

# REFERENCE AND INFERENCE IN ENGLISH READING AND IMPLICATIONS IN VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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**Abstract:** This study employed a quasi-experimental design in which guided strategies and practice exercises were integrated into the curriculum to measure effects of the treatment in improving students' referring and inferring ability. Besides, a descriptive study based on questionnaire, pre and post - reading tests was designed to complement the experimental study and to investigate the factors causing their difficulties in answering these types of questions in English. Results indicate that students' insufficient knowledge of the language, their inexperience in answering the questions, their teachers' neglect of the questions, and the absence of the questions in the course books are the four causes of their struggling. Also, students' referring and inferring ability can be developed by teacher's adapting certain reading tasks in the course book.

**Keywords:** English reading ability, difficulty, inference, reference

## 1. Introduction

Referring is one of the basic things we do with words and it would be a good idea to understand what that involves and requires. According to Yule (1996), reference is an act by which a speaker (or writer) uses language to enable a listener (or reader) to identify something. However, words that we use to identify things are not in direct relation to these things. Thus, almost any referring expression, whether a proper name, a pronoun, or a noun phrase, can be used to refer to different things in different contexts. Therefore, to help listeners/readers identify exactly the referents in particular and understand the implicit meanings of speakers/writers in general, the role of inference is indispensable. In terms of Teaching English as a Foreign Language, reference and inference questions are very common, especially in reading and listening skills. We can easily find these two kinds of questions in almost all tests such as TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, etc. However, in the context of teaching English in high school in Vietnam, these two kinds of questions are seldom used. Therefore, Vietnamese learners of English, especially those at high school, may encounter difficulties when responding to such kinds of question. Although many studies have been carried out in the use of pragmatic aspects in teaching English, there is not any research that has been done to see how Vietnamese students respond to reference and inference questions when they read English texts. This study aims to fill this gap with the hypothesis that the differences in the use of reference in the two languages and the lack of linguistic knowledge, contextual knowledge and background knowledge might cause some difficulties in the students' inferring process. Therefore, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

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1. What difficulties do Vietnamese upper secondary school students encounter when answering reference and inference questions in English?
2. Can students' referring and inferring ability be developed by teacher's adapting certain of reading tasks in the coursebook?

It is hoped that the present study will shed light on the most common difficulties for Vietnamese students when responding to reference and inference questions in English and that it will be of great value for the implication for teaching-learning EFL in Vietnam.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Reference in English**

#### **2.1.1. Definition of reference**

In semantics, reference is discussed as the relationship between words and the things, actions, events, and qualities they stand for (Lyons, 1977). An example in English is the relationship between the word *table* and the object "table" (referent) in the real world. According to Crystal (1985), there are two senses for reference. First, reference is the symbolic relationship that a linguistic expression has with the concrete object or abstraction it represents. Second, reference is the relationship of one linguistic expression to another, in which one provides the information necessary to interpret the other.

In pragmatics, Yule (1996) defined reference as an act in which a speaker, or writer, uses linguistic forms to enable a listener, or reader, to identify something. Those linguistic forms are called referring expressions, which can be proper nouns (for example, "*Shakespeare*", "*Ronaldo*"), noun phrases which are definite (for instance, "*the singer*", "*the forest*"), or indefinite (for example, "*a girl*", "*an ugly cat*"), and pronouns (for example, "*he*", "*them*").

#### **2.1.2. Types of reference**

In this research, reference is classified into three different types: co-reference, endophora, and exophora.

##### **Co-reference**

Co-reference is the reference in one expression to the same referent in another expression (Quirk et al., 1985).

Consider the following example: "*You said you would come.*"

In this sentence, both *you* have the same referent.

##### **Endophora**

Endophora is co-reference of an expression with another expression either before it or after it. One expression provides the information necessary to interpret the other (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). In other words, it is the use of a word or phrase which refers back or forward to another word or phrase which was used earlier or which will be used later in the text or conversation. Endophora is divided into two different categories: anaphora and cataphora.

### ***Anaphora***

This type of endophora is commonly used in English. According to Yule (1996), in most of our talk and writing, we have to keep track of who or what we are talking about for more than one sentence at a time. After the initial introduction of some entity, speaker or writer will use various expressions to maintain reference. Mostly we use pronouns (subject, object, reflexive, relative,...).

For example, in *the film, a man and a woman were trying to wash a cat. The man was holding the cat while the woman poured water on it. He said something to her and they started laughing* (Yule, 1996).

In English, initial reference is often indefinite (“*a man*”, “*a woman*”, “*a cat*”). In the above example, the definite noun phrases (“*the man*”, “*the woman*”, “*the cat*”) and the pronouns (“*it*”, “*he*”, “*her*”, “*they*”) are examples of subsequent reference to already introduced referents, generally known as anaphoric reference, or anaphora. The second or subsequent expression is the anaphor and the initial expression is the antecedent. He then concluded that anaphora is the process of continuing to identify exactly the same entity as denoted by the antecedent.

### ***Cataphora***

There is also a reversal of the antecedent-anaphor pattern sometimes as in the following example *I turned the corner and almost stepped on it. There was a large snake in the middle of the path.*

The pronoun “*it*” is used first and is difficult to interpret until the full noun phrase is presented in the next line. This pattern is known as cataphora (Yule, 1996). It is defined as the use of a word or phrase which refers forward to another word or phrase which will be used later in the text or conversation (Richard et al., 1992).

### ***Exophora***

Exophora is reference of an expression directly to an extralinguistic referent. The referent does not require another expression for its interpretation (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). There are two kinds of exophora in English: deixis and homophora.

### ***Deixis***

Richards et al. (1992) defined deixis as a term for a word or phrase which directly relates an utterance to a time, place, or person(s). For example, in the following sentences:

*The letter is here.* (Near the speaker)

*The letter is over there.* (Far from the speaker)

*Here* and *there* refer to a place in relation to the speaker. The listener does not have to refer to any other expression in the utterance but to the place of the speaker to know where the letter is. Some other linguists agreed that deixis is reference by means of an expression whose interpretation is relative to the extralinguistic context of the utterance such as who is speaking, the time or place of speaking, or the current location of the discourse.

**Homophora**

In pragmatics, homophora is a subcategory of exophora. In common with all exophora, it does not necessarily refer back to an entity already mentioned in the text. Specifically, homophora is the use of a referring expression which gains its interpretation from the shared cultural knowledge of the participants in the conversational exchange.

For example, in *Did you see the President on TV last night?* it will normally be understood which president is being referred to simply through the location in time and space of the speaker or hearer or both (the present president, not the previous one; the president of the country in which the speaker is speaking, and not of some other country), or through the cultural affiliation of the speaker or hearer (e.g. the president of the US, not Malaysia, when the participants are Americans). Understanding of the expression in the context is gained through this type of shared contextual knowledge itself, and not through any other explanation in the text.

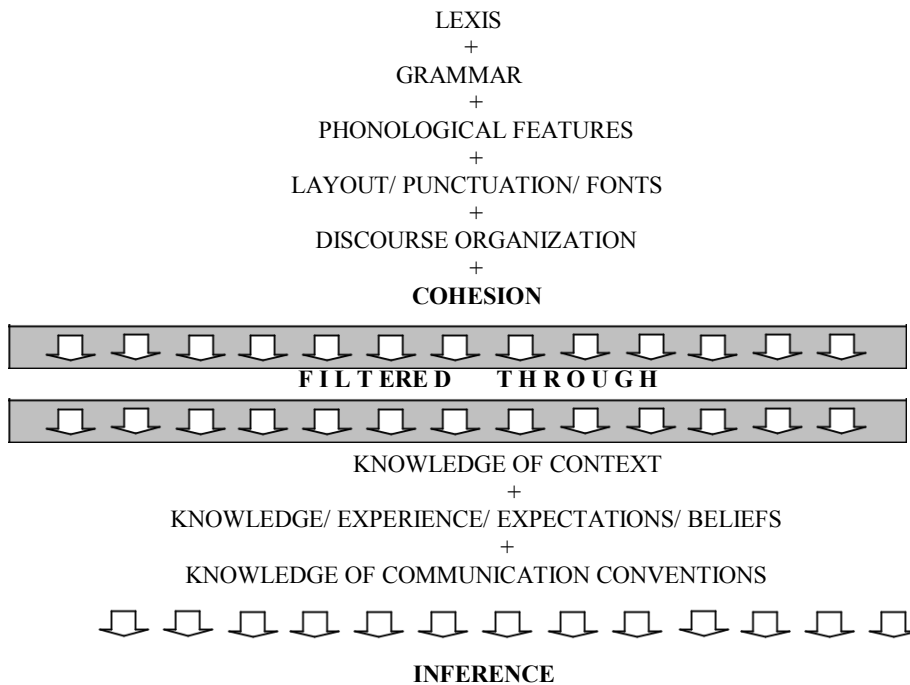
**2.2. Inference in English**

**2.2.1. The concept of Inference**

Yule (1996) defined inference as the learner’s use of additional knowledge to make sense of what is not explicit in an utterance. According to Richards et al. (1992), inferencing or making inferences is the process of arriving at a hypothesis, idea, or judgment on the basis of other knowledge, ideas, or judgments.

Garbriellatos (2002) figured out the clues provided by speakers/ writers as well as the clues and thinking process used by listeners/ readers in order for successful inferencing to take place.

**Table 1.** Garbriellatos’s table of inference: clues and procedures



From Table 1, we can see inferencing as a combination of identifying available helpful clues and filtering them through knowledge of a number of elements. The lexis, grammar, punctuation, fonts, discourse organization and cohesion are knowledge of language which allow readers to understand the explicit or literal meanings of the texts and provide helpful clues for inferring the implicit ones. Cohesion is considered here as the “glue” which links the elements of a text (Richards et al., 1992). In order for successful inference to happen, these clues must be filtered through knowledge of a number of elements including knowledge of context, and background knowledge (knowledge/ experience/ beliefs) (Garbriellatos, 2002).

### **2.2.2. Role of inference in identifying referents**

Yule (1996) also asserted that reference is clearly tied to the speaker or writer’s goals and beliefs in the use of language. For successful reference to occur, we must recognize the role of inference. Because there is no direct relationship between entities and words, the listener or reader’s task is to infer correctly which entity the speaker/ writer intends to identify by using a particular referring expressions.

Yule suggested that in order for listeners or readers to infer successfully the intended referent, they should pay attention to the role of co-text and context.

Our ability to identify intended referents has actually depended more on our understanding of the referring expression. It has been aided by the linguistic material, or co-text, accompanying the referring expression. For example, in the following sentences,

*The cheese sandwich is made with white bread.*

*The cheese sandwich left without paying.*

The referring expression “*the cheese sandwich*” stays the same, the different co-texts in (i) and (ii) lead to a different type of interpretation in each case. (that is “food” in (i) and “person” in (ii)). Of course, co-text is just a linguistic part of the environment in which a referring expression is used. The physical environment, or context, is perhaps more easily recognized as having a powerful impact on how referring expressions are to be interpreted. The physical context of a restaurant, and perhaps even the speech conventions of those who work there may be crucial to the interpretation of the sentence (ii). These examples provide some support for an analysis of reference that depends on local context and the local knowledge of the participants.

### **2.3. Related studies**

Making inferences can be considered to be one of the key cognitive processes in interpreting the meaning of a text in reading or listening. However, there is not much research which has been done on making inferences with EFL high school learners, especially in the context of Vietnam. Takahashi and Tamaoka (1992) investigated the relationship between the reading ability and English proficiency of Japanese university EFL students and the ability to make inferences. The results of the experiment showed that the subjects were better able to answer literal questions than inferential questions in general. The performance of the skilled group on the inferential questions was better than that of the less-skilled group. The results also showed that making inferences demands the integration of ideas from various sentences in a text

and the retrieval and utilization of background knowledge from long-term memory; with less able readers expected to be inferior to the skilled readers in this area. Their findings imply that for lower-skilled readers especially, syntactic knowledge is critical to their ability to accurately understand the meaning of a text. Stanovich (1980) suggested that lower-skilled readers have not acquired automatic decoding skills and therefore need more time for processing. Pretorius (2005) conducted research to investigate the relationship between the ability to make inferences and the level of reading skills by focusing on anaphoric resolution. The findings showed that students who were not performing well academically were not skilled at resolving anaphora.

Concerning reference, there have been many outstanding works such as those of Halliday and Hassan (1976), Lyon (1981), Crystal (1985), and Yule (1996) mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. In Vietnam, Nguyen Thi Xuan Duyen (2007) investigated linguistic means of reference in English as compared with the Vietnamese equivalents. She found that both English and Vietnamese employ the same lexical devices to encode reference for cohesive effects. In both languages, reference can be divided into anaphoric reference, cataphoric reference, personal reference, demonstrative reference, comparative reference, reference by substitution, and reference by repetition. However, she also found some differences in the use of reference between the two languages. That is, English discourse makes greater use of reference than Vietnamese discourse.

In a nutshell, to the moment of this research, no studies have been done to gauge students' referring and inferring ability through answering reference and inference questions in Vietnamese upper secondary school. Thus the researcher believes that the present study will uncover some problems and pave the way for further studies.

### 3. Methods

The experimental study involved 82 eleventh grade Vietnamese high school students from Chau Van Liem High school in Can Tho city. Their English was assumed to be at pre-intermediate to intermediate level. A 20-item multiple choice test, used as both the pre-test and the post-test to measure treatment effects, was constructed by four reading passages. The reading texts were taken from the course book English 11, *Các dạng bài kiểm tra tiếng Anh 11*, and *Building Skills for the TOEFL iBT: Beginning* but the questions were designed differently to meet the researcher's needs. Besides, the order of the passages and the items was changed to avoid the possibility that the students may recall or copy what they had done in the pre-test.

To facilitate the students' reading practices during the intervention program, they were provided with seven practice worksheets which included strategies to answer reference and inference questions together with examples of Worceter, Bowerman, and Williamson (2006). The researcher chose examples of Worceter et al. (2006) as a learning guide used in the treatment because they represented a practical procedure for answering these reference and inference questions together with useful examples and explanations and provide charts which outline the key information that students should remember. The study followed the procedure: Pre-test, Treatment, Post-test, and Questionnaire. The tests, the intervention program, and the completion of the questionnaire took place during the first term of the school year 2018-2019.

In the Pre-test (45 minutes), the students were asked to read the passages and choose the correct answer for each question by circling the letter before the correct answer. This was to make sure that all the papers and the students' answers were collected after the test.

During the treatment stage, the students were introduced the strategies together with examples and their explanations. Next, they practiced using the strategies by doing individually, discussing in pairs or groups to find out the answers for each question and the clues from which they drew out their answers. The treatment took place in seven 45-minute class meetings. Each class meeting was about one week after its previous class meeting. The general outline of the teaching procedures was described as the following.

1. introducing the program
2. introducing Worceter, Bowerman, and Williamson's guide on answering reference and inference questions
3. practicing individually
4. practicing in pairs or groups (comparing answers and discussing clues)
5. whole-class discussion and feedback.
6. homework assignment

After one semester of the program, the post-test was administered. The conduct of the post-test was the same as that of the pre-test.

The questionnaire was administered to 30 teachers of English in high schools in Can Tho city at the end of the first semester. The questionnaire consisted of 26 items using a 5-point Likert - scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" (1) to "Strongly agree" (5). It comprised of four clusters: Students' knowledge of language, Students' learning methods and habits, Teachers' professionalism and Teaching and learning materials.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1. Findings from the Pre-test and Post-test**

The data collected from the students' papers were subjected to the SPSS program to test the reliability and frequency. The reliability coefficient for the pre-test was  $\alpha=.7052$ ,  $SD=3.1619$ ; and the reliability coefficient for the post-test was  $\alpha=.7015$ ,  $SD=2.8249$ . This showed that the pre-test and the post-test on students' ability to refer and infer when reading English texts were reliable.

The results showed that most students achieved greater gain in performance in the post-test over the pre-test. There were 66 out of 82 students gained higher scores; 15 students remained the same score as in the pre-test; only one student got 1 point lower than the pre-test.

The descriptive statistics of the mean performance between the pre-test and the post-test was presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of the mean performance in the pre-test and post-test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
MEANPRE	82	.10	.80	.5524	.15809
MEANPOST	82	.10	.95	.6957	.14125
<b>Difference in mean</b>				.1433	

As can be seen from Table 2, the mean difference between the pre-test and the post-test was .1433. The students gained higher scores in the post-test than in the pre-test. In addition, the maximum in the post-test was also higher than that of the pre-test. However, the minimum in the post-test was not different from that in the pre-test. In the post-test, the maximum gain was .95 and the minimum gain was .10 while in the pre-test the maximum was .80 and the minimum was also .10.

An ANOVA was performed to check the difference between the means of referring and inferring ability pre-test ( $M=.5524$ ,  $SD=.15809$ ) and post-test ( $M=.6957$ ,  $SD=.14125$ ). The result was presented in table 3.

**Table 3.** Difference between the means of the pre-test and post-test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Between Groups</b>	.889	14	.063	5.852	.000
<b>Within Groups</b>	.727	67	.011		
<b>Total</b>	1.616	81			

The result shows that the difference between the two means was significant ( $F=5.85$ ,  $df=(14,67)$ ,  $p=.000$ ). It means that after the study, participants' referring and inferring ability was different.

A one-sample t-test was conducted on the students' ability to refer and infer in the pre-test scores to evaluate whether the mean was significantly different from 0.5, the accepted mean for the students' ability to refer and infer in general. The results were presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Mean score of the pre-test in comparison with the accepted mean

Test Value = 0.5						
				Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference	Lower	Upper
<b>MEANPRE</b>	3.004	81	.004	.0524	.0177	.0872

As shown in Table 4, the mean score of the pre-test ( $M=.5524$ ,  $SD=.15809$ ) was significantly different from 0.5, ( $t=3.004$ ,  $df=81$ ,  $p=.004$ ). It can be concluded that the mean score of the pre-test was just a little (.0524) higher than that of the accepted mean. In other words, the results showed that in the pre-test, when the students had not been trained, the mean score was nearly the same as the accepted mean.

Another one-sample t-test was conducted on the students' ability to refer and infer in the post-test scores to evaluate whether the mean was significantly different from 0.7, the good mean for the students' ability to refer and infer in general. The results were presented in Table 5.



**Table 5.** Mean score of the post-test in comparison with the good mean

	t	Df	Test Value = 0.7		95% Confidence Interval of	
			Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
<b>MEANPOST</b>	-.274	81	.785	-.0043	-.0353	.0268

Table 5 revealed that the mean score of the post-test ( $M = .6957$ ,  $SD = .14125$ ) was not significantly different from 0.7, ( $t = -.274$ ,  $df = 81$ ,  $p = .785$ ). It can be concluded that the mean score of the post-test was the same as that of the good mean. The results indicated that the meanscore increased remarkably from the nearly average level in the pre-test to the good or high level in the post-test.

A Pearson's correlation was computed to assess the pre- and post-test reliability of the scores that the students achieved. Table 6 displayed the results.

**Table 6.** Correlation between the results of the pre- and the post-test

		<b>MEANPRE</b>	<b>MEANPOST</b>
<b>MEANPRE</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.616(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	82	82
<b>MEANPOST</b>	Pearson Correlation	.616(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	82	82

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results from Table 6 showed that almost all students gained higher scores in the post-test than in the pre-test. The correlation between pretest-pretest and posttest-posttest ( $r = 1$ ,  $p = .000$ ) indicated that the students who achieved high marks in the pre-test also gained high marks in the post-test, and those whose scores were low in the pre-test also got low scores in the post-test.

#### 4.2. Findings from the questionnaire

**Table 7.** Four Factors causing Difficulties (N=30)

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Students' knowledge of language	3.7857	.34942
Students' learning methods and habits	3.5417	.53067
Teachers' professionalism	3.3333	.31238
Teaching and learning materials	3.0417	.56126

The results from Table 7 indicated that teachers agreed that these are factors causing difficulties to students. The highest mean is for the students' knowledge of language ( $M = 3.7857$ ) suggesting that this is the main factor causing a number of difficulties to their students when answering reference and inference questions and the lowest mean is for "Teaching and learning materials".

The data were also subjected to SPSS Program for the mean scores of all respondents' perception about the factors causing difficulties to their students. The results were presented in Table 8.

**Table 8.** The mean scores of the questionnaire

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>TOTAL MEAN</b>	30	2.73	3.92	3.4744	.30087
<b>Valid N</b>					
(listwise)	30				

As presented in Table 8, the descriptive statistics showed that the mean scores of the questionnaire and the standard deviation were  $M=3.4744$ ,  $SD=.30087$ . This revealed that the respondents, on the whole, agreed that their students encountered difficulties concerning the factors stated in the questionnaire. This conclusion was statistically proved by the following results.

Table 9 showed that the mean score of the questionnaire was 3.4744. This number was between the range of scale 3 (Unsure) and scale 4 (Agree). Therefore, another test was also run to compare this mean score with the scale 3.

A one-sample t-test was performed to check whether the total mean score of the questionnaire ( $M=3.4744$ ) was significantly different from scale 3 or not. The results were shown in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Comparing the mean scores of the questionnaire and the scale 3 (Unsure)

		<b>Test Value = 3</b>				
				95% Confidence		
				Mean	Interval of the	
		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference	
					Lower	Upper
<b>TOTAL MEAN</b>	8.635	29	.000	.4744	.3620	.5867

The results from Table 9 indicated that the mean scores of the questionnaire ( $M=3.4744$ ,  $SD=.30087$ ) was different from 3 ( $t=8.635$ ,  $df=29$ ,  $p=.000$ ). The results, therefore, supported the conclusion that most of the teachers agreed upon the factors causing difficulties to their students stated in the questionnaire.

### 5. Discussion

Among main causes of students' difficulties, students' knowledge of language, especially their vocabulary shortage was the most common difficulties for Vietnamese high school students when answering reference and inference reading questions in English. Besides, if the students could not translate the text into Vietnamese, they could not make any inference; the students did not know the importance of the lay-out, and punctuation of a text, they could not draw the organization of a text, and identify the grammatical and lexical relationships between different elements of a text. These items were available helpful clues (Gabrielatos, 2002) for successful inferencing to take place. When students read English texts, they paid little or no attention to these clues; as a result, they could not make inference. However, the majority of their students were not good at grammar, and their students' English was influenced much by their Vietnamese. It was showed that Vietnamese students were not bad at English grammar and

this might not be a common reason for their poor performance in answering reference and inference questions.

Particularly, the students tend to choose the answer that was the most literally the same as what was stated in the text. In a quick look for reference and inference questions in the three course books (English 10, 11, and 12), the researcher found that these two kinds of questions were rarely included. Moreover, the students only practiced English reading skill in class. These findings supported the conclusion that Vietnamese students got familiar with literal questions and, therefore, failed to answer reference and inference questions which students did not need to “pull the answer out of thin air” when answering (Worceter et al., 2006). They might be easily deceived into choosing the most literally the same but wrong options.

In addition, their students paid little attention to reading and interpreting repeated words in sentences and they did not usually integrate the ideas from various sentences in a text. These might also cause some difficulties for students because, according to Gabrielatos, cohesion was one of the helpful clues for successful inferencing to take place.

However, not many teachers often included test items which required students to identify referents and make inferences in most of the tests because their students were not interested in questions which required them to make inference and identify referents. This was really an obstacle to inferencing because when interpreting language, the nature and quantity of knowledge that were activated would depend on the particular context, co-text and our needs (Gabrielatos, 2002). When students were not interested, not encouraged, and even not asked to answer these two kinds of questions, they would fail to do it.

Another amazing thing is that the teachers had been rarely trained to design reference and inference questions or provided their students with useful strategies and processes to answer these two kinds of questions. Besides, they don't often gave their students homework assignments with reference and inference questions. Based on these figures, we can conclude that teachers pay little or no attention to these two kinds of questions and that they are not skilled enough in teaching reference and inference questions.

About teaching and learning materials, the findings indicated that the topics in the textbooks were more of a help than a hindrance to students because they could efficiently use their knowledge of context and background knowledge which, according to Gabrielatos, were very helpful in inferencing. However, reference and inference questions rarely appeared in the textbooks and tests and their students did not have enough time and English materials to read outside classroom. These figures once again confirmed that Vietnamese students lacked practice on reference and inference questions.

The most notable findings of the study were that the adaptation instruction had a remarkable effect on students' performance in referring and inferring when reading in English. Specially, the participants who got high marks in the pre-test certainly got high marks in the post-test, and those whose scores were low in the pre-test also got low scores in the post-test. The result also indicated that the intervention program benefited a certain group of participants. Lower-skilled readers encountered more difficulties with inferential questions and improving their inferring ability than skilled ones. This result was also supported by Stanovich (1980),

which suggested that lower-skilled readers had not acquired automatic decoding skills and therefore needed more time for processing. The finding of the present study was also similar to that of Takahashi & Tamaoka (1992), which showed that the performance of the skilled group on the inferential questions was better than that of the less-skilled group and that less able readers were inferior to the skilled readers in this area demanding the integration of ideas from various sentences in a text and the retrieval and utilization of background knowledge from long-term memory.

## 6. Conclusion

The study aimed to investigate common factors that cause difficulties for Vietnamese high school students when answering reference and inference reading questions in English and whether students' referring and inferring ability can be developed by teacher's adapting certain of reading tasks in the course books. On the evidence provided, it can be concluded that Vietnamese high school students face some difficulties mostly due to their poor knowledge of the language, their inexperience in answering the questions, their teachers' neglect of the questions, and the absence of the questions in the course books. However, students' referring and inferring ability can be developed by teacher's adapting certain of reading tasks in the course books. From the findings of the present study, some implications can be set up to high school teachers of English in Vietnam in the field of teaching reading, particularly, teaching reference and inference questions. Firstly, reference and inference questions should be included in the course books (English 10, 11, 12 as well as tests and national examinations like the General Certificate of Highschool Education examination. By doing this, referring and inferring ability will become a must to develop and, therefore, teachers and students will pay much more attention to it. Also, when designing reference questions teachers should cover common types of reference and vary them in different units. Since there are so many types of reference and each of them is used differently, students may find it hard to identify and need to practice adequately. It is the same for inference questions, teachers need to help students practice inferring by using different kinds of clues, ranging from linguistic to contextual and background knowledge. Hopefully, the results will encourage an extension of research into students' referring and inferring ability.

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## CÂU HỎI VỀ TỪ ĐƯỢC QUY CHIẾU VÀ HÀM Ý TRONG MÔN ĐỌC TIẾNG ANH VÀ ỨNG DỤNG TRONG LỚP HỌC NGÔN NGỮ Ở VIỆT NAM

**Tóm tắt:** Nghiên cứu được triển khai theo hướng thực nghiệm nhằm tích hợp các chiến thuật đọc và bài tập thực hành vào chương trình học để đo lường tính hiệu quả của việc nâng cao khả năng trả lời dạng câu hỏi về từ quy chiếu và hàm ý của học sinh. Ngoài ra, những tác nhân gây khó khăn trong việc trả lời những dạng câu hỏi tiếng Anh này cũng được miêu tả. Kết quả cho thấy việc thiếu kiến thức ngôn ngữ, thiếu kinh nghiệm trả lời của học sinh, việc giáo viên không chú trọng các dạng câu hỏi này và sự xuất hiện hiếm hoi của chúng trong sách giáo khoa là bốn tác nhân chính. Ngoài ra, năng lực trả lời các dạng câu hỏi này của học sinh có thể được cải thiện thông qua các loại hình bài đọc trong sách.

**Từ khóa:** Năng lực đọc hiểu tiếng Anh, khó khăn, hàm ý, từ quy chiếu