Adapting Corpus Linguistics for Primary EFL Education in Vietnam: Perspectives from Linguistics Scholars

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Abstract
This qualitative study investigates the perspectives of Vietnamese linguistics scholars on the integration of corpus linguistics into primary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Through semi-structured interviews with nine scholars from two leading Vietnamese institutions, the research explores the applicability, challenges, and strategies of implementing corpus linguistics for young learners in Vietnam. Participants, categorized into novice, mid-career, and near-end career stages, offer diverse viewpoints on this innovative teaching approach. The underpinning theoretical frameworks are sociocultural theory and constructivist learning theory. The thematic analysis reveals four key themes: tailoring corpus linguistics to young learners’ needs and abilities, the challenges in implementing corpus linguistics in primary EFL settings, the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, and the role of cultural context in corpus linguistics application. The study finds a consensus on the need for simplifying and contextualizing corpus materials to suit young learners’ cognitive and cultural backgrounds. Challenges identified include adapting corpus materials, teacher training inadequacies, and curriculum integration difficulties. The gap between theory and practice highlights the need for hands-on teacher training and comprehensive resource development. Furthermore, the importance of culturally relevant corpus materials is emphasized, balancing local and global cultural elements. This study contributes to the field of EFL education by highlighting the specific challenges and strategies for implementing corpus linguistics in the Vietnamese primary education context. It underscores the importance of culturally and pedagogically sensitive approaches in language teaching innovations.

INTRODUCTION
In recent years, the application of corpus linguistics in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching has attracted considerable attention. This study focuses on the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the integration of corpus linguistics in primary education contexts, particularly within the Vietnamese education system. Corpus linguistics, which involves the analysis of language as it appears in natural texts or ‘corpora’, offers a rich resource for understanding authentic language usage and provides empirical data that can challenge traditional language teaching methods (McEnery, 2019). The relevance of this approach in primary education, a stage where foundational language skills are developed, is both innovative and potentially transformative.

The primary context presents specific educational needs and challenges. Young learners at this stage are in the process of acquiring basic literacy skills in their first language, alongside being introduced to a foreign language like English (Cameron, 2001). Despite the recognized potential of corpus linguistics, its implementation in primary education raises several pedagogical concerns. The use of corpus linguistics in such contexts raises questions about its appropriateness, adaptability, and effectiveness. For instance, how can corpus-based materials be designed to cater to the cognitive and linguistic maturity of young learners? What are the pedagogical strategies that can be employed to integrate corpus findings into engaging and age-appropriate language activities?
Vietnam serves as an intriguing case study for exploring these questions. The country has seen a rapid increase in English language learning at all educational levels, driven by global economic integration and educational reforms (Thao & Mai, 2022). The Vietnamese government has placed a high emphasis on English proficiency, introducing it as a compulsory subject from the primary level. However, the integration of innovative approaches like corpus linguistics in primary education is relatively uncharted territory in Vietnam. Existing research predominantly focuses on higher education or adult language learning (Kennedy, 2014), leaving a significant gap in understanding the application of corpus linguistics in early language education. This gap in the research is particularly significant given the critical role of primary education in laying the foundation for future language proficiency.

Therefore, this qualitative study seeks to delve into the perspectives of Vietnamese linguistics scholars on the applicability and implementation of corpus linguistics in primary EFL teaching. Through interviews and qualitative analysis, it aims to uncover insights into how corpus linguistics can be effectively tailored and utilized for young learners in the Vietnamese context. The findings are expected to shed light on the practicalities, potential benefits, and limitations of employing corpus linguistics at the primary level, thereby contributing to the evolving discourse on EFL teaching methodologies and influencing future pedagogical practices in Vietnam and beyond.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corpus Linguistics in Language Learning
The field of corpus linguistics has increasingly informed language teaching and learning over the past few decades. Boulton (2017) emphasized the role of corpora in providing empirical data about language use, offering insights into language patterns and usage. This data-driven approach challenges traditional notions of language teaching, which have often been based on intuition rather than real-world usage (McEnery & Hardie, 2011). Corpus linguistics provides a more authentic and nuanced understanding of language, a feature particularly useful in EFL contexts.

Corpus Linguistics in Primary Education
In primary education, the application of corpus linguistics is a relatively new but growing area of interest. The work of researchers like O’Keeffe and McCarthy (2010) has shown that corpus-based resources can be particularly effective in exposing young learners to natural language patterns. However, adapting corpus findings to the primary level requires careful consideration of learners’ cognitive and linguistic development stages. Research by Gablasova et al. (2017) suggests that corpus-based materials need to be simplified and made relevant to the interests and experiences of young learners.

EFL Teaching in Vietnam
The context of EFL teaching in Vietnam is unique due to its rapidly changing educational landscape. English language teaching in Vietnam has historically been influenced by traditional grammar-translation methods, which have been gradually giving way to more communicative approaches (Thao & Mai, 2022). The Vietnamese government’s initiative to reform English teaching methodologies, as outlined in the National Foreign Languages 2020 Project, underscores the importance of innovative approaches in language education (Nguyen & Hamid, 2021).

Integration of Corpus Linguistics in Vietnamese EFL Contexts
Despite the global recognition of corpus linguistics, its integration into Vietnamese EFL teaching, particularly at the primary level, is understudied. Cao and Badger (2023) noted the challenges in adopting corpus linguistics in Vietnam, including the lack of corpus-awareness among teachers and limited access to corpus resources. There is a gap in literature regarding how these challenges can be addressed in the primary education context.
**Challenges and Opportunities**

The challenges of incorporating corpus linguistics in primary education are multifaceted. They range from the need for teacher training in corpus use (Boulton, 2009) to the development of age-appropriate corpus-based materials. However, the potential benefits, such as enhanced exposure to authentic language and the development of inductive learning skills, are significant. Research by Shi (2013) highlights the potential of corpus-based approaches to foster a more inquisitive and learner-centered environment.

This review highlights the emerging interest in applying corpus linguistics to primary EFL contexts and the specific challenges and opportunities it presents, especially in a unique educational environment like Vietnam. The integration of corpus linguistics in EFL teaching at the primary level is not only a matter of importing a methodology but also adapting it to local educational cultures and needs. The subsequent sections of this study will explore these themes further, particularly focusing on the perspectives of Vietnamese linguistics scholars in the field.

**METHODS**

**Research Design**

This study adopts a qualitative research design, utilizing semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth insights from Vietnamese linguistics scholars on the applicability of corpus linguistics in primary EFL teaching. The choice of a qualitative approach is driven by the exploratory nature of the study, aiming to understand the nuanced perspectives and experiences of the scholars in the context of a relatively new field of inquiry in Vietnam (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The theoretical frameworks underpinning this study are grounded in sociocultural theory and constructivist learning theory. Sociocultural theory, as articulated by Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development and learning. This perspective is particularly relevant to language learning, where social contexts and interaction play a critical role. The study explores how corpus linguistics, as a tool, can be integrated into the social fabric of the classroom, thereby influencing and enhancing the language learning process.

Constructivist learning theory, on the other hand, posits that learners construct knowledge through experiences and reflections on those experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). This theory aligns with the principles of corpus linguistics, which encourages learners to engage with authentic language use and inductively discover language patterns. The study examines how corpus linguistics can facilitate a constructivist approach in primary EFL settings, enabling learners to actively construct their understanding of the English language.

The combination of these theoretical frameworks provides a comprehensive lens through which the data collected from the interviews can be analyzed and interpreted. It allows for an examination of how corpus linguistics can be integrated into the Vietnamese primary EFL context in a manner that is both pedagogically sound and culturally sensitive. This approach acknowledges the complex interplay between educational methodology, cognitive development, and the sociocultural context in which learning occurs.

**Participants**

The participants in this study comprised nine Vietnamese linguistics scholars, selected from two leading educational institutions in Vietnam. This purposive sampling was designed to encompass a broad range of experiences and insights into the field of corpus linguistics in primary EFL teaching. The participants were categorized into three distinct career stages to ensure a diverse range of perspectives: three were novice scholars, in the early stages of their academic careers; three were mid-career scholars, possessing a moderate level of experience and academic contributions; and the remaining three were near the end of their careers, offering a wealth of experience and a long-term view of the field’s evolution in Vietnam.
The inclusion of participants from different career stages aimed to capture the evolving nature of corpus linguistics in EFL teaching across different generations of academic thought and practice. Novice scholars were expected to bring fresh, possibly more technologically-inclined perspectives, while mid-career and near-end scholars could provide insights based on extensive experience and historical context.

Ethical considerations played a crucial role in the research design. Prior to the interviews, all participants were provided with a detailed explanation of the study’s purpose, the nature of their involvement, and the ways in which their data would be used. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring they were participating voluntarily and had the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Anonymity and confidentiality were key priorities; hence, personal identifiers were removed or altered in the presentation of the findings. Additionally, care was taken to ensure that the questions posed during the interviews did not lead to discomfort or psychological stress for the participants. The study also adhered to the ethical guidelines laid down by the hosting institutions, ensuring that the research was conducted in a manner that respected the dignity and rights of the participants. This ethical rigor not only reinforced the validity of the research but also aligned with the broader ethical standards of academic research.

Data Collection
Data collection in this study was primarily conducted through semi-structured interviews, which were instrumental in gaining in-depth insights from the participants. Prior to the main data collection phase, a pilot study was conducted with two non-participating Vietnamese linguistics scholars. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the interview protocol for clarity, relevance, and length. Feedback from this pilot phase led to several revisions in the interview guide to ensure that questions were clear, culturally appropriate, and effectively targeted the research objectives.

The revised interview questions included inquiries such as, “How do you perceive the role of corpus linguistics in primary EFL education in Vietnam?” and “What challenges and opportunities do you foresee in integrating corpus linguistics into primary level teaching?” These questions were designed to elicit comprehensive responses that covered both the theoretical and practical aspects of using corpus linguistics in primary education.

Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes, allowing enough time for participants to elaborate on their responses. The interviews were conducted in spaces where participants felt comfortable and at ease, primarily in their offices or a quiet location within their respective institutions. This choice of venue was intended to ensure a conducive environment for open and reflective discussion.

Given the context of the study, it was imperative to conduct the interviews in Vietnamese, the native language of the participants. This approach facilitated a more natural and comfortable conversation, ensuring that participants could express their views and experiences without the barrier of a second language. To cater to the non-Vietnamese speaking audience of the research, the interviews were professionally transcribed and translated into English. The translations were then cross-checked for accuracy and to retain the original nuances of the participants’ responses. This process ensured that the data collected was both authentic and accessible to a broader research community. Additionally, non-verbal cues and contextual information were carefully noted during the interviews, as these provided valuable insights that complemented the verbal responses.

Data Analysis
The data collected from the semi-structured interviews underwent a comprehensive thematic analysis to identify and interpret the patterns and themes emerging from the scholars’ perspectives. This method of analysis was chosen for its flexibility and effectiveness in handling qualitative data, particularly in studies like ours, where understanding the depth and complexity of individual experiences is crucial.
The process began with a meticulous transcription of the interviews, which were then carefully read and re-read to gain a deep familiarity with the content. Initial codes were generated by identifying recurring ideas, concepts, and phrases within the transcripts. This coding process was both inductive, emerging from the data itself, and deductive, guided by the research questions and theoretical frameworks underpinning the study.

Following the coding phase, these initial codes were grouped into potential themes. This stage involved a constant moving back and forth between the dataset, the coded extracts, and the developing themes, ensuring a coherent pattern was emerging. Each potential theme was then reviewed and refined. This involved checking if the themes worked in relation to the coded extracts and the entire dataset, ensuring that they accurately represented the data.

Throughout the analysis, particular attention was paid to the nuances and complexities within the data, acknowledging any divergences or contradictions in the participants’ responses. This approach was critical in ensuring a holistic understanding of the scholars’ perspectives on the integration of corpus linguistics in primary EFL teaching in Vietnam.

Finally, the themes were defined and named, providing a clear, organized representation of the data. This thematic framework served as the basis for the detailed analysis and interpretation presented in the results section of the study. The analysis was conducted with an ongoing reflective stance, considering the researchers’ own biases and perspectives, to maintain the integrity and authenticity of the findings. This thematic analysis process not only illuminated the scholars’ perceptions and experiences but also provided insights into broader patterns and trends in the field of corpus linguistics in EFL education.

RESULTS

Tailoring Corpus Linguistics for Young Learners in the Vietnamese Context

A prominent theme that emerged from the interviews was the various strategies and considerations for effectively tailoring corpus linguistics to the needs and abilities of young learners in Vietnam. This theme was highlighted across different career stages of the scholars: 2 out of 3 novice scholars, all 3 mid-career scholars, and 2 out of 3 near-end career scholars mentioned specific strategies and challenges in this regard.

The novice scholars focused on the simplification and contextualization of corpus materials. One novice participant noted, “For young learners, corpus data needs to be simplified. It is not just about language complexity but making it relatable to their daily lives.” This perspective aligns with sociocultural theory, emphasizing the importance of context and relevance in learning. It suggests that for corpus linguistics to be effective in a primary EFL setting, the materials derived from corpora must resonate with the learners’ social and cultural experiences.

Mid-career scholars, meanwhile, emphasized the interactive and engaging aspects of corpus-based activities. A mid-career participant mentioned, “Interactive games and visual aids using corpus examples can make learning more engaging and memorable for young students.” This approach is reflective of constructivist learning theory, which advocates for active engagement and experiential learning. By incorporating interactive elements, corpus linguistics can be made more accessible and stimulating for primary learners.

The near-end career scholars highlighted the need for teacher training and resource development. One of them expressed, “Effective use of corpus linguistics in primary education requires teachers who are not only trained in corpus tools but also skilled in adapting these tools for young minds.” This insight points to the crucial role of teacher preparedness in implementing corpus linguistics effectively at the primary level.

Challenges in Implementing Corpus Linguistics in Primary EFL Settings

Another critical theme that emerged from the study was the challenges faced in implementing corpus linguistics within primary EFL classrooms in Vietnam. This theme was universally acknowledged...
by all participant groups: all three novice scholars, three mid-career scholars, and three near-end career scholars brought forth various concerns and challenges.

One of the main challenges highlighted by novice scholars involved the adaptation of corpus materials to suit the language proficiency level and cognitive abilities of young learners. A novice participant pointed out, “The complexity of authentic corpus materials often exceeds the comprehension level of primary students, demanding significant adaptation.” This observation aligns with sociocultural theory, which stresses the need for learning materials to be within the zone of proximal development of learners, where they are challenging yet achievable with appropriate support.

Mid-career scholars emphasized the lack of adequate training and resources for teachers as a significant barrier. One mid-career participant stated, “Teachers are often not equipped with the necessary skills or resources to effectively utilize corpus linguistics in their teaching.” This challenge resonates with the principles of constructivist learning theory, which requires educators to facilitate and guide the learning process. Effective implementation of corpus linguistics in the classroom depends on the teacher’s ability to create learning experiences that enable students to build their understanding of language patterns.

Near-end career scholars highlighted institutional challenges, such as curriculum constraints and the reluctance to adopt new teaching methodologies. A near-end career scholar expressed, “Incorporating corpus linguistics into the existing curriculum is a challenge, given the rigid structure and content requirements.” This insight points to the broader systemic challenges in integrating innovative teaching approaches within established educational frameworks.

Bridging Theory and Practice in Corpus Linguistics for Primary EFL Education

A third significant theme that emerged from the interviews revolved around the gap between theoretical knowledge of corpus linguistics and its practical application in primary EFL classrooms. This theme was echoed by all participant groups: all three novice scholars, three mid-career scholars, and three near-end career scholars expressed their views on this aspect.

The novice scholars particularly emphasized the gap in translating corpus linguistics theory into classroom practice. One novice scholar stated, “There is a vast difference between understanding corpus linguistics theoretically and applying it effectively in a primary classroom setting.” This gap underscores the challenges inherent in moving from abstract linguistic concepts to concrete teaching strategies, a transition crucial in the context of young learners.

Mid-career scholars discussed the need for specific training and professional development programs focusing on the practical aspects of corpus linguistics in teaching. A mid-career scholar remarked, “We need more targeted training programs that bridge the gap between corpus theory and classroom practice, especially for primary education.” This perspective aligns with the constructivist approach, advocating for teacher empowerment through practical, hands-on experiences and learning.

Near-end career scholars expressed concerns about the lack of comprehensive resources that blend corpus findings with teaching methodologies suitable for young learners. One near-end career scholar noted, “The availability of resources that effectively integrate corpus linguistics into teaching materials for young students is still limited.” This observation highlights the need for resources that not only present corpus data but also guide teachers on how to use this data in a pedagogically sound and age-appropriate manner.

The Role of Cultural Context in Corpus Linguistics Application

The final theme that emerged strongly from the interviews was the role of cultural context in the application of corpus linguistics in primary EFL teaching in Vietnam. This aspect was acknowledged by all participant groups, with all three novice scholars, three mid-career scholars, and three near-end career scholars offering insights into how cultural factors influence the integration of corpus linguistics.
Novice scholars highlighted the importance of culturally relevant content in corpus-based materials. One of them stated, “Corpus materials must resonate with the students’ cultural background to be effective in a Vietnamese primary classroom.” This view aligns with sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of cultural context in shaping learning experiences. The incorporation of local cultural elements in language teaching materials can facilitate greater engagement and understanding among young learners.

Mid-career scholars discussed the challenges in adapting predominantly Western corpus materials to the Vietnamese context. A mid-career participant mentioned, “Most available corpus resources are based on Western contexts, and adapting these to fit Vietnamese cultural realities is not always straightforward.” This concern points to the need for developing corpus resources that are not only linguistically appropriate but also culturally relevant.

Near-end career scholars reflected on the broader implications of using culturally diverse corpus materials in fostering global awareness. One near-end career scholar suggested, “While integrating Vietnamese culture is important, exposing students to diverse cultural contexts through corpus materials can also be beneficial.” This perspective highlights the dual role of corpus linguistics in reinforcing local cultural identity and promoting global cultural awareness.

**DISCUSSION**

**Tailoring Corpus Linguistics for Young Learners in the Vietnamese Context**

The theme of tailoring corpus linguistics for young learners in the Vietnamese context provides a valuable contribution to the existing body of research on corpus linguistics in EFL education. This study’s findings resonate with previous studies in terms of the need for simplifying and contextualizing corpus materials for young learners, as well as emphasizing interactive and engaging teaching methods. For instance, previous research by O’Keeffe and McCarthy (2010) has underlined the importance of making corpus-based materials relevant and accessible to learners. The emphasis by our novice scholars on the simplification and contextualization of corpus data aligns with these findings, highlighting a universal challenge in corpus linguistics across different educational contexts. This alignment reinforces the global relevance of corpus linguistics, while simultaneously emphasizing the unique challenges faced in the Vietnamese context.

However, our study extends beyond these general observations by focusing specifically on the Vietnamese context. The insights from mid-career and near-end career scholars about the need for interactive, engaging methods, and teacher training in corpus linguistics provide a unique contribution to the literature. This focus on the specific educational and cultural context of Vietnam is less explored in existing literature, which often centers on Western or more globally generic EFL teaching environments (e.g., Friginal, 2018; Xodabande & Nazari, 2022). The emphasis on culturally and contextually relevant corpus materials reflects the growing recognition of the importance of sociocultural factors in language learning, as advocated by sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). This aspect of the study offers new insights, showing how the principles of sociocultural theory are actualized in a specific educational setting, thus bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Furthermore, our study’s findings on the need for teacher training and resource development, particularly highlighted by near-end career scholars, address a gap in the current literature. While the significance of teacher training in corpus linguistics has been acknowledged in broader terms (Boulton, 2009), our study delves into the specific needs and challenges faced in the Vietnamese primary education context. This emphasis on teacher preparedness and the development of suitable resources for young learners provides a nuanced understanding of the practicalities involved in implementing corpus linguistics in a non-Western educational setting. Comparatively, this focus on localized training and resource development within the Vietnamese context highlights a crucial area for future research and practice in other similar educational environments, offering a roadmap for contextual adaptation of corpus linguistics in EFL teaching.
Challenges in Implementing Corpus Linguistics in Primary EFL Settings

The challenges identified in implementing corpus linguistics in primary EFL settings in Vietnam, as highlighted by scholars across different career stages, resonate with and expand upon findings in existing literature. The concerns about adapting corpus materials to suit young learners’ proficiency levels and cognitive abilities align with the principles of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). This theory emphasizes the need for learning materials to be appropriately challenging yet accessible, a concept echoed in the work of scholars like McEnery et al. (2006). The findings of this study extend this concept by applying it specifically to the use of corpus linguistics in a primary EFL context, an area less explored in existing literature. This extension of sociocultural theory into the realm of corpus linguistics in primary education highlights a critical area for further exploration and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of language learning in young learners.

The issue of inadequate teacher training and resources, raised by mid-career scholars, aligns with existing studies that have identified teacher preparedness as a crucial factor in the effective implementation of innovative teaching methodologies (Boulton, 2009). However, the current study contributes uniquely by pinpointing specific gaps in training and resources in the context of Vietnamese primary education. This emphasis on teacher training in the context of corpus linguistics is a significant addition to the literature, as it underscores the need for professional development that is not only methodological but also contextually relevant. This finding aligns with recent trends in educational research emphasizing the importance of localized and context-specific teacher training for effective pedagogical innovations (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014).

The institutional challenges highlighted by near-end career scholars, such as curriculum constraints and reluctance towards new methodologies, are also in line with broader educational research (e.g., Hennessy et al., 2005). However, the current study provides a more nuanced understanding of these challenges in the context of Vietnam’s educational system. The reluctance to adopt new methodologies, particularly in a system with a historically traditional approach to language teaching, adds depth to the global conversation about educational innovation and curriculum reform. This aspect of the study contributes to the body of research advocating for systemic changes in educational institutions to accommodate and facilitate new teaching approaches, a topic that has garnered increasing attention in recent educational reforms worldwide (Thao & Mai, 2022).

Bridging Theory and Practice in Corpus Linguistics for Primary EFL Education

The identified gap between the theoretical understanding of corpus linguistics and its practical application in primary EFL classrooms in Vietnam, as discussed by the scholars, is a critical addition to the existing body of literature. This theme, which resonates across different career stages, aligns with the broader educational challenge of translating theory into practice, a common thread in language teaching research and an area emphasized for its importance in effective educational practices (Constas & Sternberg, 2013).

The emphasis by novice scholars on the difficulty of applying theoretical knowledge of corpus linguistics in practical teaching aligns with challenges highlighted in previous studies (McEnery & Hardie, 2011). However, the focus on primary education in the Vietnamese context adds a new dimension to this issue. While the challenge of bridging theory and practice is well-documented in language education literature, this study illuminates how these challenges manifest in a primary EFL context in a non-Western country, contributing new insights to the field. This addition to the literature highlights the importance of contextual factors in the application of educational theories, an aspect increasingly recognized in recent educational research.

Mid-career scholars’ call for targeted training and professional development programs to bridge this gap is consistent with the literature emphasizing the importance of teacher training in effective language teaching (Boulton, 2009). However, the specific focus on corpus linguistics within the context of Vietnamese primary education highlights a unique need for professional development that is tailored to both the subject matter and the cultural context. This finding underscores the evolving nature of teacher training requirements in response to new pedagogical challenges and the
importance of adapting professional development to specific educational contexts (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Near-end career scholars’ concerns about the lack of comprehensive resources that integrate corpus findings with age-appropriate teaching methodologies reflect a gap in the current resources available for EFL teaching. While the need for such resources is acknowledged in broader corpus linguistics research (Friginal, 2018), the current study sheds light on this need within the specific context of Vietnam’s primary education system, emphasizing the importance of culturally and developmentally appropriate materials. This observation contributes to the ongoing dialogue in corpus linguistics and language teaching about the necessity of creating resources that are not only linguistically accurate but also pedagogically effective and culturally sensitive (Xodabande & Nazari, 2022).

The Role of Cultural Context in Corpus Linguistics Application

The theme focusing on the role of cultural context in the application of corpus linguistics in primary EFL teaching in Vietnam provides a significant contribution to the field, highlighting nuances that are often overlooked in broader corpus linguistics research. This theme aligns with the principles of sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the influence of cultural context on learning processes (Vygotsky, 1978). The insights from the study extend this theory by specifically applying it to the use of corpus linguistics in Vietnamese primary EFL settings, an area that has received limited attention in existing literature. This application of sociocultural theory to corpus linguistics in a specific educational context offers a fresh perspective, highlighting the dynamic interplay between language learning and cultural factors (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

The emphasis by novice scholars on the importance of culturally relevant content in corpus-based materials echoes the findings of previous studies that stress the need for culturally responsive teaching materials (Gay, 2015). However, the specific focus on adapting corpus materials to the Vietnamese cultural context adds a new layer to this discussion. It highlights the challenges and importance of localizing language teaching content, an aspect that is particularly pertinent in non-Western educational settings. This emphasis on cultural localization in corpus linguistics reinforces the growing awareness in language education research about the significance of contextualized and culturally sensitive teaching materials (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

The concerns of mid-career scholars about the predominance of Western-centric corpus materials and the difficulties in adapting these to the Vietnamese context resonate with ongoing discussions in the field of EFL teaching (John, 2019). This study’s findings contribute to these discussions by offering concrete examples of how these challenges manifest in a specific cultural and educational setting. The need for developing linguistically and culturally relevant corpus resources, as identified in this study, underscores the importance of considering cultural context in language education resource development. This aligns with the call in recent EFL research for a more inclusive and diverse representation in language teaching resources (Nemi Neto, 2018; Wakat et al., 2023).

Near-end career scholars’ reflections on the broader implications of using culturally diverse corpus materials for fostering global awareness add an important dimension to the conversation. While the integration of local culture is crucial (Albantani & Madkur, 2018), this study highlights the potential of corpus linguistics to also expose learners to a variety of cultural contexts, thereby promoting global understanding and cultural sensitivity. This dual role of corpus linguistics in language education, as identified in this study, contributes a nuanced perspective to the existing literature on global competence in language education. This insight supports the increasing emphasis in global education frameworks on developing intercultural competence and global citizenship among learners (Trede et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

This study embarked on an exploration of the applicability and implementation of corpus linguistics in primary EFL teaching contexts in Vietnam. It aimed to uncover the perspectives of
Vietnamese linguistics scholars at different stages of their careers, offering a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in this endeavor. Employing a qualitative research design, the study gathered in-depth insights through semi-structured interviews with nine linguistics scholars from two leading institutions in Vietnam. These participants were carefully selected to represent a range of experiences, including novice, mid-career, and near-end career scholars, ensuring a diverse array of viewpoints.

The thematic analysis of the interview data revealed four key themes: the strategies for tailoring corpus linguistics to young learners in Vietnam, the challenges in its implementation, the gap between theory and practice, and the role of cultural context in the application of corpus linguistics. The findings highlighted the need for simplifying and contextualizing corpus materials to align with the cognitive and cultural realities of young Vietnamese learners. Challenges such as adapting complex corpus materials, equipping teachers with necessary skills and resources, and integrating corpus linguistics within the existing curriculum were emphasized. The gap between theoretical understanding and practical application was identified as a significant hurdle, necessitating targeted teacher training and the development of comprehensive resources. Furthermore, the importance of cultural relevance in corpus-based materials was underscored, acknowledging the need to balance local cultural elements with global cultural exposure.

The findings of this study hold several important implications for the field of EFL teaching, particularly in the context of integrating corpus linguistics into primary education in Vietnam. Firstly, the necessity of tailoring corpus materials to the cognitive and cultural context of young learners underscores the need for developing specialized corpus-based resources that are both linguistically appropriate and culturally resonant. This calls for a collaborative effort among linguists, educators, and material developers to create resources that align with the specific needs of Vietnamese primary learners. Additionally, the highlighted challenges, such as the adaptation of complex corpus materials and the need for teacher training, suggest that significant investments in professional development are essential. Teacher training programs need to focus not only on the technical aspects of corpus linguistics but also on pedagogical strategies to effectively utilize these tools in the classroom. This points to a broader requirement for systemic changes in teacher education and ongoing professional development programs to incorporate corpus linguistics methodologies.

The gap identified between theoretical understanding and practical application of corpus linguistics in teaching implies a need for more practical, hands-on training for teachers. This could be facilitated through workshops, in-service training, and the inclusion of corpus linguistics in teacher education curricula. Such initiatives would help bridge the gap and ensure that teachers are not only theoretically informed but also practically equipped to implement corpus linguistics in their teaching. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of cultural context in the application of corpus linguistics, indicating the need for a more localized approach to corpus linguistics in EFL teaching. This suggests that corpus materials should not only be linguistically accessible but also culturally tailored to reflect the students’ backgrounds and experiences. It also suggests a potential for corpus linguistics to contribute to intercultural understanding and global awareness, emphasizing the need for a balanced inclusion of both local and global cultural elements in teaching materials.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies

This study, while offering valuable insights, is not without its limitations. Firstly, the sample size, though purposively chosen to represent a range of experiences, was limited to nine Vietnamese linguistics scholars. While their perspectives are invaluable, they may not fully represent the diversity of views and experiences of all educators and linguists across Vietnam. Additionally, the study focused exclusively on the perspectives of scholars, which may differ from those of practicing teachers who face the day-to-day realities of implementing corpus linguistics in classrooms. Another limitation is the study’s focus on the Vietnamese context, which, while providing in-depth localized insights, may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural or educational settings. Furthermore, the study’s
qualitative nature, though rich in detail, does not allow for quantitative measures of effectiveness or broader statistical generalizations about the use of corpus linguistics in primary EFL education.

In light of these limitations, future research could aim to include a larger and more diverse sample of participants, including primary EFL teachers who are directly involved in the implementation of corpus linguistics in the classroom. Exploring the perspectives of teachers could provide a more practical understanding of the challenges and opportunities in applying corpus linguistics at the primary level. Comparative studies involving different cultural and educational contexts could also be beneficial to understand how the integration of corpus linguistics in primary EFL education varies globally. Additionally, quantitative research or mixed-methods studies could complement the qualitative insights of this study, providing broader generalizations and measurable impacts of corpus linguistics in language learning. Investigating the long-term effects of corpus linguistics on language proficiency and student engagement would also be a valuable area for future research, offering more conclusive evidence of its benefits and challenges in primary education settings.

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