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THE IMPACTS OF INTEGRATING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING INTO ENGLISH LESSONS FOR NON-MAJORED STUDENTS AT A UNIVERSITY IN VIET NAM

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Abstract

Social emotional learning plays a crucial role not only in academics but also in everyday life. Integrating social emotional learning into non-majored students in learning English is necessary at a university in Vietnam. This quasi-experimental study, which included both pre- and post-tests, was conducted to compare the improvement levels of four skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—after integrating social emotional learning into the curriculum for 40 students, as measured by their scores. In addition, during the 8 weeks of social emotional learning intervention based on the English 3 textbook, students actively participated in the activities. In addition, in-depth interviews with 10 students provided qualitative data. The statistical results showed that all four skills of the students improved when applying this experiment. Furthermore, qualitative findings emphasized that social emotional learning brought many positive impacts to students. The study confirms the effectiveness of social emotional learning and provides pedagogical implications for integrating social emotional learning. The study also suggests further exploration of the impact of social emotional learning at multiple levels of education in Vietnam.

Keywords: *Non-majored English, post-test, pre-test, social emotional learning, students.*

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NHỮNG ẢNH HƯỞNG CỦA VIỆC TÍCH HỢP HỌC TẬP CẢM XÚC XÃ HỘI VÀO CÁC BÀI HỌC TIẾNG ANH CHO SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN NGÀNH TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC Ở VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt

Học tập cảm xúc xã hội đóng vai trò quan trọng không chỉ trong học tập mà còn trong cuộc sống hằng ngày. Việc tích hợp học tập cảm xúc xã hội vào việc học tiếng Anh cho sinh viên không chuyên là cần thiết tại một trường đại học ở Việt Nam. Nghiên cứu bán thực nghiệm này, bao gồm cả bài kiểm tra trước và sau, cũng được tiến hành để so sánh mức độ cải thiện của bốn kỹ năng nghe, nói, đọc và viết sau khi tích hợp học tập cảm xúc xã hội của 40 sinh viên, thể hiện qua điểm số. Ngoài ra, trong 8 tuần can thiệp học tập cảm xúc xã hội theo giáo trình Tiếng Anh 3, sinh viên đã tích cực tham gia các hoạt động. Bên cạnh đó, các cuộc phỏng vấn sâu với 10 sinh viên đã cung cấp dữ liệu định tính. Kết quả thống kê cho thấy cả bốn kỹ năng của sinh viên đều được cải thiện khi áp dụng thử nghiệm này. Các phát hiện định tính nhấn mạnh học tập cảm xúc xã hội mang đến nhiều tác động tích cực đến sinh viên. Nghiên cứu khẳng định hiệu quả của học tập cảm xúc xã hội và đưa ra những hàm ý sư phạm cho việc tích hợp học tập cảm xúc xã hội. Nghiên cứu cũng gợi ý việc khám phá sâu hơn về tác động của học tập cảm xúc xã hội ở nhiều cấp học tại Việt Nam.

Từ khóa: *Học tập cảm xúc xã hội, kiểm tra trước, kiểm tra sau, sinh viên tiếng Anh không chuyên ngành.*

1. Introduction

SEL is applicable throughout a person's life; most studies have focused on preschool and secondary education, with established guidelines primarily targeting these age groups. In addition, according to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) in 2020, SEL has only been applied in primary to high school; for instance, it has been surveyed or integrated into ethics, civic education, and soft skills (based on the timetable and lesson content at primary to high school). Meanwhile, in the context of Vietnam, there are few studies on SEL in higher education. Typically, Le (2020) conducted a study about integrating SEL into four skills for students from the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the National Economics University. Additionally, the 2018 General Education Program of Vietnam (Circular 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT), issued on December 26, 2018, requires learners to achieve standards, including autonomy, self-study, communication, cooperation, problem-solving, and creativity. Furthermore, the Politburo has just issued Conclusion No. 91 (Conclusion No. 91-KL/TW), dated August 12, 2024, on continuing to implement Resolution No. 29, dated November 4, 2013, of the 11th Party Central Committee that focuses on improving the foreign language skills of students, and gradually making English the second language in schools.

With regards to Dong Thap University, students are recognized as meeting foreign language output standards when meeting one of the following conditions: accumulating enough enhanced foreign language credits as prescribed or having a Foreign Language Proficiency Certificate at Level 2 (for College of Preschool Education level) and Level 3 (for university level) under the 6-level Foreign Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam by educational institutions recognized by the Ministry of Education and Training. This study is expected to find out students' perceptions when integrating SEL into stress management at universities in Vietnam. In particular, it provides a specific approach for practice in the case of non-English major students at Dong Thap University, with the expectation that SEL can be applied to relieve stress on a larger scale.

2. Literature review

2.1. Concepts of Social Emotional Learning

There are various kinds of definitions of SEL. First of all, SEL is the process by which children, adolescents, and adults acquire and apply the necessary knowledge and skills to understand and manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Reicher, 2010). Additionally, SEL helps students of all ages better understand their emotions, experience them fully, and demonstrate empathy for others (Greenberg et al., 2017). These learned behaviors are then used to help students make positive, responsible decisions; create frameworks to achieve their goals, and build positive relationships with others. Srinivasan (2019) defined SEL as encompassing an equity perspective, which enhances EL skills and improves the ability to connect with individuals across differences in race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning needs, and age.

The CASEL is structured around five competencies that encompass various thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors, such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Firstly, self-awareness involves recognizing feelings about values and personal goals. This requires an accurate appraisal of strengths and limitations, a good sense of efficacy and optimism, as well as a growth mindset that encourages learning. The evaluation of one's emotions and actions, plus their effect on other people, is important for self-awareness. A key aspect of this awareness is the ability to recognize emotions and their triggers (Mayer et al., 2004). Additionally, self-awareness

involves examining personal strengths and opportunities for improvement, as well as their connections to one another (Osher et al., 2016). This includes understanding, empathizing, and showing compassion for those with opposing beliefs (Osher et al., 2016). It also includes identifying social norms of behavior and cooperation from stakeholders.

Furthermore, self-management refers to the ability to regulate one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors to achieve personal and professional goals. This involves maintaining confidence and calmness in challenging situations, waiting for positive outcomes, resisting impulsive actions, and persevering in the face of difficulties. The important things are to control one's anxiety, feelings, and urges (Osher et al., 2016). When people can do this, they can make greater efforts, handle issues more effectively, and manage their emotions more effectively (Gullone et al., 2010). Besides, relationship skills provide us with the tools to build and maintain healthy, rewarding relationships while following social norms. This involves fostering collaborative relationships, establishing connections, resolving conflicts, listening actively, negotiating effectively, problem-solving, communicating clearly, and seeking assistance when necessary (Osher et al., 2016). Competence in this area includes clear communication, active listening, cooperation, resisting negative social pressures, resolving conflicts constructively, and seeking help when necessary. Ultimately, responsible decision-making entails the ability to make informed choices about personal behavior and social interactions that consider ethical standards, safety concerns, and the well-being of oneself and others. That involves making respectful and safe decisions, understanding both positive and negative aspects, and recognizing how our own actions can positively or negatively impact others. These skills enable people to consider the benefits and drawbacks before making a decision (Osher et al., 2016). This also refers to avoiding risky behavior, prioritizing safety, and being mindful of both your own health and the health of others.

2.2. Roles of SEL in teaching and learning EFL at Higher Education

SEL has an important place in Teaching English of Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) because students cannot learn successfully when they are afraid, hungry, scared, excluded, discriminated, invisible, unsupported, depressed, homeless, fearing family separation or deportation; the list can go on. It is essential to create a learning environment where students feel safe, welcome, physically and mentally nourished, and acquire all the necessary skills they need to thrive in their new surroundings and in a global society. When students have the vocabulary to articulate their emotions, they start to realize that their feelings do not define them and gain a deeper understanding of their own emotions. By equipping students with practical skills to express their feelings through language, they can better understand their emotions and recognize the suitable time to seek help (Srinivasan, 2019). Emotions play a significant role in activating long-term memory, facilitating the learning process, and guiding attention, which in turn significantly impacts mental expression, motivation, and critical thinking, particularly in the context of English learning. Moreover, the environmental surroundings and social responsibility significantly contribute to studying, since they allow individuals to express cooperative working as an important member of their community. Students who have positive connections with friends and teachers can demonstrate higher academic engagement and motivation compared to those who lack such interactions (Bărbuceanu, 2019). Moreover, these students tend to have better problem-solving skills because they can identify problems and explain them to find appropriate measures. When students are motivated by expectations and a suitable learning environment, they will imitate these attitudes, as they experience a testing process in reality that helps them evaluate the alignment between real facts and their experiences. There is currently a continuous discussion about whether emotional intelligence is a collection of studied skills and competencies or innate abilities.

Concerning Vietnam's context, Le (2020) explored the problem of English language teaching integrated with SEL in response to stress exposure at higher education. A total of 500 third-year students from traditional majors and international programs were invited to complete the questionnaire in stage 1. This group included 200 students from the School of Accounting and Auditing and 100 from the Faculty of Foreign Languages, representing the traditional majors. Additionally, 200 students from the School of Advanced Educational Programs represented the international programs. The study's results showed that students at the National Economics University often experience stress, primarily due to academic pressure, with third-year students being the most affected. Although stress has a significant impact on their emotions, health, and learning, it has not been addressed actively. The most common coping strategies among students are avoidance and emotional reactivity. This problem stems from the lack of SEL instruction. Besides, Le et al. (2025) surveyed social-emotional skills education. 782 students (314, 237, 137, and 94 of first-year students to fourth-year students, respectively) majoring in English Teacher Education, Translation and Interpretation, Tourism English, and Business English in the Faculties of Foreign Languages at Dong Thap University, An Giang University, and Kien Giang University in the 2023- 2024 academic year. They focused on self-awareness and emotional management skills, as well as the ability to recognize and empathize with the emotions of others. They used the quantitative method, and the results showed that most participants were able to identify and manage their own emotions effectively. However, some students feel they can recognize others' emotions and display empathy, while others demonstrate lower levels of these skills.

Previous studies about SEL reveal several gaps that need to be addressed for improvement and advancement. First, the studies by Yagcioglu (2017) and Zhoc et al. (2018) lacked elucidation of the long-term effects of SEL. In addition, teacher training and attention to SEL interventions in culturally diverse contexts remain underexplored. Besides, studies that use convenience sampling to assess SEL competencies are unlikely to accurately represent the entire student population. Furthermore, the integration of technology to support SEL in EFL contexts has not been explored fully. Therefore, addressing these gaps could help to better understand the role of SEL in higher education in general and in EFL education in particular.

2.3. Theoretical framework

This study is motivated by two key components in the current educational context of integrating SEL at a university in Vietnam. First, students' perceptions of SEL. Second, their practices of integrating SEL into their learning and life. Within this framework, the integration of SEL is expected to help students manage their emotions and cope with challenges.

In summary, SEL integration brings many benefits to many different fields, especially in higher education. Currently, since there is only one study on integrating SEL into the English learning of English major students, this study is expected to explore students' perceptions of integrating SEL into stress management in universities in Vietnam. In particular, the study offers a specific approach to be applied to non-majored English students at Dong Thap University, with the expectation that SEL can be effectively implemented to reduce stress on a large scale. The research question posed is "How does SEL impact non-majored students when integrated into teaching and learning English at Dong Thap University?".

3. Methods

3.1 Research design

The quasi-experimental research was conducted because, this semester, due to the workload and a desire to spend time on the thesis, the researcher was only assigned to teach one English 3 class. Moreover, when teaching only one class, it cannot be representative of a

large population, as this would disadvantage classes that did not apply this method. A quantitative study was designed through a pre-post test to investigate whether integrating SEL into teaching is effective for students. Furthermore, the tests were based on the structure of the exercises based on the Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP), which would help students approach the official test format later, helping them not to be confused and handle the test more confidently. Forty students participated in this study voluntarily before and after the course. The content of tests was also sent to lecturers of the Foreign Language Faculty at Dong Thap University for quality assessment before being included in the survey.

In the present study, three phases were executed: Phase 1- A pre-test (4 skills) was administered to collect preliminary data; Phase 2 - A 7-week SEL intervention was run; Phase 3 - A post-test (4 skills) and interviews on SEL impacts were conducted.

3.2 SEL Intervention

Selecting appropriate skills to integrate SEL into classroom lessons and compare effectiveness because there are 8 periods a week of English 3 with four different topics: transport and travel, work, health, and technology. The implementation time takes place in 60 periods – 8 weeks (the last 4 periods of the 8th week are only for exam orientation and announcing the process score). Besides, the first week is used for pre-test, so the experiment started from the second week.

3.3 Data collection instruments

3.3.1. Pre/Post-tests

Pre-test and post-test grades were not calculated or applied to the students' overall course grade. Students were given 60 minutes (for listening and reading skills), 30 minutes (for writing skills), and about 15 minutes (for speaking skills) during class to answer questions and to enter their responses on a paper test. The report information from a survey through pre-tests and post-tests was analyzed using a software program named Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to code and generate statistics. This analysis indicated the means and standard deviations. The results of this data analysis answered research questions.

3.3.1. Interview

After the SEL intervention, 10 students (among 40 partaking in the study) volunteered to participate in the deep interview. The interview questions were organized into major areas:

SEL's impacts on non-majored students

- How does SEL influence the academic performance of non-majored students?
- What effects does SEL have on their engagement and motivation levels in their studies?
- How does SEL promote diversity and inclusion among non-major students at the university?
- What factors contribute to the effectiveness of SEL activities designed explicitly for non-majored students?

3.4 Data collection and analysis

3.4.1. Pre/Post-tests

Students were given 60 minutes (for listening and reading skills), 30 minutes (for writing skills), and about 15 minutes (for speaking skills) during class to answer questions and to enter their responses on a paper test. Moreover, there were two invigilators for all tests to ensure objectivity, fairness, and efficiency.

First of all, in the listening and reading test, the structure of the listening and reading

test included 20 listening questions and 20 reading questions that related to the lesson topic and related to SEL integration. To begin with, the invigilators distributed the test papers to all students, requiring them to wait until all the tests were distributed to the whole class before opening the test to view at once. This ensured fairness for students promptly. In addition, students were required to check the number of pages in the test; the number and content of the questions and answers to see if they were enough, or if there were any unclear parts. Next, the invigilators gave students 1-2 minutes to glance over the content of the listening passages. Then, the invigilators turned on the speakers and monitored the students as they took the listening test. After finishing the listening test, the invigilators asked students to proceed to the reading passages, which took approximately 40 minutes to complete. When students finished the test integrated listening and reading skills, the invigilators asked them to sign and submit their test. Students were only allowed to leave when the invigilators checked that the number of test papers was complete and met the requirements.

The speaking test consisted of three parts: social interaction, solution discussion, and topic development, which followed the structure of the 6-level Foreign Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam, as established by educational institutions recognized by the Ministry of Education and Training. The researcher invited a teacher from the Foreign Language Faculty at DThU to mark the speaking test together. This ensured objectivity in scoring as well as evaluating the students' results more effectively. First of all, 40 students waited outside to be called into the exam room. Each of the exams had only one student taking the exam and one student sitting in the exam room to prepare. When conducting the speaking test for students, two teachers took turns asking questions and listening to the students' answers, taking notes and giving individual scores. Additionally, the scoring criteria were based on the English output test score sheet issued by the Foreign Languages and Informatics Center at DThU. After the students finished the three test speaking sections, the two teachers discussed and assigned the final scores. In turn, this happened until the end of the speaking test for 40 students. Next, the two teachers checked all the notes and scores given, then added them to a sheet with the signatures of both teachers. Additionally, during the test, a recording device was used for each student's test, allowing the two teachers to review it if necessary.

With regards to the writing test, there was a writing paragraph of at least 100 words that expresses the student's feelings about an issue. Firstly, the invigilators distributed the test papers to all students, requiring them to wait until all the tests were distributed to the whole class before opening the test to view at once. Additionally, students were required to check the content of the questions to see if they were clear enough or if there were any unclear words. Next, the invigilators asked the students to complete the writing test, which took approximately 30 minutes to complete. When students finished the test, the invigilators asked them to sign and submit their test. Students were only allowed to leave when the invigilators checked that the number of test papers was complete and met the requirements. In addition, students were assigned a two-digit code when they returned the consent form and pre-test so that their pre-test and post-test responses could be linked. Each student was asked to read, sign, and return the cover page in order to get in-class participation points.

The report information of a survey through pre-test and post-test was coded using a software program named Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate statistics. This analysis indicated the means and standard deviations. The results of this data analysis answered research questions. The t-test was used to determine the differences between treatments. Differences were considered significant at $p < 0.05$ (Li et al., 2016).

3.4.2. Interview

Collecting data through in-depth interview questions was designed to elicit more

detailed participant responses regarding understanding and emotional expression when answering the interview questions. First of all, a clear set of questions was built to answer the research questions. The interview content focused on exploring students' perceptions, emotions, and experiences about SEL. From there, the researcher has more in-depth information to serve the research question of the thesis. Additionally, during the data collection process, active listening and careful note-taking were crucial, as the teacher could ask follow-up questions to gain a deeper understanding of the students' expressions. When the teacher created a comfortable, trusting environment, students could share naturally and objectively. Furthermore, with the students' consent, the teacher used a tape recorder to record the interview process. After the interview, the teacher reviewed the notes and the recording quality to make any necessary adjustments or supplements. From there, identifying and grouping the main ideas that emerged from the answers was done. Furthermore, the interview guide was tailored with an awareness of social desirability and cultural sensitivities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To analyze the interviews, it is advisable to gradually condense the text by summarizing its meaning and general concepts. This can be organized into three columns: the first column contains the complete transcription, the second column includes the initial reduction of the content, and the third column lists only the key words. For the present study, coding interview data based on two competencies of SEL, such as self-awareness and self-management, was conducted in the literature review. In the current research, based on the above outline, transcribed and translated information from interviews with students was analyzed to address the research questions. These qualitative data were interpreted to mean the reality of how students understood the concept, the role of SEL in the university environment, and their further suggestions. Additionally, the validity and reliability of the qualitative data analyzed were focused. For qualitative reliability, the research approaches of this study must be stable.

3.5. Ethical considerations

Students participated in this study voluntarily, so they were free to decline to take the survey at any time without fear of affecting their score in the class. Participants' names were kept secret; they did not write their names on the pre-test and post-test. Similarly, the stories shared during the interviews related to SEL were kept confidential and used for research purposes only. Additionally, the researcher provided information about SEL before the interviews, which helped participants better understand the topics that would be discussed.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Pre-test and Post-test findings

a. Reading and Listening tests

Table 1. Descriptive statistics results of Reading and Listening scores before and after the experiment

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Reading-Listening Before	6.23	40	0.99	0.16
	Reading-Listening After	7.22	40	0.79	0.13

Paired differences								
Results before experiment - Results after experiment	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	99% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
	-0.99	0.71	0.11	-1.30	-0.69	-8.84	39	0.00

The analysis of **Table 1** provides compelling evidence regarding the effectiveness of experimental intervention in integrating SEL into learning English, designed to improve students' scores in Reading and Listening skills. In the conducted study, a sample of 40 students was evaluated for their Reading and Listening skills both before and after the experiment. The descriptive statistics reveal that the mean score before the intervention was 6.23 with a standard deviation of 0.99. After the intervention, the mean score increased to 7.22, accompanied by a reduced standard deviation of 0.79. This initial observation indicates not only an improvement in average performance but also a reduction in score variability post-intervention. In addition, to clarify the effectiveness of the experiment, the study ran SPSS data to produce paired sample t-test results, as shown in the table. The mean difference between the pairs was calculated to be -0.99, with a standard deviation of 0.71. This negative mean difference indicates that, on average, students scored higher after the experiment than before, which is a positive result for the effectiveness of the experiment.

Furthermore, the results show that the 99% confidence interval for the difference lies between -1.30 and -0.69. This indicates that the actual mean difference in scores lies within these values by 99%. Because all the values are negative, this further strengthens the belief that the improvement in student achievement after the experiment was statistically significant. The t-value is -8.84, which is far from the null hypothesis of no difference in scores before and after the experiment, showing that the experiment is meaningful. Furthermore, since the p-value is 0.00, which is less than 0.01, we can confidently reject the null hypothesis; thus, such improvement is not due to chance but is a result of the experiment.

b. Writing test

Table 2. Descriptive statistics results of Writing scores before and after the experiment

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 2	Writing Before	6.83	40	0.63	0.01			
	Writing After	7.43	40	0.58	0.09			
Paired differences								
Results before experiment - Results after experiment	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	99% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
	-0.60	0.33	0.05	-0.74	-0.46	-11.74	39	0.00

The analysis of **Table 2** concerning students' Writing scores before and after an experimental intervention provides valuable insights into this thesis. A sample of 40 students was evaluated to assess their Writing abilities both before and after the experiment. The statistics show that the mean score of writing before the experiment was 6.83 with a standard deviation of 0.63. However, this mean score increased to 7.43 after the experiment, which is shown by the current standard deviation of only 0.58. Such an increase in the mean score indicates a positive response in the overall learning outcomes of the students, thus indicating the effectiveness of the experimental method in improving their writing skills. The lower standard deviation in the scores after the treatment also indicates that more students scored higher. This also demonstrates that the abilities of most students improved through these experimental measures.

Besides, to clarify the effectiveness of the experiment, the study ran SPSS data to produce paired sample t-test results, as shown in the table. The mean difference between the pairs was calculated to be -0.60, with a standard deviation of 0.32. This negative mean difference indicates that, on average, students scored higher after the experiment than before, which is a positive result for the effectiveness of the experiment. Additionally, the results show that the 99% confidence interval for the difference lies from -0.74 to -0.46. This indicates that the actual mean difference in scores lies within these values by 99%. Because all the values are negative, this further strengthens the belief that the improvement in student achievement after the experiment was statistically significant. The t-value is -11.74, which is far from the null hypothesis of no difference in scores before and after the experiment, showing that the experiment is meaningful. Furthermore, since the p-value is 0.00, which is less than 0.01, we can confidently reject the null hypothesis; thus, such improvement is not due to chance but is a result of the experiment.

c. Speaking test

Table 3. Descriptive statistics results of Speaking scores before and after the experiment

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 3	Speaking Before	6.67	40	0.77	0.12			
	Speaking After	7.54	40	0.65	0.10			
Paired differences								
Results before experiment - Results after experiment	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	99% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
	-0.87	0.39	0.06	-1.03	-0.70	-14.20	39	0.00

The analysis of **Table 3** provides compelling evidence regarding the effectiveness of experimental intervention for integrating SEL into learning English, designed to improve students' scores in the Speaking skill. In the conducted study, a sample of 40 students was evaluated for their Speaking skills both before and after the experiment. The descriptive statistics reveal that the mean score before the intervention was 6.67 with a standard deviation

of 0.77. After the intervention, the mean score increased to 7.54, accompanied by a reduced standard deviation of 0.65. This improvement in mean score indicates a positive change in overall student achievement, while the decrease in standard deviation indicates a higher rate of student improvement in their speaking ability.

Moreover, to assess the effectiveness of the experiment, the study used SPSS data to produce paired sample t-test results, as shown in Table 4.1.3.b. The mean difference between the pairs was calculated to be -0.87, with a standard deviation of 0.39. This negative mean difference indicates that, on average, students scored higher after the experiment than before, which is a positive result for the effectiveness of the experiment. In addition, the results show that the 99% confidence interval for the difference ranges from -1.03 to -0.70. This indicates that the actual mean difference in scores lies within these values by 99%. Because all the values are negative, it further strengthens the confidence that the improvement in students' performance after the experiment is statistically significant in students' Speaking scores. The t-value of -14.20 makes it very clear that the results should considerably deviate from the H_0 hypothesis, which states that there is no difference between pre-test and post-test scores. Such a magnitude t-value goes a long way toward affirming the potency of an intervention in enhancing speaking skills among students. The p-value is 0.00, less than 0.01, so allowing rejection of the null hypothesis with strong confidence.

4.1.2. Students' practices of social-emotional learning

Students identified their thoughts and feelings in conversations, which helped them eliminate negative thoughts during their learning process. Additionally, while learning English, they incorporated SEL skills, such as self-management, by breaking down learning goals and reviewing them regularly, and using self-awareness to understand their learning needs and self-management to keep themselves organized. Students also believed that practicing self-awareness and perseverance had a significant impact on improving their English skills and motivating themselves. Additionally, teamwork enables students to support one another and collaborate on finding solutions to problems. Furthermore, they shared that self-management skills helped them stay focused and calm in any situation because they were in control of their plans. They also developed empathy to help them listen and provide positive feedback, which enabled them to learn from one another. For example, during group work, when they discovered that their classmates were mispronouncing something, they could correct each other without feeling embarrassed. Some students also practiced social awareness by listening and giving positive feedback to their classmates. They believed that "these skills help them stay motivated and connected." Furthermore, social awareness aids in understanding different communication styles and relationship skills that enhance team work effectiveness. It facilitates connection with peers and instructors in group activities. Additionally, students practice responsible decision-making when selecting learning materials and optimizing their study time.

With regard to the methods that students used to manage their emotions and thoughts in the process of learning English. They had their own special ways to implement SEL, as follows. First of all, half of the students shared that when they felt exhausted, they took short breaks and practiced deep breathing. This helped them regain their composure and restore their mental health. Changing negative thinking—changing it from "I can't learn this" to "I'm making progress" helped students maintain a positive outlook. Besides, watching reality TV shows such as "2 Days 1 Night", "Haha family", etc., was a real experience that helped students relax after stressful study hours and gain more life experience for themselves. Moreover, sharing experiences and controlling emotions in the process of learning English and in life would help students focus on solving many problems instead of feeling hopeless and giving

up. Students told themselves to stay calm, especially during speaking tests or when they were called upon to speak suddenly. Furthermore, students also kept notebooks to record strengths and weaknesses that need improvement, helping them understand themselves better and set clearer goals.

Additionally, they better controlled their anxiety when presenting their opinions and were more confident when speaking in front of a crowd. This also motivated them to be willing to support their friends and contribute positively to the learning process together. Students shared that they started each class by discussing the joys or challenges they had experienced the day before, which helped foster trust among them. Through this sharing, students also got to know each other better, shared strategies for problem-solving, and shared joys in life. In addition, when assigned to pair or group work, students believed that the impact of SEL on these activities was significant. For example, when working together, students discovered that whether a group member was having problems or was not keeping up with the group's progress, they would ask each other by asking "How are you feeling? What problems are you having?". From there, group members would help one another and work together to solve problems and achieve the desired results. That was also a way to create a positive learning environment. All ten students shared that by listening and providing constructive feedback, they created an environment of respect and understanding. For example, if someone felt tired or struggled, they talked to help them feel better. They clearly divided tasks when working together, ensuring everyone had a chance to contribute. They felt safe and comfortable learning with their friends. Furthermore, during the learning process, students gave constructive, growth-focused feedback that improved their peers' morale and learning outcomes. They listened, encouraged, and supported each other without judgment. They respected each other's opinions and cooperated calmly. This helped reduce tension in the classroom and fostered empathy and sharing, with the goal of mutual progress.

4.2. Discussion

The statistical results clearly demonstrate the positive impact of the experiment on students' learning outcomes, as the mean scores increased and the t-test results were also significant. The changes in students' ability improved more evenly across the pre-test and post-test. It suggests that the experiment in all four skills may have benefited the majority of participants. This also highlights the importance of implementing practical skills instruction techniques. Regarding writing skills, the experiment included methods such as structured writing assignments, peer assessment, and feedback, which contributed to improved student learning outcomes. Additionally, the study found that interactive learning environments foster improved writing skills, as they enable students to learn from one another. In addition, the improvement in Speaking scores suggests that the methods used improved students' communication skills. Practicing and improving good speaking skills not only benefits students academically but also helps them succeed in the future. The experiment employed methods such as interactive speaking exercises and constructive feedback, which contributed to improving students' learning outcomes. The study demonstrated that actively participating in speaking activities helps students communicate more fluently and significantly improves their language skills. Additionally, possessing good communication skills can lead to success in various areas for students. The analysis results showed that speaking scores improved significantly after the experimental intervention.

Furthermore, integrating SEL into the teaching and learning of English at DThU was important for non-majored students. The teacher chose to integrate SEL activities into teaching the four skills to promote a more interesting and compelling learning environment. First of all, in the process of integrating SEL, one of the main characteristics of self-awareness that

students develop is the ability to recognize emotions. They were encouraged to express their personal feelings in speaking and writing activities. For example, when asked to present the benefits of their favorite means of transportation, students expressed their views to defend the reasons why they loved and chose that type of transportation. They used descriptive words such as "love", "like", "convenient", "comfortable", and "interesting" when talking about reasons. Through this, students knew how to identify personal feelings about the given problems and solve them. Additionally, the ability to recognize personal feelings was important because it helped students to be aware of their psychology and actions, enabling them to handle them effectively. Besides, reflective activities also contributed to improving students' self-awareness. For example, in the SEL integration into writing skills section, teachers asked students to watch videos and do reflective writing exercises on the topic of technology, or in the listening skills section, teachers asked them to watch clips and discuss common conflicts in daily life based on the clips and find ways to resolve them. Through these exercises, students practiced reflecting on their own experiences, from which they identified the strengths and weaknesses of the problem, thereby promoting critical thinking. Moreover, this activity also promoted students to master the language learning journey.

In terms of self-management, students learnt to manage their anxiety during language acquisition. Techniques such as taking short breaks and practicing deep breathing enabled students to regulate their emotions and gain the confidence to solve problems more effectively. In addition, students communicated more comfortably during group work and calmly resolved conflicts when they arose. Moreover, students gained planning and prioritization skills. For example, they became aware of the importance of each assignment or task given by their teacher and then found ways to tackle it quickly and effectively. More specifically, during the timed group assignment process, students learned to allocate time effectively and set realistic goals to complete tasks on time. From there, time management was also promoted through the integration of SEL, and students were more responsible for their learning outcomes.

Compared to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, 2020), the integration of SEL highlighted the links to the objectives with this framework, including abilities such as being able to introduce people from different backgrounds with more confidence, showing awareness that some questions can be understood differently, and inviting others to contribute their expertise, experience, and perspectives. Additionally, students practiced and experimented with new combinations and expressions while receiving feedback. They then noted common errors and actively monitored them. In addition, students communicated information provided in explicit, well-structured informational texts on topics that were familiar or of personal interest by expressing and responding to emotions such as surprise, joy, sadness, interest, and indifference. This enabled them to make sense of their own experiences and to explain and defend their views clearly by providing appropriate explanations and arguments. Furthermore, when preparing for a potentially complex or challenging situation, they knew how to plan what to say in case of different reactions and consider how to phrase it appropriately, taking into account the impact on the recipient. Last but not least, students gradually recognized the misunderstandings and disagreements that arise in collaborative exchanges and found ways to respond politely and appropriately, helping to resolve the issue as long as the other person is willing to cooperate.

5. Conclusion and implications

This study is one of the results of investigating the impact of SEL integration on teaching and learning English for non-majored students at Dong Thap University. The results showed that students' scores in all four skills improved significantly. This study also provides insights into the existing literature in this area, particularly in the local context.

In the future, this study should be expanded to include a larger sample of major students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Dong Thap University. Ultimately, both teachers and students should be organized into workshops focused on integrating SEL in higher education.

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