification in language learning preferences. This shift is influenced by the cultural appeal of Asian media, economic opportunities linked to regional trade, and the rising influence of Asian countries globally. The data of this study indicate that while English maintains a strong position due to its historical and economic significance, other languages are gaining traction, suggesting a potential shift in the linguistic landscape of Vietnam. One of the key insights from this study is the need for educational institutions and policymakers to adapt language education strategies that reflect these changing preferences. Curriculum developers should consider integrating diverse language offerings and tailor programs to meet the evolving demands of learners. Additionally, fostering a supportive learning environment that encourages cultural exchange and interaction with native speakers could enhance the effectiveness of language education.

Overall, the study underscores the dynamic nature of language learning in Vietnam. While English continues to be a cornerstone of language education and employment, the rising popularity of other languages indicates a broader trend towards multilingualism. This evolution in language preferences provides an opportunity for educational reforms that not only support

English learning but also embrace the cultural and economic benefits of learning additional languages. Future research should further explore the motivations behind these changing preferences, incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups to gain deeper insights into learners' attitudes and expectations. By understanding the complex factors influencing language choices, educators and policymakers can develop more responsive and relevant language education policies that align with the aspirations of Vietnamese learners in a rapidly globalizing world.

Teaching implications

The findings of this study provide essential insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in Vietnam to align language education strategies with evolving learner preferences. As Vietnamese students show increasing interest in languages like Japanese, Korean, and Chinese, it is crucial for educational institutions to diversify their language offerings beyond English. Expanding language programs will cater to students' diverse interests, career aspirations, and the growing demand for multilingual skills in the job market.

Incorporating cultural elements into language teaching, including films, music, literature, and real-life scenarios, can significantly enhance student engagement by connecting them with the cultural context of the language. This approach makes learning more relatable and enjoyable, motivating students to experience the language in meaningful ways beyond traditional textbooks. The study also emphasizes the importance of promoting self-directed learning and utilizing digital resources. Educators should guide students in developing skills such as goal setting, time management, and effective use of e-learning platforms, empowering them to take control of their language acquisition journey and fostering a sense of independence.

Interactive and practical learning activities, including group discussions, role-plays, and simulations, should be central to language teaching to enhance communication skills and build confidence. The integration of technology, such as language apps and virtual exchange programs, can provide personalized learning experiences, instant feedback, and connections with native speakers, enriching the learning process. As language preferences shift towards multilingualism, fostering an inclusive classroom environment that celebrates linguistic diversity through language clubs and cultural exchanges is vital. These initiatives promote a positive attitude towards learning

multiple languages and reflect the value of multilingualism in today's global society.

The continuous professional development for language teachers is essential to keep pace with these changes. Creating opportunities for educators to refine their teaching methodologies, incorporate new technologies, and stay updated on cultural trends will enable them to meet the evolving needs of their students. By implementing these strategies, language education in Vietnam can become more responsive to learner preferences, supporting students in achieving their language goals and preparing them for success in a multilingual global environment.

Reliability and validity of this study

The study's reliability and validity are supported by the secondary data sourced from the Q&Me survey titled "Foreign Language Learning Behaviors in Vietnam." The survey design ensured that questions were clear, straightforward, and aligned with the study objectives, enabling participants to respond accurately. A standardized data collection procedure was followed, involving 728 participants from diverse backgrounds who completed the survey without external pressure or manipulation, enhancing the reliability of the findings.

The validity of this study is reinforced by the careful design and execution of the Q&Me survey, which serves as the primary source of secondary data. The survey instrument was well-structured, with clear and concise questions that directly aligned with the study objectives, allowing for the accurate reflection of participants' attitudes and behaviors regarding foreign language learning in Vietnam. The data collection process adhered to standardized procedures, ensuring consistent responses from a diverse and representative sample. Despite relying on the secondary data, which inherently limits the range of data collection methods, the comprehensive approach of the survey and the large sample size bolster the validity of the findings. The data accurately captures the current language learning trends and motivations among Vietnamese learners, offering the valuable insights that are pertinent to the study aims. While the incorporation of additional qualitative methods such as interviews and observations could further enhance the depth of analysis, the current data remains robust and relevant for exploring language attitudes and preferences in Vietnam, offering a valid basis for examining the influence of language attitudes on the preference for English as the dominant foreign language.

CONCLUSIONS

This study confirms that English remains the dominant foreign language in Vietnam due to its historical, social, and economic significance, as well as the country's ongoing global integration. While career and educational motivations continue to drive English learning, there is growing interest in Japanese, Korean, and Chinese, influenced by cultural appeal and emerging regional economic opportunities. Despite these shifts, English is expected to maintain its leading role and could become an official second language in Vietnam, much like in Singapore and the Philippines. The increasing popularity of other languages reflects a trend toward multilingualism, presenting an opportunity for educational institutions to diversify language offerings. Aligning language education with evolving learner needs and preferences is crucial. By integrating culturally relevant and diverse language options, educators can better equip students for success in a globalized world. Future research should further investigate the factors influencing language choices to inform responsive and effective language education strategies in Vietnam.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors state no conflict of interest and there are no data associated with this article.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The author conceptualized and designed the study, conducted a comprehensive literature review, and analyzed the relevant secondary data from the survey titled *Foreign Language Learning Behaviors in Vietnam* to examine the influence of language attitudes on the preference for English as the dominant foreign language in Vietnam. Responsibilities included drafting the manuscript, covering the historical context, contemporary attitudes, and educational implications, and performing the detailed data analysis to uncover trends and motivations behind the preference for English among Vietnamese learners. The author also revised the manuscript based on feedback to enhance clarity and coherence, and approved the final version, ensuring it met publication standards and accurately represented the study.

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Thái độ ngôn ngữ tại Việt Nam: sự thống trị của tiếng Anh và các xu hướng mới trong lựa chọn ngoại ngữ

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TÓM TẮT

Nghiên cứu này khám phá thái độ của người học Việt Nam đối với tiếng Anh như là ngoại ngữ ưu tiên, tập trung cụ thể vào động lực, phương pháp học tập, và lựa chọn ngôn ngữ trong tương lai. Nghiên cứu này nhằm nâng cao hiểu biết về cách các thái độ hiện nay của người Việt ảnh hưởng đến việc lựa chọn tiếng Anh, xem xét trong bối cảnh phát triển lịch sử của tiếng Anh tại Việt Nam. Dữ liệu thu thập từ cuộc khảo sát với hơn 700 người tham gia cho thấy tiếng Anh vẫn là ngoại ngữ chiếm ưu thế tại Việt Nam, được thúc đẩy bởi các động lực như thăng tiến nghề nghiệp, cơ hội việc làm, và yêu cầu học tập. Phần lớn người trả lời ưu tiên tự học và học tại các trung tâm ngoại ngữ, thể hiện cách tiếp cận chủ động trong việc tiếp thu ngôn ngữ. Nghiên cứu cũng xác định một sự thay đổi trong sự ưu tiên ngôn ngữ, với sự quan tâm ngày càng tăng đến các ngôn ngữ khác như tiếng Nhật, tiếng Trung, và tiếng Hàn. Những ngôn ngữ này đang trở nên phổ biến hơn do ảnh hưởng văn hóa, triển vọng nghề nghiệp đang phát triển, và sự tác động ngày càng lớn của các quốc gia châu Á trong khu vực. Xu hướng này gợi ý khả năng đa dạng hóa việc học ngoại ngữ tại Việt Nam, với sự thống trị của tiếng Anh đang bị thách thức bởi các ngôn ngữ mới nổi này. Kết quả nghiên cứu nhấn mạnh sự cần thiết cho các cơ sở giáo dục, nhà phát triển chương trình, và các nhà hoạch định chính sách thích ứng chiến lược giáo dục ngôn ngữ để phản ánh thái độ hiện tại của người học và bối cảnh hiện tại. Bằng cách hiểu rõ thái độ hiện tại đối với tiếng Anh và các ngoại ngữ khác, các nhà giáo dục có thể thiết kế chương trình học và phương pháp giảng dạy phù hợp với mục tiêu và sự ưu tiên của học sinh. Nghiên cứu trong tương lai nên phát triển từ các phát hiện này bằng cách tích hợp các phương pháp thu thập dữ liệu đa dạng như phỏng vấn và quan sát để cung cấp cái nhìn sâu sắc hơn về các yếu tố phức tạp ảnh hưởng đến thái độ và sự lựa chọn ngôn ngữ tại Việt Nam. Nghiên cứu này cung cấp những hiểu biết nhằm định hướng chính sách và thực tiễn giáo dục ngôn ngữ, hỗ trợ việc đáp ứng nhu cầu của người học Việt Nam trong bối cảnh toàn cầu thay đổi.

Từ khoá: thái độ ngôn ngữ, tiếng Anh tại Việt Nam, yếu tố xã hội, giáo dục ngoại ngữ

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Lịch sử

- Ngày nhận: 15-07-2024
- Ngày sửa đổi: 04-3-2025
- Ngày chấp nhận: 21-3-2025
- Ngày đăng: 31-3-2025

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32508/stdjssh.v9i1.1039>



Bản quyền

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Trích dẫn bài báo này: Yến P N H. Thái độ ngôn ngữ tại Việt Nam: sự thống trị của tiếng Anh và các xu hướng mới trong lựa chọn ngoại ngữ. *Sci. Tech. Dev. J. - Soc. Sci. Hum.* 2025; 9(1):1-1.