Social Learning for Vocabulary Development: Perception of Grade 8 Students of a Secondary School in Vietnam

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Abstract—The study aims to investigate how Grade 8 English students in a secondary school in Vietnam perceive the use of social learning for vocabulary development, including its benefits, challenges, and the specific tools they find most effective. A mixed-method approach is employed, combining surveys via Google Forms and in-person interviews. The social learning tools examined include pair work, group work, group presentations, collaborative projects, and peer feedback. The findings highlight that while most students view these tools as engaging and beneficial, they encounter challenges such as distractions from classmates, unequal task distribution, and limited time. Key benefits identified are learning new vocabulary from peers, applying vocabulary in context, engaging in meaningful discussions, and enjoying collaborative, competitive learning environments. The top three preferred tools are group work, collaborative projects, and group presentations. The study offers valuable insights into the role of social learning in vocabulary development, providing evidence-based recommendations for improving adolescent students' language skills.

Keywords— Perception, social learning, social learning tools, challenges, benefits.

I. INTRODUCTION

Around 60,000 years ago, humans began spreading across the globe, demonstrating their ability to adapt to various environments (Henrich et al., 2011). Although it is often argued that our advanced cognitive abilities, supported by our larger brain size, make us more intelligent than other species, no individual possesses all the knowledge needed to survive independently in any given habitat. Even in basic societies, people rely on tools, local expertise, and intricate social systems, often without fully understanding why these adaptations work (Boyd et al., 2011). Our success is largely attributed to our exceptional capacity for social learning — the ability to learn from others.

The 1970s marked a significant shift in social learning research, largely influenced by Albert Bandura's pioneering contributions (McLeod, 2024). Bandura's social learning theory defines social learning as incorporating social interactions into the learning process to enhance the achievement of educational goals. This approach allows students to learn not only from instructors but also from their peers. Social learning does not necessarily require in-person interactions and can be facilitated through virtual platforms as

well. It is essential to note that social learning can occur both directly and indirectly. Direct social learning involves active participation, such as attending lectures, engaging in group discussions, or collaborating on group projects. Indirect social learning, on the other hand, involves observation without direct interaction, such as reading online forums or articles authored by others.

Bandura's social learning theory has expanded with numerous researchers building on earlier studies (Yang, 2023). This research has significantly influenced society and sparked interest among English learners. However, there is insufficient evidence to determine whether social learning truly alters Grade 8 students' attitudes toward vocabulary development in the secondary schools in Vietnam, necessitating further investigation into this issue. Additionally, much of the existing research has focused on how social learning addresses behavioral problems rather than its role in vocabulary acquisition (Jensen, 2015).

While social interactions are known to influence behavior and speech, it remains unclear whether they impact writing or language comprehension. This study seeks to explore the role of social learning in vocabulary development, including its challenges, benefits, and the social learning tools students find most effective. The findings could help refine teaching strategies to consider social learning tools with the greatest impact on learning, transforming students from passive to active and engaged learners in vocabulary acquisition.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social learning theory introduced by Canadian Social Cognitive Psychologist, Albert Bandura accentuates the importance of social interaction in cognitive development, including vocabulary acquisition (Smith, 2023). From the moment we are born, we are surrounded by socialization, and therefore communication is significant in our lives. We have the instinct to incorporate the sounds and movement of our caretakers into our daily lives, which lays a foundation for babies to enhance language development. This process is not limited to the early years, but it continues to grow through observing cohorts and role models (Smith, 2023).

The role of socialization in the learning process

The process of socialization helps people embody their affections and values through their interactions with peers, family, or significant others, thereby shaping an individual's social structure. Beyond personality and behavioral assistance, socializing provides students with opportunities to rehearse speaking skills and experiment with new terminology. Initially, language socialization research commenced in the study of young children's first-language acquisition (Ward, 2024). However, it has since expanded to more extensive language learning contexts, providing new knowledge on language acquisition difficulties. For instance, immersing students in discussions and activities helps steer them in the direction of learning and memorizing words they would not have understood from traditional books or flashcards (Short, 2023). Socialization is fundamental for educational growth, particularly for adolescents in foreign countries learning a second language. It fosters a positive bond between the learner and the language, creating a non-hostile environment for learners who struggle with apprehending new language syntax (Ward, 2024).

Learning with peers

While there are countless benefits associated with social learning, there are also some undeniable drawbacks that can lead students to prefer a solitary environment. Although learning with their classmates can be thrilling and motivating, it can also be distracting. It is especially common in young students, where they are easily pushed off course by the presence of their friends (Hansen, 2022). Students can also feel disengaged with their work when they are constantly required by peers to review and assess their tasks. Social learning extends beyond physical interactions; it also includes digitally connected friends who frequently send messages, whether it is about studies or unrelated materials. Unfortunately, these notifications can hinder their focus. Middle schoolers are always attempting to multitask, even when they are aware it can hamper their concentration. On average, adolescents struggle to spend 15 minutes without getting sidetracked; but most end up spending nearly half of that time distracted by online media sent by peers either way (Rosen, 2017).

Collaborative learning

Collaboration in school, such as projects requiring pair work, group work, presentations or collaborative projects, is when multiple people work together to achieve a goal. This type of learning involves students to sufficiently work together to maximise not only their own but their peer's learning as well (Mackenzie, 2015). When learners are in groups, they are given the opportunity to work face-to-face, allowing them to practice important skills such as negotiating, clarifying, suggesting and disagreeing about the meaning of vocabulary (Ariffin, 2021).

Another form of collaborative learning is peer feedback. Providing feedback is recognised to be a constructive learning activity (Yu et al., 2023). Not only does it show you new aspects of the same piece of vocabulary, but it shows you where you went wrong and how you could improve.

Nonetheless, based on feedback from grade 8 students in Vinschool Central Park, peer assessment seems to be the least popular method of vocabulary development, as they feel they get dishonest, incorrect information from classmates.

Language anxiety

Learning a new language is undoubtedly difficult. The pressure intensifies in school where students are graded based on their fluency in new words, grammar, and pronunciation in a second language. Hence, It is not uncommon for students to feel discouraged or even forced into learning this language, as not only do they fear a failing grade, but also make humiliating mistakes in front of their peers (Adamson, 2022).

Some secondary schools are renowned as prestigious international institutions in Vietnam, where students are held to exceptionally high standards. This reputation is reflected in the schools' hallways, which showcase national and international titles won by their students, symbolizing their commitment to excellence. However, the intense pressure to excel in all areas often causes students to lower their expectations in certain subjects—English being one of the most affected for Vietnamese learners. Many students gravitate toward subjects where they feel more confident and experience less anxiety, which often excludes English. This contributes to feelings of inadequacy in their English language abilities.

As a result, students may confuse their curiosity with a lack of ability, leading them to avoid seeking help in the subject. This phenomenon, known as Language Anxiety (BAU, 2024), is frequently misunderstood by teachers, who may interpret it as laziness or a poor attitude (Gregersen, 2003). Social learning, however, offers a solution by creating a supportive environment where students receive encouragement from both peers and teachers. This reduces their fear of making mistakes, helps them feel more at ease, and builds their confidence. In such an environment, students are better equipped to speak the target language and engage productively in diverse learning situations (Lundberg et al., 2023).

Hence, this study is anchored on the theory of Social Learning by Albert Bandura, where learning happens not only between the student and the teacher interactions, but also from peers makes learning more interesting and meaningful. In fact, social learning can happen indirectly through reading articles or listening to podcast and more. The study attempts to investigate how Grade 8 English learners of a secondary school in Vietnam perceive the use of social learning for vocabulary development, including its benefits, challenges, and the specific tools they find most effective.

Thus, this study sought to answer these three research questions:

How do Grade 8 students perceive the role of social learning in vocabulary development?

What are the challenges and benefits that Grade 8 students in Vinschool experience using social learning tools in vocabulary development?

What specific social learning tools do Grade 8 students find most helpful in vocabulary development?

III. METHODS

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection. Quantitative data is gathered through a survey administered via Google Forms to 100 randomly sampled grade 8 students at Vinschool Central Park. Qualitative data is collected through face-to-face interviews with 10 purposefully sampled students from the same grade and school.

IV. RESULTS/FINDINGS

The results of the survey are presented according to the research questions. It is followed with the results of the interview to cross-reference the perception of social learning for vocabulary development in Grade 8 English learners of Vinschool Central Park.

RQ1 How do Grade 8 students perceive the role of social learning in vocabulary development?

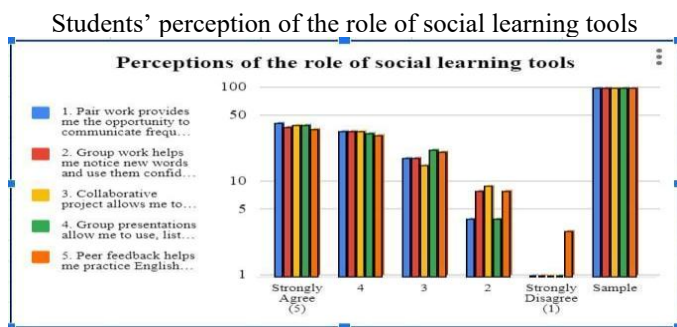Students' perception of the role of social learning tools

Fig.1 Perceptions of the role of social learning tools

The bar graph illustrates Grade 8 students' perceptions of social learning tools, based on responses to five statements: Pair work provides me the opportunity to communicate frequently using new vocabulary in conversations; Group work helps me notice new words and use them confidently in context; Collaborative project allows me to improve my vocabulary by listening actively, sharing ideas, and explaining my ideas to my classmates; Group presentations allows me to use, listen and learn new words in context, and Peer feedback helps me practice English by sharing ideas and improving both my classmates' and my own work. Responses are distributed across five levels, from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree," for each statement with a summary column labeled "Sample" at the far right.

The findings show that Pair work (Statement 1) has a substantial proportion of respondents who "Strongly Agree" that pair work provides opportunities to frequently use new vocabulary in conversations. This perception remains consistently high, showing little to no disagreement or neutral responses. Pairwork appears to be a highly valued social learning tool. Group work (Statement 2) indicates that many respondents also "Strongly Agree" that group work helps them notice new words and use them confidently in conversation. There is a slight reduction in the number of students who agree compared to pair work, but overall, group work is positively perceived. Collaborative projects (Statement 3) shows a large number of participants agree that collaborative

projects help improve vocabulary by listening actively, sharing ideas, and explaining their ideas to their classmates, though there is a slight decrease in the "Strongly Agree" category compared to pair and group work. However, there are more responses in the "Agree" and "Neutral" categories, indicating a more moderate level of confidence in this method's effectiveness.

Group presentations (Statement 4) indicates that perceptions about group presentations allowing them to use, listen and learn new words in context are somewhat more distributed across different levels of agreement. While a notable number of respondents agree or strongly agree with the benefit of group presentations, there is a more significant presence of neutral or disagreeing responses, suggesting this method may be less universally effective for vocabulary acquisition, and last is peer feedback (Statement 5) allowing them to practice English by sharing ideas and improving both their classmates' and their own work. Peer feedback has the most varied distribution of responses. While some respondents agree that it helps them practice English, there are higher proportions of neutral and disagree responses compared to other categories. This indicates that peer feedback may not be as widely viewed as an effective tool for practicing English as the other tools.

Across the board, most participants strongly agree or agree with the effectiveness of social learning tools. The prominent social learning tools include pair work, group work and collaborative projects in improving vocabulary and language skills. Group presentations and peer feedback shows slightly more ambivalence or disagreement. The "Sample" bar shows 100% agreement in some way, suggesting that all respondents find some benefit from social learning tools.

RQ2 What are the challenges and benefits that Grade 8 students in Vinschool experience with social learning in vocabulary development?

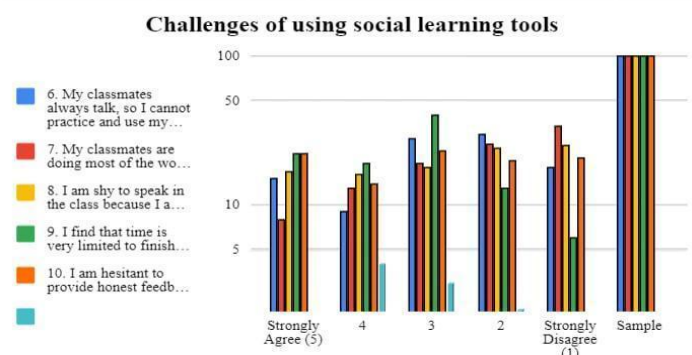The Challenges of using social learning tools

Fig. 2 Challenges of using social learning tools

The graph presents data on the challenges students face when using social learning tools, as indicated by their responses to five key concerns: my classmates always talk, so I cannot practice and use my new vocabulary; my classmates are doing most of the work and I contribute very little, so my vocabulary is not developed; I am shy to speak in the class because I am not confident of my vocabulary; I find that time

is very limited to finish our project, and I am hesitant to provide honest feedback to my peers because I might hurt their feelings or damage our friendship. These challenges are rated across five levels of agreement, from "Strongly Agree" (5) to "Strongly Disagree" (1), with the "Sample" column indicating overall participation.

The findings highlight several challenges associated with using social learning tools, presented in order from the most to the least challenging as follows: class distractions, unequal work distribution, time constraints, shyness in speaking and hesitance to provide feedback. The findings of classmate distractions (Statement 6) indicate a considerable proportion of students reported that they "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that excessive talking by peers hinders their ability to practice and use new vocabulary effectively. This is reflected in the data as the most notable challenge, with a significant number of responses confirming its impact**.** Also, the data of unequal work distribution (Statement 7) show that many students indicated that they "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that group work often results in an unequal distribution of tasks, with some classmates doing most of the work. While this challenge is prevalent, it is less significant compared to classmate distractions. Furthermore, a notable number of students disagreed with this statement, suggesting variability in how this challenge is experienced across groups.

The findings of time constraints (Statement 9) emerge as a common concern, with a substantial number of students "Agreeing" or "Strongly Agreeing" that they struggle to complete tasks within the allotted time during group work. However, a significant proportion of neutral responses indicates that the challenge is not universal. Additionally, some students "Strongly Disagreed," suggesting that time constraints may affect individuals differently, depending on their pace or workload. On shyness in speaking (Statement 8) the data show that a moderate number of students "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that shyness affects their ability to participate in class, particularly during speaking activities. However, the higher frequency of neutral responses indicates that shyness is a challenge for some students but not a significant issue for others. A smaller number of students "Strongly Disagreed," emphasizing that this challenge is not shared universally. Hesitance to provide feedback (Statement 10) gathered mixed responses regarding students' reluctance to give honest feedback to their peers. While some students "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with this challenge, a relatively even distribution of neutral and disagreeing responses suggests that feedback hesitancy is a less significant issue overall and varies among students.

Overall, the data reveals that students face several challenges when using social learning tools. The most prominent issues are interruptions by classmates, unequal work distribution, and time constraints. Other issues such as time constraints, shyness and hesitance to provide feedback are more nuanced and vary in their impact among students. This variation underscores the importance of addressing these challenges with tailored strategies to improve the effectiveness of social learning tools to enhance vocabulary.
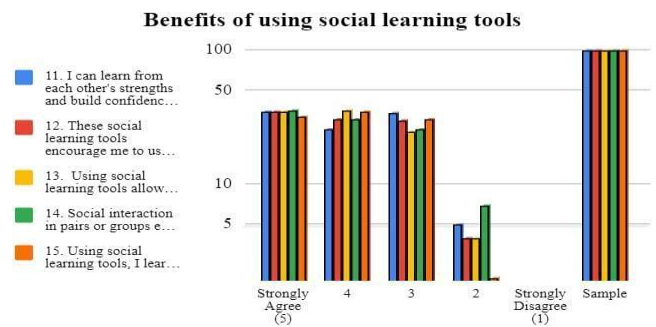
Benefits of using social learning tools

Fig. 3 Benefits of using social learning tools

The graph illustrates students' perceptions of the benefits of social learning tools based on five key statements: I can learn from each other's strengths and build confidence in using vocabulary in context; These social learning tools encourage me to use new vocabulary, rather than passively memorizing lists of words; Using social learning tools allow me use vocabulary in real-world communication scenarios; Social interaction in pairs or groups enables me to feel more comfortable using new vocabulary, and Using social learning tools, I learn to collaborate and learn from each other's strengths. Responses are categorized into five levels of agreement, ranging from "Strongly Agree" (5) to "Strongly Disagree" (1), highlighting students' varied perspectives on the benefits of social learning.

The findings on learning from each other's strengths and build confidence in using vocabulary in context (Statement 11) discloses a significant portion of students "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that social learning tools help them learn from each other's strengths and build confidence. It shows relatively high indicating that students widely recognize this benefit. There is minimal disagreement, suggesting that most students feel positively about the collaborative learning experience. On encouraging vocabulary use (Statement12), the findings indicate that many students "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that social learning tools encourage them to use new vocabulary, rather than passively memorizing the list of words. There is little disagreement, and few neutral responses demonstrating that this is a well-regarded benefit among students. On using vocabulary in real-world communication (Statement 13), the findings reveal that a substantial number of students "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that social learning tools allow them to use vocabulary in real-world communication scenarios. It indicates strong support for this benefit. Neutral responses are more frequent than in the previous two categories, suggesting some variation in the extent to which students experience this benefit. Very few students disagree or strongly disagree, reinforcing the generally positive perception.

The findings on encouraging social interaction (Statement 14) show that students also "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that social interaction in pairs or groups enables them to feel more comfortable using new vocabulary. While this benefit receives broad support, there is a slightly higher number of neutral responses compared to other benefits, indicating a more

moderate perception for some students. Minimal disagreement suggests that most students recognize the value of social interaction for learning. On one note, the findings on learning about different perspectives (Statement 15) show that many students "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that social learning tools help them to collaborate and learn from each other's strengths. However, this category has a higher proportion of neutral and disagreeing responses compared to the others. A notable number of students "Disagree" with this statement. Despite this, most students still feel that learning from different perspectives is a benefit.

Overall, the findings disclose that social learning tools are highly beneficial from the perspective of the students. The strongest perceived benefits are the ability to learn from peers, use vocabulary in context, and engage in meaningful discussions. While there is some variability regarding the acquisition of life skills such as, encouraging social interaction and learning from each other's strengths, most students acknowledge that social learning helps them improve their vocabulary in English, teamwork and communication skills. Overall, the positive feedback supports the continued use of social learning tools in educational environments.

RQ3 What specific social learning tools do Grade 8 students find most helpful in vocabulary development?
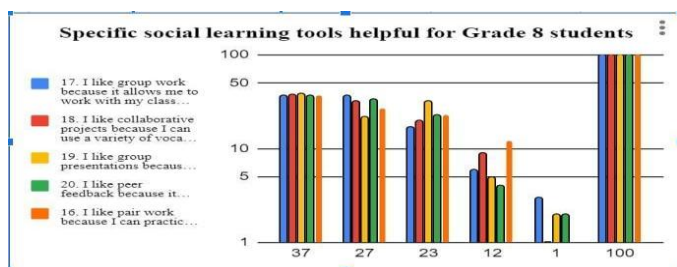

Fig. 4 Specific social learning tools helpful for Grade 8 students

The graph illustrates the perceptions of Grade 8 students on the effectiveness of various social learning tools in enhancing vocabulary development. The data is based on five key statements: I like pair work because I can practice using new vocabulary with a partner; I like group work because it allows me to work with my classmates on task, share ideas, and learn from each other's vocabulary; I like collaborative project because I can use a variety of vocabulary, improve my vocabulary and develop my critical thinking skills; I like group presentations because it helps me present my ideas and knowledge to my classmates, improve my vocabulary and develop my public speaking skills, and I like peer feedback because it gives me the chance to receive constructive criticism and suggestions from my classmates, helping me improve my vocabulary and understanding. Responses are categorized on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree," with a "Sample" column summarizing the overall responses.

The findings reveal that group work (Statement 17) is by far the most preferred social learning tool, with 100% of students liking it. This indicates that students value the opportunity to work with their classmates and learn from each other. It is followed with collaborative projects (Statement

18). This tool is also highly preferred, with above 50% of students "liking it. This suggests that students enjoy working together to create something new as a group. Both group work and collaborative projects are highly favored. Students appreciate the opportunity to work with their classmates and use a variety of vocabulary and skills.

Group Presentations (Statement 19) receive more varied responses. This tool is less preferred than the previous two social learning tools. This may be because students are concerned about public speaking or feel less confident in their presentation skills. Peer Feedback (Statement 20) shows the most varied results, with a more balanced spread across agreement, neutrality, and some disagreement. While some students appreciate the opportunity to give and receive peer feedback, it seems to be the least favored tool compared to group work, collaborative projects, and presentations. This may be because some students are uncomfortable giving or receiving feedback from their peers. Pair work (Statement 16) is the least preferred tool. This may be because some students feel that they can learn more effectively in larger groups or prefer to work independently. The "Sample" bar shows that nearly all students participated, indicating widespread involvement in these social learning tools.

Overall, social learning tools are well-received by Grade 8 students, with group work, collaborative projects, and group presentations perceived as the most helpful. Pair work and peer feedback show more varied responses, highlighting that some students may not benefit as much from these methods. The data suggests that incorporating these tools into a classroom environment can be beneficial, but the varying levels of effectiveness across tools should be considered for optimizing student engagement.

V. INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The interviews reveal a broad range of perspectives on the role of social learning tools in vocabulary development among Grade 8 students. Although students acknowledge the usefulness of these tools, their opinions highlight both positive impacts and challenges.

Perception of the Role of Social Learning in Vocabulary Development

Across the interviews, students expressed generally positive attitudes toward social learning tools. Most students found social learning engaging, competitive, and helpful for improving vocabulary. For instance:

S2 described it as "cool and interesting" though sometimes exhausting.

S3 emphasized the motivating nature of social learning, finding it engaging and competitive.

S6 felt it was the most effective method for learning vocabulary, indicating a strong reliance on social learning for vocabulary acquisition. However, some students like S1 felt the effectiveness of social learning was mediocre, requiring more focus than other methods, while S9 valued the comfort and collaborative aspects of learning vocabulary with others.

Overall, the interviews illustrate that while students generally view social learning positively for vocabulary development, their experiences and perceptions can vary

depending on personal preferences and learning styles. The findings suggest that social learning tools are most effective when tailored to address diverse needs and preferences within the classroom.

Challenges of Using Social Learning Tools

Challenges related to social learning tools varied widely but generally fell into a few key themes:

Distractions issues: Several students (e.g., S1, S2, S9) mentioned that they easily lost focus during social learning activities, which led to difficulty remembering new vocabulary. S2 specifically pointed out that it is hard to retain both the word and its meaning simultaneously.

Group dynamics: A common challenge identified was uneven group contributions. S3 and S10 found group members to be either annoying or less proficient, which hindered their learning. S7 mentioned difficulties in managing work distribution within groups, leading to frustration.

Limited exposure to perspectives: S6 mentioned that social learning tools are limited to classmates, restricting exposure to a broader range of ideas and language use. This highlights the need for diverse interactions during social learning.

Overall, while social learning tools are beneficial, addressing these challenges could enhance their effectiveness and ensure a more productive learning experience for all students.

Benefits of Using Social Learning Tools

The benefits of social learning were clear from most students' responses, and several themes emerged:

Practical language use: S4, S6, and S7 appreciated the opportunity to practice vocabulary in real-life scenarios. S4 found social learning tools are helpful for building confidence and fluency, while S6 noted that collaborative projects in particular are helpful in understanding the multiple meanings of words. In addition, S7 pointed out that social learning tools help improved learning new vocabulary and skills in writing and speaking using English language.

Diverse knowledge sharing: S5 and S10 highlighted the value of learning from peers, with S5 appreciating the diverse knowledge from friends and S10 benefiting from knowledge shared among peers.

The interviews revealed that social learning tools play a critical role in vocabulary development by enabling students to practice language in meaningful ways and by fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among peers.

Specific Social Learning Tools Helpful for Grade 8 Students

Many students identified activities as the most effective tools for vocabulary development:

Collaborative group work was highlighted by students such as S2 and S4, who found them useful for practicing vocabulary in specific contexts and building communication skills.

S6 also recommended more interaction with different people and cultures through online platforms and media to broaden perspectives on language use.

Tools that facilitate real-time interaction and feedback were identified as most effective in enhancing vocabulary retention and usage.

Students appreciated tools that allowed creative application of new words, such as storytelling or role-playing as group presentation exercises. Many students emphasized the importance of social learning tools that encourage group work and collaborative projects and provide a sense of community in the learning process.

Fun and gamified approaches were mentioned as reducing stress and increasing motivation to learn vocabulary.

Overall, the findings indicate that students prefer tools and activities that combine creativity, collaboration, and enjoyment to make vocabulary development more effective and meaningful.

VI. DISCUSSION

The study sheds light on Grade 8 students' perceptions of the role social learning tools play in vocabulary development, offering valuable insights into their preferences and experiences. Students highlighted several challenges and benefits associated with various social learning tools, emphasizing their importance in both academic and practical language use as well as the specific social learning tools they find most effective.

Perception of the Role of Social Learning Tools for Vocabulary Development

The study provides valuable insights into the perceptions of Grade 8 students regarding the effectiveness of social learning tools in fostering vocabulary development. The findings highlight how various collaborative strategies positively influence students' ability to learn and apply new vocabulary in diverse contexts.

Students expressed a strong preference for pair work, emphasizing its role in creating an interactive yet focused learning environment. Working with a partner allows students to practice new vocabulary in conversations, helping them feel more comfortable using unfamiliar words. This one-on-one dynamic appears to encourage active engagement and fosters confidence in vocabulary usage. Similarly, group work was regarded as a beneficial social learning tool. Students appreciated the opportunity to share ideas and learn from their peers' vocabulary usage. Through group collaboration, students can observe and adopt different linguistic styles and expressions, which broadens their understanding of vocabulary in various contexts. The exchange of ideas within a group appears to encourage deeper learning and reinforces the value of teamwork.

Collaborative projects emerged as a particularly effective method for vocabulary development, as they combine academic learning with practical application. Students reported that working on projects allowed them to use a wider variety of vocabulary while also enhancing critical thinking skills, which is reinforced by Ariffin (2021). This dual focus on linguistic and cognitive growth makes collaborative projects a highly impactful tool for language learning.

The role of group presentations was also highlighted in the findings. Students noted that presenting their ideas to peers not only helped them refine their public speaking skills but also encouraged them to use new vocabulary confidently in front of an audience. This experience seemed to build their competence and comfort with using language in formal settings, further enhancing their communication skills.

Lastly, peer feedback was recognized as a constructive approach to vocabulary improvement. Students valued the chance to receive input and suggestions from their classmates, which helped them identify areas for improvement while reinforcing their understanding of vocabulary. The collaborative nature of peer feedback also contributed to a shared learning experience, fostering a sense of community in the classroom.

Furthermore, the findings from the interviews revealed a generally positive perception among students regarding the role of social learning in vocabulary development. Most students described social learning tools as engaging, motivating, and beneficial for enhancing their vocabulary. They highlighted the collaborative and interactive nature of social learning as a key factor in making the learning process enjoyable and effective.

For instance, one student, S2, referred to social learning as "cool and interesting," though they admitted it could sometimes feel exhausting. This indicates that while social learning is appealing, the effort required to engage actively can be demanding. Similarly, S3 emphasized the motivating aspects of social learning, describing it as not only engaging but also fostering a sense of healthy competition among peers. This competitive element appeared to inspire greater participation and effort in vocabulary learning.

Student S6 went further to praise social learning as the most effective method for vocabulary acquisition. This strong endorsement reflects the value some students place on the dynamic and participatory nature of social learning tools. On the other hand, S1 expressed a more moderate view, considering the effectiveness of social learning to be average and noting that it required more focus compared to other methods. This perspective highlights the variability in how students experience social learning, with some finding it more demanding.

Lastly, S9 underscored the comfort and collaborative aspects of social learning, appreciating the opportunity to learn vocabulary in a supportive environment with peers. This sentiment highlights the importance of a positive and inclusive atmosphere in enhancing the effectiveness of social learning.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Grade 8 students view social learning tools as essential for vocabulary development. These tools offer a variety of benefits, including increased engagement, improved language skills, and enhanced confidence. However, the study also implies that the effectiveness of these methods relies on creating a supportive and interactive learning environment. Teachers are encouraged to leverage these insights to maximize the impact of social learning tools while addressing any potential barriers, such as uneven participation or shyness, to ensure all students benefit from these approaches.

Challenges of using social learning tools

The findings of the study reveal several challenges that Grade 8 students encounter when using social learning tools for vocabulary development. These challenges, ranked from most to least significant, provide a comprehensive understanding of the obstacles that can hinder the effectiveness of social learning tools.

The most notable challenge reported by students is classmate distractions. Many students expressed frustration with their peers engaging in excessive talking or unrelated discussions during group activities. This behavior disrupts the learning process, making it difficult for students to focus on practicing and applying new vocabulary. The prevalence of this issue highlights the importance of fostering a more focused and disciplined group dynamic to ensure that social learning environments remain productive.

Another significant challenge is unequal work distribution in group settings. A considerable number of students agreed or strongly agreed that certain group members tend to dominate the workload, leaving others less engaged or underutilized. This imbalance not only creates frustration among students but also undermines the collaborative aspect of social learning. However, the responses also revealed that not all students experience this challenge, suggesting that its impact depends on specific group dynamics and individual roles. This finding underscores the need for clearer task allocation and accountability mechanisms to ensure active participation from all group members.

Time constraints emerged as the third major challenge, with many students feeling that they have insufficient time to complete group tasks effectively. This concern reflects the difficulties of coordinating efforts within a limited timeframe, which can lead to stress and reduced productivity. Interestingly, the responses varied, with some students indicating that they did not experience this issue. This variation suggests that the impact of time constraints may depend on factors such as the complexity of the task, individual pacing, and group organization.

Another challenge identified is shyness in speaking during social learning activities. A moderate number of students acknowledged that their reluctance to speak or participate actively limited their contributions. While this issue was less significant compared to other challenges, it remains a barrier for a subset of students. Shyness can hinder meaningful engagement and reduce the benefits of collaborative learning, emphasizing the need for a supportive and encouraging environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of judgment.

The final challenge noted in the study is hesitance to provide feedback to peers. The responses to this challenge were mixed, with some students agreeing that they find it difficult to offer constructive criticism, while others disagreed or remained neutral. This diversity in responses indicates that the comfort level with giving feedback varies among students. Factors such as confidence, familiarity with peers, and the nature of the feedback likely influence this challenge.

Notably, the findings from the interviews revealed several challenges associated with the use of social learning tools,

categorized into three primary themes: distractions, group dynamics, and limited exposure to diverse perspectives. First, distraction issues were commonly mentioned by students. For instance, S1, S2, and S9 indicated that they struggled to maintain focus during social learning activities, which negatively impacted their ability to remember new vocabulary. S2 specifically highlighted the difficulty of simultaneously retaining both the word and its meaning, emphasizing how distractions could detract from the learning process.

Second, challenges related to group dynamics were frequently cited. Uneven contributions within groups posed a significant barrier to effective learning. S3 and S10 expressed frustration with certain group members, describing them as either annoying or less proficient, which hindered the overall productivity and learning experience. Additionally, S7 noted that managing work distribution within groups often led to frustration, indicating that collaborative tasks were not always equitable or efficient. Finally, limited exposure to a wider range of perspectives was identified as a drawback of social learning tools. S6 pointed out that interactions were often confined to classmates, which restricted opportunities to engage with diverse ideas and language use. This limitation underscores the importance of incorporating more varied and inclusive interactions into social learning environments to broaden students' exposure to different linguistic contexts.

In summary, the findings highlight a range of challenges that can affect the effectiveness of social learning tools. From distractions and unequal participation to time constraints, shyness, and feedback hesitancy, these challenges reflect the complexities of collaborative learning environments. Addressing these challenges requires targeted strategies, such as promoting focused group behavior, ensuring fair task distribution, managing time effectively, and fostering a supportive atmosphere that encourages open communication. By addressing these barriers, educators can maximize the potential of social learning tools on vocabulary development and create a more inclusive and effective learning experience for all students.

Benefits of using social learning tools

The study revealed several perceived benefits of using social learning tools, as reported by Grade 8 students, particularly in enhancing their vocabulary development. These findings underscore the positive impact of collaborative activities and interactions on students' language learning experiences.

One of the key benefits identified was the opportunity to engage in pair work, which students found highly valuable for practicing new vocabulary in a conversational context. Pair work allowed them to experiment with vocabulary in real-time, enhancing both their confidence and fluency. The close, two-person interaction provided a safe space for students to test out new words without the fear of making mistakes in front of a larger group, which many students found motivating and effective.

Similarly, group work emerged as another significant advantage of social learning tools. Students reported that working in groups enabled them to exchange ideas, notice new

words, and use vocabulary in varied contexts. By learning from their peers, students not only enriched their vocabulary but also built a deeper understanding of how words could be applied in different scenarios. This collaborative dynamic fostered a sense of community and mutual support, which is critical in social learning environments.

The study also highlighted the role of collaborative projects in vocabulary improvement. These projects offered students opportunities to actively listen, articulate their ideas, and engage in critical thinking. Through these activities, students were able to incorporate a wide range of vocabulary while refining their ability to explain concepts clearly and effectively. Collaborative projects encouraged active participation and critical reflection, which helped solidify their language skills.

Another benefit noted by students was the effectiveness of group presentations. Presenting their ideas to classmates not only helped them practice vocabulary but also boosted their public speaking skills and confidence. Group presentations provided a platform for students to use, listen to, and learn new vocabulary in meaningful ways. The added benefit of public speaking helped students become more articulate and comfortable using English in front of an audience, an essential skill for real-world communication.

Lastly, students valued peer feedback as a constructive element of social learning. Receiving feedback from classmates allowed them to identify areas for improvement while also learning from the insights and suggestions provided by others. Peer feedback helped create a collaborative learning atmosphere where students could support each other's growth and reinforce their own understanding of the language.

Likewise, the interviews revealed that students found specific social learning tools particularly effective for vocabulary development, with several themes emerging. Many students emphasized the value of collaborative group work, highlighting its effectiveness in practicing vocabulary within specific contexts and improving communication skills. For example, S2 and S4 noted that working in groups helped them apply new words meaningfully while fostering interaction and teamwork.

S6 suggested incorporating more opportunities for interaction with diverse people and cultures through online platforms and media, as this would expand their perspectives on language usage and enhance their vocabulary learning experience. Tools that enable real-time interaction and feedback were also deemed highly effective by students, as they aid in both retaining and applying vocabulary in practical scenarios. Activities that encourage creative use of vocabulary, such as storytelling and role-playing exercises, were particularly appreciated for making the learning process dynamic and engaging.

Additionally, many students highlighted the importance of tools that foster teamwork and create a sense of community, which they felt contributed to a supportive learning environment. Fun and gamified approaches were also frequently mentioned, as they reduced stress and increased motivation to learn new vocabulary.

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The findings illustrate the numerous benefits of using social learning tools for vocabulary development. Through pair work, group work, collaborative projects, group presentations, and peer feedback, students were able to actively engage with the language, improve their vocabulary, and build confidence in their communication skills. These activities not only enhanced their learning but also fostered a supportive and interactive environment, highlighting the potential of social learning tools to transform language education.

Most effective social learning tools

The findings of the study shed light on the specific social learning tools that Grade 8 students found effective in enhancing their vocabulary development. The results highlight how various collaborative and interactive activities fostered a deeper engagement with the language and provided meaningful opportunities for vocabulary use and improvement.

One of the most effective tools identified by the students was pair work. Many students expressed a preference for this method, as it provided frequent opportunities to practice using new vocabulary with a partner. Pair work allowed students to communicate in a focused setting, where they could apply new words in real-time conversations. This practice helped them develop confidence and fluency in using vocabulary while simultaneously receiving immediate feedback from their partners.

Another tool that students found beneficial was group work, which offered opportunities to collaborate on tasks, share ideas, and learn from each other's vocabulary usage. Through group discussions and activities, students were exposed to a variety of vocabulary and perspectives, enriching their language learning experience. The collaborative nature of group work encouraged active participation and supported students in building a broader and more practical vocabulary repertoire.

Collaborative projects were also highly regarded by the students. These projects enabled them to use a wide range of vocabulary while engaging in critical thinking and problem-solving. Students appreciated the chance to actively listen to their peers, articulate their own ideas, and explain concepts during group discussions. The interactive environment of collaborative projects not only improved their vocabulary but also enhanced their ability to express themselves clearly and effectively.

The role of group presentations in vocabulary development was another significant finding. Students reported that presenting their ideas to classmates helped them improve their vocabulary while also developing public speaking skills. Group presentations provided a platform for students to use vocabulary in structured and meaningful contexts, boosting their confidence in articulating ideas and knowledge in front of an audience. The process of preparing and delivering presentations motivated students to practice and refine their language skills.

Finally, students recognized peer feedback as an important social learning tool. They valued the opportunity to receive constructive criticism and suggestions from their classmates, which helped them identify areas for improvement and expand their vocabulary. Peer feedback created a collaborative atmosphere where students could support each other's learning while simultaneously reflecting on their own language use. This mutual exchange of ideas fostered both individual and collective growth.

Remarkably, the interviews revealed that students identified various social learning tools as highly effective for vocabulary development, with several key insights emerging. Collaborative group work stood out as a favored method, as students like S2 and S4 found it valuable for practicing vocabulary in specific contexts and developing communication skills. They appreciated the opportunity to use words in real-world scenarios while engaging with their peers.

S6 suggested incorporating opportunities for interaction with individuals from different cultures and backgrounds through online platforms and media, emphasizing that such exposure could broaden their understanding and application of language. Students also highlighted the importance of tools that enable real-time interaction and feedback, as these were particularly effective in enhancing vocabulary retention and practical usage. Activities that allow for the creative application of new words, such as storytelling, role-playing, or group presentations, were widely appreciated for their engaging and dynamic nature.

The collaborative aspect of social learning was another recurring theme. Many students emphasized the significance of tools that foster teamwork and create a sense of community, particularly through group work and collaborative projects. Lastly, fun and gamified approaches were recognized for their ability to reduce stress and increase motivation, making vocabulary learning a more enjoyable and rewarding experience.

In conclusion, the study revealed that Grade 8 students found pair work, group work, collaborative projects, group presentations, and peer feedback to be effective social learning tools for vocabulary development. These tools provided students with diverse opportunities to practice, experiment, and refine their vocabulary in interactive and supportive settings. The findings underscore the importance of incorporating social learning tools into language education to promote meaningful engagement and sustained language growth.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study, *Social Learning for Vocabulary Development: Perception of Grade 8 Students of a Secondary School in Vietnam*, highlights the multifaceted role that social learning tools play in fostering vocabulary acquisition among students. The findings, derived from survey data and in-depth interviews, reveal a generally positive perception of social learning as an effective approach to enhancing vocabulary.

The survey data revealed a strong positive perception of social learning tools, with students noting that activities like pair work, group work, collaborative projects, and peer feedback facilitated not only vocabulary practice but also boosted their confidence in using new words in context. The

responses suggested that students recognize the importance of social interaction in language learning, particularly in creating a comfortable environment for experimenting with new vocabulary. While challenges such as distractions, group dynamics, and time constraints were mentioned, the overall sentiment emphasized the value of collaborative learning environments in fostering vocabulary growth.

Interviews further reinforced these findings, with students expressing clear appreciation for social learning tools that encourage real-life language use and creative applications of vocabulary. Many students highlighted the benefits of collaborative group work and peer interactions, particularly in contexts where they could practice vocabulary actively and receive real-time feedback. The students also emphasized the importance of diverse interactions, such as engaging with peers from different backgrounds and cultures, which they believe broadens their perspectives and understanding of language. Additionally, gamified approaches and activities like role-playing and storytelling were recognized as effective ways to make vocabulary learning enjoyable and motivating.

Despite some challenges, such as occasional distractions and uneven group contributions, the students' perceptions were overwhelmingly positive. They appreciated the collaborative and dynamic nature of social learning tools, which not only enhanced their vocabulary development but also fostered a sense of community in the learning process. This study underscores the value of integrating social learning tools into vocabulary development programs, as they provide students with opportunities for meaningful interaction, engagement, and the practical application of language skills. Ultimately, the findings suggest that when social learning tools are used effectively, they can significantly enhance students' vocabulary development and their motivation to learn.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that social learning tools are highly effective in vocabulary development when applied thoughtfully. By integrating collaborative and interactive approaches with diverse and engaging activities, teachers can empower students to deepen their vocabulary knowledge while fostering critical communication skills and teamwork. The study offers valuable insights into optimizing social learning tools, paving the way for more innovative and inclusive language education in Vietnam and beyond.

The study, while providing valuable insights into the perceptions of Grade 8 students regarding the role of social learning tools in vocabulary development, has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study's sample size was limited to a specific group of Grade 8 students from a single secondary school in Vietnam. This narrow focus may not fully represent the broader student population across different schools, regions, or educational systems. Consequently, the findings may not be generalizable to other student groups or educational contexts.

Second, the research relied on self-reported data from surveys and interviews, which can introduce biases. Students' perceptions and experiences may be influenced by personal opinions, social desirability, or an incomplete understanding of their own learning processes. This can impact the accuracy and reliability of the data collected. Third, while the study aimed to explore both the benefits and challenges of using social learning tools, there may have been limitations in the types of activities and tools explored. The study may not have covered the full range of social learning strategies available, potentially overlooking some effective methods that could have been relevant to students' vocabulary development.

Additionally, the study did not include long-term data or track changes over time. This limits the ability to assess the sustained impact of social learning tools on vocabulary development and does not account for how students' attitudes or experiences might evolve as they use these tools over a longer period. Lastly, external factors such as teacher support, classroom environment, and access to technology were not fully explored in this study but could play significant roles in shaping the effectiveness of social learning tools. These factors could influence students' engagement and the overall success of using social learning for vocabulary development.

In conclusion, while this study sheds light on the perceptions of Grade 8 students regarding social learning tools and their role in vocabulary development, the limitations highlighted suggest that further research involving larger, more diverse samples and long-term investigations would be valuable. Addressing these limitations could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how social learning tools can be optimized to support vocabulary acquisition in different educational settings.

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