



Student engagement and speaking achievement among EFL learners at a Vietnamese language centre

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ABSTRACT

Several studies on the relationship between student engagement and language achievement have previously been conducted in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts from the perspectives of behaviour, emotion, cognition, and agency (Dincer et al., 2017; Trinh & Conner, 2019; Liu et al., 2023). Nevertheless, few studies have investigated the relationships between these four dimensions and performance outcomes of students in their speaking tasks. In this regard, a cross-sectional study was designed to examine the relationships between multidimensional student engagement and speaking test performance among 96 young EFL learners at a private language centre in Vietnam. Data were gathered through the 12-item Primary Learner Oral Engagement Questionnaire (PLOEQ) and a speaking test conducted by two raters. Independent-samples t-test and multiple linear regression were utilised in data analysis. Descriptive statistics demonstrated high levels of engagement among students, with cognitive engagement having the highest mean score. Girls expressed significantly greater behavioural, emotional, and agentic engagement compared to boys. It is apparent from the regression findings that emotional and cognitive engagement were significantly correlated with the speaking test scores, but behavioural and agentic engagement were not significant predictors. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the study, the results imply statistical association rather than causation. These results indicate that the speaking instruction conducted in private language institutions can be enhanced through engaging the students emotionally and cognitively, while recognising that not all engagement dimensions might contribute equally to speaking skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking plays a vital role in English language learning since it allows learners to engage in using the language communicatively. However, the development of speaking skills poses serious difficulties as learners have to manage language competence, cognitive processes, and interaction in real-time situations (De Jong, 2023; Tavakoli et al., 2020). EFL learners might face problems associated with vocabulary limitations, grammar and pronunciation issues, hesitations, and anxiety about making errors that will limit the desire to engage in oral practice (Afshar & Asakereh, 2016; Riadil, 2020). Speaking anxiety may additionally discourage learners from participating in class activities since they may be afraid of public speaking, possible criticism from the teacher, or unfavourable peer comparisons (Erdiana et al., 2020; Günes & Sarigöz, 2021). These challenges emphasise the importance of learners' active participation in speaking opportunities within the classroom setting.

Student engagement is relevant to speaking because speaking acquisition necessitates learners'

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participation in communication-related activities and their willingness to put in effort in terms of using the target language. Engagement is defined as the way learners' behaviour, emotions, thinking, and agency interact with learning processes (Trinh & Conner, 2019). Speaking-related engagement includes behaviour in speaking activities, emotional engagement in terms of interest and affective reactions, cognitive engagement in terms of efforts made during learning, and agentic engagement in terms of learners' active involvement in the learning process. There have been studies showing a relationship between student engagement and learning or speaking results. For instance, Istiara et al. (2023) demonstrated a positive association between student engagement and speaking competence, while Dincer et al. (2012) stated that active engagement in classroom discussions was positively linked to higher academic performance in EFL speaking courses. The task-based learning literature has also shown that speaking activities which are interactive can help learners engage behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively through collaboration and spoken practice (Febriyanti et al., 2023). This research indicates that the study of engagement in speaking tasks can shed light on participation in opportunities for spoken language practice as well as on the relationships between engagement dimensions and speaking achievement.

However, two research gaps persist. Firstly, while student engagement has been extensively studied as a general aspect of their academic behaviour, not much research has been devoted to investigating the dimensions of engagement with regard to the learners' speaking performance (Trinh & Conner, 2019). Existing literature has explored engagement in terms of a broad learning experience or a certain teaching approach, which has made it hard to understand how the dimensions of engagement are related to the speaking performance of the learners. Secondly, little has been known about the correlation between multidimensional student engagement and objectively evaluated speaking performance. Prior research has largely focused on the relationship between student engagement and subjective measures of speaking such as self-assessment of the learners' speaking abilities, questionnaires, and perceptions of learning outcomes (Sundqvist & Uztosun, 2024; Mystkowska-Wiertelak et al., 2025). Research has also been done in more specialised contexts such as within one class, one institution, or a certain form of instruction (Istiara et al., 2023; Zhong et al., 2024). More empirical studies are thus required to determine whether behavioural, affective, cognitive, and agentic engagement have different associations with speaking performance measures.

It is especially necessary to investigate this phenomenon in private language centres in Vietnam. While most studies conducted on the learning of English in Vietnam have been done in educational institutions, learning in private language centres is an equally important phenomenon, but it has received much less coverage in the scientific literature (Trinh, 2024; Vo & Ho, 2024). These centres might stress the communicative approach and offer a chance for interactive practice in English (Torshizi & Torshizi, 2016). Nevertheless, results about student engagement found in other educational settings cannot be generalised to those who learn English at private language centres. Learners who study English in private language centres might do so for various reasons, such as exam preparation, university entrance, work needs, or to study abroad (Hiver et al., 2024). Moreover, there are many factors that distinguish private language centres from regular schools, including curriculum, teaching strategies, materials used during lessons, and assessments (Hiver et al., 2024). Thus, it is important to investigate the engagement of learners at private language centres.

Age may also be relevant when considering how engagement is expressed in different learning contexts. Research on young foreign language learners has identified developmental differences in interactional patterns and learners' responses to communicative tasks across age groups (Butler & Zeng, 2015; Pinter, 2006; Dao et al., 2024). While teachers and classroom interaction could have a major influence in young learner settings regarding engagement, adult EFL learners would have more opportunities for learner autonomy and decision-making in their learning process (Pinter, 2006; Tran, 2020). However, such differences in engagement context may manifest themselves in behavioural involvement, emotional reactions, cognitive engagement, and contributions to class activities by the learners. Yet, these arguments are used as plausible explanations that have been proposed by past studies instead of being used to explain the current results.

Another point to consider is that of gender. Some previous literature has documented gender differences in engagement among students, yet such results may not be generalizable in all contexts or types of engagement (Wang & Eccles, 2012; Wang et al., 2011). In the EFL context, some researchers have found gender differences with regard to foreign language emotions, including behaviour (Jiang & Dewaele, 2019), whereas more recent literature has explored gender differences with respect to behavioural, cognitive, emotional, and agentic engagement during EFL learning (Huang et al., 2025). However, little evidence is available on the possible differences between male and female EFL learners with regard to these dimensions of engagement during speaking tasks. Thus, analysing gender differences can contribute to obtaining more descriptive data about the engagement of EFL learners in the private language-centre context. In the current

study, whether these kinds of differences are found in the sample is investigated without presuming that gender dictates students' engagement.

In this regard, this current study focuses on multidimensional student engagement in English-speaking activities among Vietnamese students learning EFL in a private language centre. This study looks into aspects such as level of engagement, gender differences, as well as the link between engagement and speaking test scores. By focusing on speaking activities and the achievement of speaking skills through a test, this study tries to add to empirical research on skill-specific engagement and its link to speaking performance. Rather than presenting a new theoretical model, the current study applies the existing multidimensional student engagement concept in a private language centre setting and looks at how different dimensions of engagement relate to speaking test scores. This study examines the following questions:

1. What is the level of student engagement in English speaking activities among the participants?
2. Is there a significant difference in student engagement in English speaking activities based on gender?
3. To what extent does student engagement predict speaking test scores among Vietnamese EFL learners at the language centre?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Student engagement in EFL contexts

Student engagement is defined as a complex phenomenon, which refers to learners' involvement in and reactions to learning activities. At early stages of defining engagement, much attention was paid to behavioural aspects, namely participation, effort, persistence, and completion of tasks, while more recent approaches have extended the definition of engagement by adding to it emotional and cognitive aspects (Fredricks et al., 2004; Okur et al., 2017). Behavioural engagement relates to learners' participation and persistence in learning activities, emotional engagement reflects learners' interest and enjoyment, and cognitive engagement includes mental effort and strategies used in learning activities. Agentic engagement was subsequently introduced by Reeve and Tseng (2011) to explain learners' efforts in actively participating in the learning process in the form of giving preferences, asking questions, and having an influence on their learning environment. These dimensions represent associated yet different elements of learner engagement and offer an understanding of engagement that goes beyond just behavioural participation.

Engagement is multidimensional, and these dimensions are related to the processes and outcomes of learning. Studies carried out in an EFL context have found connections between behavioural engagement and participation or persistence, cognitive engagement and learning strategies/deeper processing, and emotional engagement and learners' interest or affective experiences (Dincer et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2023; Tsang & Dewaele, 2024). Moreover, agentic engagement as a separate dimension has also been studied, as it involves active learner contribution to the learning process rather than just participation in it (Reeve & Tseng, 2011). As a result, most research indicates that engagement needs to be viewed on several dimensions rather than just as a behavioural measure.

Nevertheless, research does not always find the same dimension as the most influential factor of language learning performance. For instance, Guo et al. (2023) stated that cognitive engagement was an important predictor of proficiency in English, but Liu et al. (2023) revealed more significant correlations with emotional and behavioural engagement. Moreover, Dincer et al. (2017) found variations in the nature of the connections between the four engagement dimensions depending on the learner population and learning situation. In addition, He (2025) established that the connection involving agentic engagement varied for learners at different educational levels. These results imply that the influence of particular engagement dimensions can vary depending on the outcome studied, the features of learners, and the learning environment. As a result, the literature has not provided any consistent grounds on which to assume that one dimension is more significant than others in EFL contexts.

Moreover, there are differences in research methods that complicate comparison of results obtained by different researchers. Indeed, a considerable number of studies devoted to learner engagement employ self-report questionnaires, while some studies also use self-report measures to assess language proficiency or speaking skills (Feng & Hong, 2022; Mystkowska-Wiertelak et al., 2025; Sundqvist & Uztosun, 2024). Self-report measures may be useful to obtain relevant data regarding learners' perceptions and experiences; however, they do not allow assessing classroom behaviour or independent measures of language performance. Further, earlier research has considered various age categories, educational institutions, teaching methodologies, and language achievements, which could be sources of differences (Istiara et al., 2023; Zhong et al., 2024). Thus, there is an evident necessity to conduct studies that would clarify the

learning environment and the language achievement measure.

This problem appears especially pertinent in terms of the analysis of engagement in relation to speaking. Speaking entails the production of language, interaction with others and participating in conversations, thus allowing different kinds of engagement to be applicable to the learning of speaking skills. The evidence obtained in the EFL area suggests that there is a connection between engagement and speaking-related results. For instance, Istiara et al. (2023) found a positive correlation between student engagement and speaking skills, whereas Dincer et al. (2012) found an association between classroom engagement and achievement in EFL speaking classes. Speaking tasks may also offer the chance for behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement (Aubrey et al., 2022; Febriyanti et al., 2023). However, the definition of engagement, measurement methods, subjects, and instruction contexts vary among these studies, and only a few studies investigated these three aspects of engagement in terms of a performance-based speaking assessment.

Past studies reveal the value of taking a multidimensional approach to measuring engagement, but the associations between the different aspects of individual engagement and language acquisition outcomes may differ depending on the learners, outcomes, and contexts. In other words, the existing multidimensional framework can be used to analyse engagement without assuming the identical connections of all four dimensions in all EFL settings. Specifically, the use of the framework for analysing the younger EFL learners enrolled in a private language centre will provide additional empirical information on whether the four engagement dimensions are correlated with performance on speaking tasks. The main contribution of this study lies in the context and empirical sense, as the study uses a proven multidimensional model of engagement for an under-researched audience of learners and learning environment, with speaking test results as the dependent variable.

Age is another factor that is crucial to consider in this context because engagement is exhibited in certain developmental and educational contexts. There is research on young EFL learners in Vietnam showing that teachers can find out about various forms of engagement, including behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and social, in primary school settings where classroom activities and teacher actions serve as important contexts for these types of engagement (Dao et al., 2024; Bui et al., 2025). Furthermore, young learners have special needs that are different from those of older learners, especially in terms of learning development, classroom assistance, and strategy formation (Pinter, 2006). Meanwhile, there is research on adult English learners focusing more on autonomy, learning goals, and self-directed learning (Pham & Nguyen, 2021). Such differences do not necessarily mean that young and adult learners are engaged at different levels of engagement. They imply the fact that different contexts in which learners engage are associated with their developmental needs and learning aims. Thus, results from university students or adults learning EFL cannot necessarily be applied to younger learners.

2.2. Speaking achievement and the private centre context

The connection between students' engagement and their performance in speaking can also be studied in terms of the context of education where speaking skills are learned and tested. Private language schools serve as one of the contexts of EFL learning in Vietnam, besides schools and universities. Although English language learning in Vietnam has been extensively researched with regard to formal education, relatively little empirical data on private language schools is available (Trinh, 2024; Vo & Ho, 2024). Even though research has been conducted on the relationship between engagement and language acquisition in Vietnamese private language centres (Dao et al., 2021), evidence on young learners and speaking skills is not plentiful. Investigation of student engagement in this regard can therefore offer data on learning settings which are not fully covered in existing literature.

Private language centres often have courses of English where much attention is paid to the development of communicative skills and interaction activities in the classroom. This kind of activity includes working in pairs, in groups, playing games, having discussions, and so forth (Torshizi & Torshizi, 2016). Thus, this context can be related to the problem of speaking engagement since the development of oral language depends on the level of engagement in classroom activities. At the same time, the format of teaching, the number of people in classes, time for studying, and the teachers' instructional activities are likely to vary at different centres and can influence the opportunity for engagement (Nguyen & Le, 2021; Wongwan et al., 2019). Thus, results obtained in other educational environments need to be examined with respect to the private language centre environment rather than being taken for granted.

Another factor to consider when studying engagement among students in private language centres is the age of the learners. Unlike previous research studies that have focused on the engagement of university and adult EFL learners, this study will involve children and early adolescents who are 7 to 14 years old. Previous

studies on the engagement of young EFL learners have suggested that engagement among children and early adolescents can be determined by their behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement in class activities. Teachers can be instrumental in providing these engagements (Dao et al., 2024; Bui et al., 2025). Younger learners have different developmental and learning needs as compared to older learners, and this might impact the manifestation of classroom engagement (Pinter, 2006). For this reason, results that are obtained using older EFL learners cannot automatically be applied to younger learners in the language centre context.

Similarly, the speaking outcome of this current study is also measured using an assessed speaking test rather than measuring the speaking proficiency based on the learners' perceptions about their speaking skill level. The importance of this difference is that the performance of speaking actually depends upon producing speech and thus can be measured through performance-based assessment. Previous studies have explored the relationship between classroom engagement and speaking proficiency (Dincer et al., 2012; Istiara et al., 2023); however, the literature about the relationship between multiple classroom engagement dimensions and speaking performance in younger learners at private language institutions is relatively sparse. This research aims to fill this void by investigating the role of all four engagement dimensions concerning speaking test performance in this particular educational setting.

2.3. Gender dynamics in student engagement

Gender has been investigated in terms of participation, interactions, and language achievement, but results have been inconsistent. Some studies have found that there are variations in class participation, group work, and language achievement between male and female students (de Carvalho et al., 2025; Erdiana et al., 2019). Other investigations have shown that variations in language achievement based on gender can become less obvious if learner-related variables such as cognitive and motivational traits are taken into account (Rababah et al., 2023). The above findings suggest that gender is not necessarily the determinant of the level of engagement and speaking ability of students.

There is a similar level of uncertainty in the studies conducted to investigate the dimensions of student engagement. It must be noted that behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement are various types of engagement, which may show some gender differences depending on their dimensions and context of learning (Dincer et al., 2017; de Carvalho et al., 2025). At the same time, there has been relatively little attention paid to the question of whether male and female EFL learners show any difference in their multidimensional engagement when speaking English, especially among the younger generation learning in language centres.

Gender is thus considered in this study as a grouping variable and not as a predictor, moderator or cause. The reason is that the study seeks to establish whether there is a statistically significant difference in the level of student engagement between male and female subjects. The study is aligned to the second research question, which addresses group differences in engagement. In this case, gender is evaluated independently of the predictive link between engagement and speaking test performance. Speaking test performance is analysed using four measures of engagement in the regression analysis, while gender is simply a grouping variable in the independent samples t-test.

2.4. Conceptual framework

The framework for the current study is mainly based on the multidimensional definition of student engagement put forward by Fredricks et al. (2004), defining behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement as separate but interconnected dimensions of student involvement in learning. Agentic engagement is also considered, taking into account the work by Reeve and Tseng (2011), who describe it as the proactive role of students in learning. A four-dimensional definition has also been used in studies on EFL classroom engagement (Dincer et al., 2017; Trinh & Conner, 2019).

In this research, the construct of student engagement is defined based on four components, which are behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement. Behavioural engagement describes the extent to which students are involved, effortful, and persistent in participating in speaking activities. Emotional engagement is about the extent to which students experience interest and pleasure in their speaking activities. The definition of cognitive engagement is about the mental effort that is exerted in understanding, processing, and producing spoken English. Agentic engagement involves the proactive involvement of students in the learning process through such actions as preference expression, questioning, and making contributions (Fredricks et al., 2004; Reeve & Tseng, 2011). These dimensions are considered interrelated aspects of the larger concept of student engagement.

The dependent variable in the study is speaking performance, which is measured using the participants' scores on their speaking test at the language centre. Some studies found associations between engagement

and language acquisition or speaking performance, yet the strength of the relationship varies for each engagement dimension (Dincer et al., 2012; Istiara et al., 2023). Based on this premise, the current study explores the statistical predictive power of engagement in the behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and agentic domains toward speaking test scores among the sample studied. This involves the explanatory power of engagement in the regression analysis and not that of causation in the improvement of speaking performance.

However, gender is not a moderating or predicting variable in the theoretical framework but rather a grouping variable. This aligns with research question 2, which focuses on whether there is a difference in student engagement among males and females. Research on gender and its effects on language learning outcomes has yielded inconsistent results (de Carvalho et al., 2025; Erdiana et al., 2019; Rababah et al., 2023). As a result, the current study does not posit that gender affects engagement or alters the connection between engagement and speaking achievement. In this study, gender is utilised as a basis for making up the two comparison groups for the independent samples t-test.

In the conceptual framework, the emotionally secure sense of belonging and other constructs not measured in the current study are not included. Though these constructs might be important for student engagement, the inclusion of such constructs in the conceptual framework would not align with the variables being studied using the questionnaire, speaking assessment, and statistics. The conceptual framework only covers the variables discussed in the research questions and measured in the current study. Thus, the framework covers behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement as four components of student engagement examined as the predictor of speaking test scores, and gender is considered as a separate construct for grouping purposes.

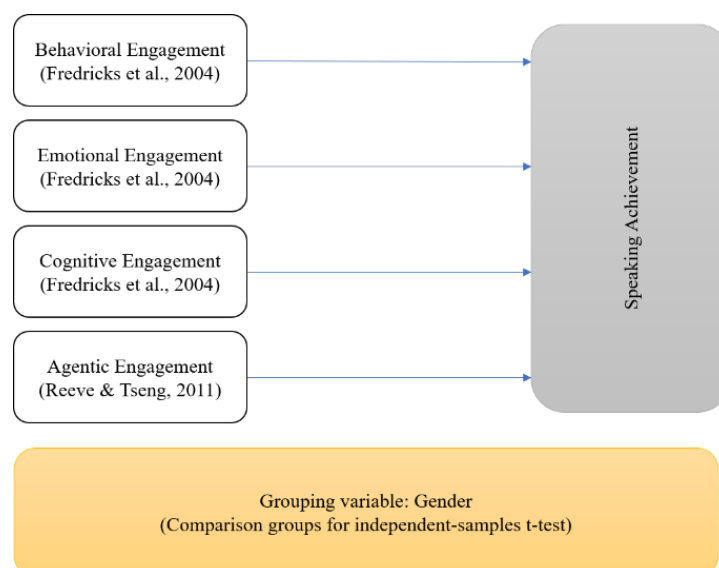


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research design

The present research employed the quantitative research methodology in order to investigate the relationship between the level of engagement and the achievement of English-speaking skills by EFL learners enrolled in a language school. The employment of a quantitative approach is appropriate in this context since the aim of the research is to measure engagement levels and analyse the relationship between engagement dimensions and speaking test scores in terms of numbers. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the quantitative approach is appropriate when the investigation of the relationships between variables in numbers and statistics is the key point of research. More specifically, a correlational research design was selected. Correlational research is appropriate in cases when the manipulation of the learning environment and experimental treatments are not applied. On the contrary, this approach seeks to identify the natural relationships between behavioural, affective, cognitive, and agentic engagement dimensions and students' speaking skills. It is known that correlational studies are applicable in studying the associations among the educational variables (Fraenkel et al., 2018).

3.2. Research context and participants

Participants of the study included 96 children who were learning English as a foreign language in a

language centre in Vietnam. The technique employed for teaching English in that institution was the communicative English approach through interactive means such as flashcards, games in English, pair work, and classroom discussions. In the classroom, teachers always try to foster a conducive environment by creating a friendly atmosphere to foster students' participation in activities and prevent speech anxiety; hence, it was appropriate to conduct a study about students' participation in speaking classes there. Among these children, there were 46 boys (47.9%) and 50 girls (52.1%). The majority of the students were between 10 and 12 years of age, having learned English for about three to four years, although some had learned English for six years.

A purposive sampling technique was used in order to ensure the participation of those participants whose relevance to the objectives of the research could be determined. All the participants involved in the research were taking EFL classes that specifically concentrated on developing speaking, had to attend speaking classes, and to undergo an evaluation of their speaking skills. Besides, participants were studying at the centre for at least one semester in order to become familiar enough with the educational environment and the teaching techniques used there. The purposive sampling method gives the researcher an opportunity to select those subjects having particular characteristics in relation to the study area and who can provide accurate data in regard to the study topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Mills & Gay, 2019). As the participants were selected via purposive sampling from one private language centre, it is possible that the results may not be reflective of young EFL learners in other language centres. This sampling feature was taken into account while analysing the findings and their applicability.

An a priori power analysis was performed in order to assess whether the sample size is adequate for the intended multiple linear regression. The a priori power analysis was performed using the software package G*Power 3.1 with the following inputs: fixed multiple regression, four predictors, medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$), significance level of $\alpha = .05$, and desired power of .80. Based on these inputs, it was found that the minimum sample size necessary would be 85 participants. Consequently, the final sample of 96 participants surpassed the required minimum for the regression analysis.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants (N = 96)

	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Boys	46	47.9
	Girls	50	52.1
Age	7	1	1.0
	8	10	10.4
	9	14	14.6
	10	30	31.3
	11	23	24.0
	12	16	16.7
	13	1	1.0
	14	1	1.0
Years of learning English	1 year	7	7.3
	2 years	15	15.6
	3 years	33	34.4
	4 years	34	35.4
	5 years	4	4.2
	6 years	3	3.1

3.3. Instruments

Primary Learner Oral Engagement Questionnaire (PLOEQ)

The main tool employed in this study for quantification purposes is the Primary Learner Oral Engagement Questionnaire (PLOEQ), designed to measure four multidimensional engagement constructs in primary foreign language classes: agentic, behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement. In order to keep the structure balanced, the PLOEQ has 12 items, namely, three items for each of the target constructs. The items have been drawn from the empirically validated measures. More precisely, the items for measuring agentic engagement have been drawn from the Agentic Engagement Questionnaire (Reeve & Tseng, 2011), the items for measuring behavioural and emotional engagement from the Behavioural and Emotional Engagement Scale (Skinner et al., 2009), and those for cognitive engagement from Wolters' (2004) Metacognitive Strategies Scale based on the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) by

Pintrich et al. (1993). All items are the same in terms of their format and use the seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

To ensure that the measure used would be culturally appropriate and easily readable by children, it was subject to some adaptations. Firstly, the items of the instrument were translated into Vietnamese and back-translated by two independent bilingual researchers in order to guarantee semantic equivalence between both versions. Having done this, we conducted an analysis of the content validity involving three experts in applied linguistics and teaching English at the primary school level. The panel of experts analysed the relevance and clarity of the items and adjusted them so that the Content Validity Index became .92. Next, the instrument was tested in a pilot study among a group of elementary school students ($N = 30$) who had demographic characteristics similar to those of the target sample, but were not involved in the main experiment. As a result of this pilot testing, we managed to identify any ambiguities in wording, cognitive complexity of a 7-point scale for children and consistency of the items. Finally, we decided that a 12-item length is perfect for concentration.

The construct and structural validity of the measure, PLOEQ, were examined by Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), which was done using PCA. This gave rise to an exact four-factor structure based on the Kaiser Criterion (*Eigenvalue* > 1.0) that explained a very high cumulative variance of 92.69%. Particularly, the contribution made by Factor 1 was 40.36%, by Factor 2 it was 25.74%, by Factor 3 it was 15.96%, and by Factor 4 it was 10.64%. All 12 items of the PLOEQ proved to have excellent psychometric qualities due to their high communality ranging from .595 to .995 and thereby showing the high shared variance between their constructs. The rotated component matrix given in table 2 shows that the factor loadings ranged from .631 to .978 and were all significantly higher than .50.

As part of validating the construct validity beyond the EFA, CFA was performed in AMOS. It was found from the results of the measurement model that there is a very good fit of the model, as shown by $\chi^2/df = 1.68$, Comparative Fit Index ($CFI = .956$), Tucker-Lewis Index ($TLI = .948$) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ($RMSEA = .054$, 90% CI [.032,.076]). Results show that all the factor loadings were significant and greater than .60, thus showing that the four-factor engagement model is structurally sound and convergent valid. The reliability test shows that there is a very high internal consistency for the whole scale (.88). The reliability was high for each dimension separately as follows: behavioural engagement ($\alpha = .84$), emotional engagement ($\alpha = .81$), cognitive engagement ($\alpha = .83$), and agentic engagement ($\alpha = .80$).

Table 2. Factor loadings and communalities for the exploratory factor analysis

Item Code	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Communality (h2)
SE9	.978	.121	—	.150	.995
SE8	.973	.124	—	.149	.984
SE7	.971	.122	—	.160	.984
SE4	.164	.931	.264	—	.967
SE5	.164	.931	.264	—	.967
SE6	—	.914	.193	—	.878
SE3	—	.228	.956	—	.970
SE1	.117	.194	.930	.163	.943
SE2	—	.273	.913	—	.916
SE10	.113	—	—	.974	.964
SE11	.101	—	—	.974	.962
SE12	.363	.241	—	.631	.595
Eigenvalue	4.843	3.088	1.915	1.276	—
% of Variance	40.36%	25.74%	15.96%	10.64%	—
Cumulative %	40.36%	66.10%	82.06%	92.69%	—

**Note. Extraction method: Principal component analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation. Factor loadings above .50 are bold for clarity. Factor loadings below .10 are suppressed.*

Speaking achievement

The testing for speaking achievement was done using the speaking test that is normally administered in the language centre. This test involved four task components, including exchange, picture differences, picture questions, and extended question. In this test, students had to respond to the questions asked, give description/ identification of the picture, interact with their speaking partners and give a short extended response. However, even though the test included four task components, performances were scored based on

three criteria, namely vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation, and interaction.

Scores for all the criteria were measured from 0 to 5 points, thus giving the highest possible sum of 15 points. The score was allocated to each of the criteria according to the performance description in the assessment scale, and then all three scores were added up to provide the final score for the student's speaking. The criterion of vocabulary and grammar included assessment of the use of vocabulary, control of simple grammar, responses at sentence level, and linking ideas through simple linkers. The criterion of pronunciation was concerned with the intelligibility and control of word stress and intonation. The criterion of interaction evaluated students' reaction to the instructions, questions, and pictures, responsiveness and seeking help if necessary. There was a performance description for the grades ranging between 0 and 5, where the intermediate grades were used as the performance in between the adjacent descriptions.

As part of an effort to provide context to the assessment rubric, the test items overlap conceptually with the CEFR oral production (largely captured through the extended response task) and oral interaction (captured through the exchange and question tasks) descriptors. The same goes for the assessment criteria, which loosely map to CEFR language and phonological competencies. and the model was used only for providing theoretical perspective on the communication variables under measurement.

In order to ensure the reliability of the results, the speaking test was independently graded by two graders, such as a Vietnamese instructor and a native English speaker. Inter-rater reliability for the grading procedure was estimated with the help of calculation of the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) based on the two-way random effects model, resulting in an ICC score equal to .88 (95% *CI* [.82, .93]). Additionally, a positive and statistically significant correlation coefficient was identified between total scores obtained by the two graders ($r = .86$, $p < .001$). The values of Cohen's kappa coefficient (κ) for the criteria grading (vocabulary/grammar, pronunciation, and interaction) ranged from .74 to .81. Both graders independently rated the same speaking performances on the same scale. The final score in speaking was calculated by the addition of scores for vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation, and interaction, resulting in a total score from 0 to 15.

3.4. Ethical considerations

As the participants were children aged 7 to 14 years, the research entailed extensive and multi-layered ethical procedures. Prior to gathering the data, permission from the institutional board of the private language centre was obtained. The parents or legal guardians of the children were provided with written informed consent after a detailed description of the research process. Moreover, verbal assent from the children was obtained using age-appropriate language (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Mackey & Gass, 2015). It is important to mention that both parents and children knew about the voluntary nature of their participation without any consequences for their studies (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012).

Strict procedures were adopted to protect the anonymity of respondents and avoid the social desirability effect. The PLOEQ questionnaire was entirely anonymous, and there was no need to ask for personally identifiable data from the students. Scores of the speaking test were collected anonymously from the administration of the centre (Kubanyiova, 2008), in such a way that all names of the students were coded before the analysis of the data. Best practices for maintaining data confidentiality were followed thoroughly; that is, all the computer files and SPSS matrices were encrypted and kept on the cloud drive, which was password-protected and could be accessed only by the principal researcher (British Educational Research Association, 2018). The complete security arrangements helped ensure the confidentiality of the identities of the students and the security of the functioning of the language centre during the research period.

3.5. Data collection

The data collection procedure was performed systematically between July and October 2025 at the private English language centre in Vietnam. To ensure temporal consistency and rule out any possible confounding factors associated with differences in timing, the data related to student engagement and results of the speaking test were gathered immediately after completion of each teaching unit. Specifically, the PLOEQ questionnaire was conducted in class after the last week of instruction, following the end of the English speaking lessons. Due to the very young age of the participants, all the questions of the questionnaire were translated into Vietnamese to enhance comprehension. Also, the researcher read the questions aloud and explained the unknown terms in order to rule out any possible mistakes made because of misunderstanding; this approach is in accordance with the guidelines for conducting surveys with children learning a foreign language (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). Anonymity of the survey procedure was ensured to prevent social desirability bias.

Information about the performances of the learners in their speaking performance was gathered from the speaking test scores of the language centre. The speaking tests were conducted by a Vietnamese and an English-speaking teacher. The test was composed of interactive speaking tasks lasting from 5 to 7 minutes

for each learner. The four parts of the test task include exchange, picture difference, picture question, and extended question. The performance of the learners was measured by the three criteria: vocabulary and grammar, pronunciation, and interaction, where each criterion was graded from 0 to 5. The sum of the three criterion scores became the speaking score, which is from 0 to 15.

3.6. Data analysis

Data collected via the research process were subsequently subjected to analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 27). Prior to analysis of primary data, all datasets were verified, cleaned, and coded to make sure there were no missing values. In order to address possible threats due to a self-report survey being used as a method of collecting quantitative data, Common Method Bias (CMB) was evaluated using Harman's single-factor test in SPSS. The unrotated exploratory factor analysis revealed that the first factor was able to explain 34.12% of the total variation in the data, far less than the required 50%, which means that common method variance was not a threat to validity.

The first part of the data analysis was the computation of the reliability coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha as a measure of internal consistency of the dimensions of the questionnaire. As indicated by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), reliability coefficients greater than 0.70 are acceptable in educational research. The second part of the data analysis process was the computation of descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis in order to examine the overall response of the students regarding student engagement issues. For the purpose of conducting the inferential statistics, the following statistical assumptions were tested: normality via skewness and kurtosis (± 1.0), multicollinearity through Tolerance and VIF, and residual independence via Durbin-Watson.

For possible differences across the demographic composition of the respondents, an independent samples t-test was conducted in order to test for significant differences in the level of engagement of male and female respondents. Finally, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted in order to test the predictive relationship of behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagements to the speaking test performance of the students. The regression analysis was conducted in order to determine the statistical contribution of the four engagement factors to variation in the speaking test performance of the students. In the regression analysis, the role of the four engagement variables in determining variation in speaking test scores among the sample participants was assessed, and not the causal relationship between engagement and speaking test performance.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Results

4.1.1. The level of student engagement in speaking skills among the participants

Table 3. Descriptive statistics

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Student engagement	2.25	6.25	4.48	1.16	-0.404	-0.996
Agentic engagement	1.00	7.00	4.32	1.73	-0.457	-0.923
Behavioral engagement	1.00	7.00	4.42	1.77	-0.214	-0.655
Emotional engagement	1.00	6.33	4.38	1.83	-0.893	-0.576
Cognitive engagement	2.00	6.00	4.79	1.22	-0.636	-0.852

As seen from the descriptive statistics in table 3, the participants showed relatively high levels of engagement in speaking activities on average ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.16$). Out of the four dimensions, the participants' engagement in the cognitive dimension was the highest ($M = 4.79$, $SD = 1.22$), followed by agentic engagement ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.73$), behavioural engagement ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 1.77$), and emotional engagement ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 1.83$). A relatively higher average for cognitive engagement indicates relatively more frequent use of mental processes in speaking activities among participants, while a relatively lower average for agentic engagement indicates relatively less frequent reports of proactivity behavior like asking questions or expressing preferences, among participants. The results are descriptions of the engagement reported by participants, but they do not give the reasons why the four dimensions were different. Skewness and kurtosis values for all variables lay within the acceptable limit of ± 1.00 , implying that there was no significant deviation from the distributional assumption of the study.

4.1.2. The difference in student engagement based on gender among the participants

The result of the independent-samples t-test showed statistically significant differences between genders in the level of students' engagement (table 4). Girls had a higher mean level of engagement ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 0.59$) than boys ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.10$), $t(94) = -8.55$, $p < .001$, effect size (d) was -1.75 . There were

significant differences in agentic, behavioural, and emotional engagement. The most significant difference was in behavioral engagement; girls had higher values ($M = 5.62$, $SD = 1.15$) than boys ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.34$), $t(94) = -9.82$, $p < .001$, $d = -2.01$.

Table 4. Independent t-test

Variables	Boys	Girls	t	p	Cohen's d
Student engagement	3.68 (1.10)	5.21 (0.59)	-8.55	.000	-1.75
Agentic engagement	3.59 (1.95)	4.99 (1.17)	-4.33	.000	-0.88
Behavioral engagement	3.12 (1.34)	5.62 (1.15)	-9.82	.000	-2.01
Emotional engagement	3.46 (2.09)	5.23 (0.96)	-5.42	.000	-1.11
Cognitive engagement	4.57 (1.30)	4.99 (1.11)	-1.71	.090	-0.35

There was also a statistically significant difference in agentic engagement, where girls scored higher than boys, $t(94) = -4.33$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.88$. Emotional engagement followed the same trend where females scoring higher than males, $t(94) = -5.42$, $p < .001$, $d = -1.11$. On the other hand, the difference in cognitive engagement was not statistically significant, $t(94) = -1.71$, $p = .090$, $d = -0.35$. Therefore, there were gender differences in overall engagement, behavioural engagement, emotional engagement, and agentic engagement, but no gender differences in cognitive engagement.

4.1.3. The predictive power of student engagement on EFL speaking test outcomes at a language centre

Table 5. Multicollinearity diagnostics and regression coefficients

Predictor Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2.138	0.701		3.051	.003		
Agentic engagement	-0.053	0.140	-0.033	-0.380	.704	.393	2.546
Behavioral engagement	0.207	0.150	0.130	1.380	.171	.327	3.055
Emotional engagement	0.654	0.108	0.427	6.070	< .001	.592	1.689
Cognitive engagement	1.276	0.137	0.553	9.283	< .001	.824	1.213

*Note. $R = .857$, $R^2 = .734$, Adjusted $R^2 = .722$, $F(4, 91) = 62.749$, $p < .001$. Dependent variable: Speaking test scores.

Before conducting the multiple regression test, the assumptions of the regression model were tested. To test multicollinearity, the values of Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were checked. From table 5, the VIF values were between 1.213 and 3.055, whereas the Tolerance values varied between .327 and .824, which indicated that there was no significant multicollinearity in the data because of the criteria utilised in this study. Furthermore, the Durbin-Watson statistic was evaluated to measure the degree of independence in the residuals, which had a value between 1.5 and 2.5.

The results from the multiple regression (table 5) yielded a statistically significant model, $R^2 = .734$, adjusted $R^2 = .722$, $F(4, 91) = 62.75$, $p < .001$. Consequently, the four engagement dimensions collectively explained 73.4% of the variance in speaking test scores in the current sample. Cognitive engagement was the dimension that explained the largest statistically significant unique proportion of the variance ($\beta = .553$, $p < .001$) in the current model, followed by emotional engagement ($\beta = .427$, $p < .001$). On the other hand, behavioural engagement did not explain any statistically significant unique variance after controlling for the other two engagement dimensions in the model ($\beta = .130$, $p = .171$). Similarly, agentic engagement did not account for any statistically significant unique variance in the model ($\beta = -.033$, $p = .704$). Thus, the findings from the regression analysis show that both cognitive and emotional engagement played an important role in the prediction of speaking test scores statistically, but the behavioural and agentic engagements were not significant in the full model.

4.2. Discussions

This study investigated the multi-dimensional engagement of EFL students in English speaking activities in a private language centre in Vietnam, with emphasis on the levels of engagement, gender differences, and the statistical relationship between the dimensions of engagement and the scores obtained from the speaking test. Results indicated that cognitive engagement had the highest mean out of all four dimensions. Significant gender differences were established in overall engagement, behavioural engagement, emotional engagement and agentic engagement, but not in cognitive engagement. Cognitive and emotional engagement made unique contributions to the speaking test scores, but behavioural and agentic engagement did not.

Concerning the results related to the description of engagement, cognitive engagement scored the highest of all dimensions investigated. This means that respondents perceived themselves as having considerable mental participation in their communicative actions, even though, in the present data, it was not explicitly evident what

kind of learning processes led to such results. Such findings are congruent with the multidimensional view of engagement offered by Fredricks et al. (2004, 2016) since it implies the distinction between students' cognitive and behavioural aspects of engagement. Moreover, it is in accordance with scientific studies proving that cognitive engagement may be associated with language learning due to the necessity for the processing of linguistic information and implementation of learning strategies (Dincer et al., 2017; Guo et al., 2023).

Speaking may offer an environment where cognitive engagement becomes crucial due to the necessity for learners to use and create language under time pressure. According to Tavakoli et al. (2020), oral communication puts pressure on working memory and entails the coordination of several processes in language processing. Cognitive engagement in speaking tasks may include processes like choosing vocabulary, structuring ideas, regulating language usage, and dealing with communication needs. Hence, the relatively high level of cognitive engagement found in the current research may be explained by the cognitive loads associated with speaking tasks, even though these processes have not been directly assessed. In this regard, restricted participation may not necessarily equate to restricted engagement, as learners may be cognitively engaged even when their engagement cannot be easily observed. This interpretation is consistent with the claim by Dewaele and Li (2021) that classroom observable behaviours do not account for all dimensions of learner engagement. From an educational point of view, this indicates that the activities conducted to teach speaking should include times when the students can plan their response, organise their thoughts, monitor their language usage, and make decisions while speaking. These activities can offer chances for intellectual engagement along with oral practice.

Regression analysis found that cognitive engagement contributed significantly and uniquely to speaking test scores. These results are congruent with previous studies which have found that cognitive engagement has been recognised as one factor of significance in language learning and the outcome of such learning (Guo et al., 2023). The results are also congruent with previous research on speaking, which has noted that there are cognitive demands associated with the production of language in a limited time frame (Tavakoli et al., 2020). This can be explained by the possibility that students who claimed to experience greater levels of cognitive engagement might have paid more attention to the language process. However, due to the fact that the current study is correlational and cross-sectional in nature, it cannot establish whether cognitive engagement caused higher speaking test scores or whether better speaking ability resulted in more cognitive engagement.

Learners' emotional engagement also made a significant unique contribution to speaking test results. This finding is in line with previous research which emphasises the importance of the relevance of learners' emotions to foreign language learning. The importance of positive emotional states for foreign language use was stressed by Tsang and Dewaele (2024), whereas Aubrey et al. (2022) and Uztosun et al. (2018) demonstrate that speaking can be a source of affective demands. Speaking practice can make learners experience evaluation, comparison with peers and potential mistakes that can be linked to willingness to communicate and classroom engagement (Erdiana et al., 2020). This could mean that those who felt emotionally engaged had achieved higher marks in the speaking test. Nevertheless, there is no way to determine which direction this relationship has based on current information. There is also another hypothesis that successful speaking experience can cause more positive emotional reactions. These results have a practical implication regarding speaking classes in such environments. Speaking tasks can require, apart from creating chances for speaking practice, also conditions facilitating positive emotional involvement and the thinking process of students. It should be interpreted as a pedagogical implication, not as an indication of the direct impact of some methods on speaking scores.

On the contrary, behavioural engagement was not found to make any statistically significant unique contribution to the speaking test scores after including cognitive, emotional, and agentic engagement in the regression analysis model. However, this result must not be taken to mean that behavioural engagement is not important. Instead, it means that the unique statistical contribution of behavioural engagement was not found to be statistically significant within the regression model framework. This is in line with the multidimensional view of engagement since, according to Fredricks et al. (2004) and Dewaele & Li (2021), engagement cannot be simply reduced to observable behaviours. Observable involvement can be similar to cognitive and emotional engagement. Hence, after taking into account the common variance between the dimensions in the regression analysis, behavioural engagement was not found to make a unique statistical contribution to the speaking test scores.

Another interesting finding relates to the lack of significance of agentic engagement's contribution. Agentic engagement was viewed by Reeve and Tseng (2011) as an active part taken by learners in their learning process, such as voicing preferences, posing questions, and initiating contributions. While this concept might be applicable to students' active engagement in their learning process, its unique contribution

to the speaking test scores in the present model was found to be insignificant. The reason behind this might be different opportunities for agency depending on the instructional context. Hiver et al. (2024) similarly noted the importance of contextual factors in engaging learners and allowing their agency. In the current case, the speaking activities could have been carried out in a curriculum-based framework, which would have restricted learners' chances of having an impact on the design of teaching activities. However, this is only a tentative conclusion, as it was not measured in the current study.

Also, the nonsignificant results for behavioural engagement and agentic engagement could be evaluated against the age of the participants. The children ranged from seven to fourteen years, during which self-regulation and metacognitive capabilities keep developing. In their paper, Veenman et al. (2006) pointed out that the development of students' self-regulatory and metacognitive skills was a critical issue. However, the development context could be taken into consideration in interpreting the less statistical contribution of agentic engagement, but not necessarily in evaluating the current research because it did not measure self-regulation, metacognitive development, and agency among learners.

The instructional context may be another important issue. Language centres as private institutions can have a certain course structure, planned learning outcomes, and classroom management by teachers. Such factors can have an impact on the opportunities provided to students to affect classroom procedures. Nonetheless, due to the fact that the current research has not attempted to explore such characteristics of the classroom, these factors can only be speculated on. Thus, future studies might, for example, investigate the relationships between classroom context, teacher support, and learner choice and the connection between agentic engagement and speaking performance.

Gender differences were observed in some aspects of engagement. Females had significantly higher levels of behavioural engagement, emotional engagement, and agentic engagement compared to males, while there were no gender differences in cognitive engagement. Such results are partially in line with existing literature where gender differences were found in classroom participation and engagement-related behaviours (Havik & Westergård, 2020; Bru et al., 2021; de Carvalho et al., 2025). This means that gender differences could be observed in behavioural, emotional, and agentic engagement, but not in cognitive engagement in the current study sample. Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to claim that gender differences caused differences in engagement.

The lack of an observable gender difference in cognitive engagement is another interesting finding. While females reported higher levels of behavioural, emotional, and agentic engagement than males, their cognitive engagement levels were not different from those of the latter. In other words, it may be concluded that the presence of some differences with regard to behavioural and emotional engagement does not imply the presence of differences concerning cognitive engagement as well. This finding aligns with the study conducted by de Carvalho et al. (2025), where they found that there might be no difference between genders in certain aspects of learning languages and that this difference does not apply to all other factors. Hence, the finding backs up the multidimensionality of engagement, whereby there might be a difference in some aspects but not in others.

With regard to the pedagogical perspective, the study reveals that there is a need for teachers to ensure that there are different kinds of participation opportunities as opposed to depending on observable participation in the classroom. On the other hand, the current findings cannot be generalised to all male or female EFL learners as the subjects were chosen from a single private language school using purposive sampling. These results also carry some implications for future studies that will examine the topic of student engagement and speaking performance. Indeed, many researchers have made use of self-reports of engagement and, in certain studies, self-reports of language outcomes (Feng & Hong, 2022; Sundqvist & Uztosun, 2024; Mystkowska-Wiertelak et al., 2025). In this study, through the use of a multidimensional measure of engagement and a score on a speaking test using a performance assessment rubric, it was possible to draw conclusions about the connection between the students' self-reports of engagement and the measured performance in speaking. The significance of this difference is that self-reporting engagement and speaking performance are two separate sources of information on language learning.

Furthermore, the current study provides contextual evidence within the framework of multidimensional engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Reeve & Tseng, 2011) regarding its four dimensions applied among younger EFL learners at private language centres. Instead of proposing an alternative engagement framework, the present research uses an existing framework to study engagement among less researched learners and contexts. The evidence regarding the significant and unique contributions of the cognitive and emotional dimensions of engagement to speaking test scores, but not the behavioural and agentic dimensions, indicates that the four dimensions do not have to exhibit the same statistical association with speaking performance within different contexts. It corroborates the existing literature about differential

contributions of engagement dimensions among different groups of learners and different learning contexts (Dincer et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2023; He, 2025). On a broader note, the present study addresses the relative lack of evidence in relation to engagement and speaking performance within the private language centre context in Vietnam (Trinh, 2024; Vo & Ho, 2024). Consequently, the findings may offer evidence specific to the mentioned context for teachers and program coordinators. These findings provide situation-specific evidence that could prove valuable to teachers and program managers operating under similar private language centre circumstances. More specifically, these findings imply that observable participation does not encompass all types of involvement that are statistically related to speaking test outcomes.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed at exploring the effect of engagement on the performance of English speaking among the EFL learners in Vietnam. It was found that cognitive and emotional engagement contributed uniquely to performance on speaking tests in multiple regression analyses, while behavioural and agentic engagement did not contribute uniquely after all four dimensions were analysed together. In addition, female learners exhibited significantly higher levels of behavioural, emotional, and agentic engagement than male learners, but there was no significant gender difference in cognitive engagement. The results indicate that there is no similar statistical association between all of the four dimensions of engagement and speaking performance. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the above results suggest a causal association between cognitive or emotional engagement and speaking performance or that behavioural and agentic engagement are insignificant. The above results only offer contextual support for understanding the relationships among the four dimensions of engagement and speaking test performance among young EFL learners.

There are several limitations that need to be taken into account when interpreting the results. Firstly, the participants were selected via purposive sampling from only one private language centre, which means that generalisation of the findings to other young EFL learners from other language centres or institutions is not possible. Secondly, there cannot be any conclusions about the causal relationship between engagement and speaking performance due to the cross-sectional design of the research. Thirdly, engagement was assessed by means of a self-report measure, which might have failed to reflect the true engagement of the learners. Ultimately, this research study was concerned with engagement and speaking performance and did not take into account any other variables like speaking anxiety, self-efficacy, and willingness to communicate. Future research may consider these limitations by sampling learners from various language learning centres as well as through longitudinal and mixed-method approaches. In addition, future research can focus on how classroom variables, as well as psychological ones, relate to speaking behaviour and engagement in young EFL learners.

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Sự gắn kết của người học và kết quả nói tiếng Anh của học viên tiếng Anh như ngoại ngữ tại một trung tâm ngoại ngữ ở Việt Nam

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO

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Sự gắn kết của người học;
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Trung tâm ngoại ngữ;
Bối cảnh giảng dạy EFL tại Việt Nam.

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TÓM TẮT

Một số nghiên cứu về mối quan hệ giữa sự gắn kết của học sinh và thành tích ngoại ngữ đã được thực hiện trong các bối cảnh tiếng Anh là ngoại ngữ dưới các khía cạnh hành vi, cảm xúc, nhận thức và tính chủ động (Đinh-sơ và cộng sự, 2017; Trinh và Conner, 2019; Lưu và cộng sự, 2023). Dù vậy, ít nghiên cứu xem xét mối quan hệ giữa bốn chiều cạnh này với kết quả nhiệm vụ nói của người học. Nghiên cứu cắt ngang này được thực hiện nhằm khảo sát mối quan hệ giữa sự gắn kết đa chiều và điểm kiểm tra nói trên 96 học sinh tiếng Anh nhỏ tuổi tại một trung tâm ngoại ngữ tư thục ở Việt Nam. Dữ liệu thu thập thông qua bảng hỏi sự gắn kết miệng ngữ gồm 12 mục và bài kiểm tra nói do hai giám khảo đánh giá. Kiểm định t và hồi quy tuyến tính bội được sử dụng để phân tích dữ liệu. Thống kê mô tả cho thấy mức độ gắn kết ở mức cao, với nhận thức đạt điểm trung bình cao nhất. Nữ giới có mức độ gắn kết về hành vi, cảm xúc và tính chủ động cao hơn có ý nghĩa thống kê so với nam giới. Kết quả hồi quy cho thấy sự gắn kết cảm xúc và nhận thức có tương quan với điểm kiểm tra nói, trong khi hành vi và tính chủ động không là biến dự báo có ý nghĩa. Do thiết kế nghiên cứu cắt ngang, kết quả phản ánh mối liên hệ thống kê thay vì nhân quả. Phát hiện này gợi ý rằng việc giảng dạy kỹ năng nói tại các cơ sở ngoại ngữ tư thục có liên quan đến sự gắn kết cảm xúc và nhận thức của học sinh, đồng thời không phải mọi chiều cạnh gắn kết đều có mức độ đóng góp tương đương đối với kỹ năng nói.