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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES IN THE 21ST CENTURY TO HOLISTICALLY APPLY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR BUDDHISM STUDIES IN VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

This study checks emerging and existing pedagogical strategies to improve English Language Teaching (ELT) in Vietnamese Buddhist institutions during the 21st century. English acts as a primary medium for scholarly discourse, publishing, and intercultural exchange, mostly amid rising globalization and the expansion of international higher education. Yet, instruction in many Buddhist affiliated colleges keeps relying heavily on grammar focused and translation based models that rarely grow students capable of academic writing or independent research. The analysis reviews several set up ELT structures including English for academic Purposes (EAP), English Medium Instruction (EMI), Content and language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Communicative Language Teaching, Task Based Language Teaching, and digital tools combined with mindfulness practices.The paper proposes a unique blend of academic English instruction with Buddhist Studies content and modern digital tools applied through contemplative teaching methods. On top of that, it asserts that English language education in Buddhist universities must shift toward academic literacy, global communication, and interdisciplinary approaches. This change is required for the stability and growth of international academic networks. And the move supports deeper integration within Vietnamese Buddhist higher education systems. When compared to similar institutions abroad, so such reforms make sure relevance and influence in a changing scholarly environment. The model displays clear potential for sustained adaptation and engagement in current academic trends.

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INTRODUCTION

In fact, English by far leads as the favorite language globally for academia, research, and everyday communication among thousands of changing worlds in this century. A lot of higher education institutions are using English as a medium of universal communication in almost all their academic programs; on the other hand, it's the primary language of research output, and it also facilitates members' participation in large international academic networks. Therefore, even when one looks at Buddhist related universities in Vietnam, the role of English can't be underestimated as it's through it that one gains access not only to English versions of Buddhist canonical texts but also to research publications, conferences worldwide, international exchanges, etc. That said, one should remember that English Language Teaching (ELT) in several universities in Vietnam is still a subject of old fashioned or traditional teaching methods that are mainly focused on grammar and translation. Although such teaching methods, also referred to as the traditional ones, engage students in understanding the structural points of grammar and reading different types of texts only, they never succeed in motivating students towards experiencing real life English communication, developing their academic writing skills, presentation skills, and learning the implicit modes of communication in research communities (Richards, 2006; Ellis, 2003). Consequently, some learners can comprehend reading materials written in English well but they face challenges when it comes to expressing and sharing their academic thoughts in English. In view of this overall context of internationalisation and globalisation of higher education, it's no surprise that the demand for English language teaching in the form of general English only is gradually being eliminated from the Buddhist university domain. Instead, more coordinated efforts are necessary to promote exposure to and practice of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English Medium Instruction (EMI) along with the adoption of interdisciplinary language learning approaches (Wingate, 2012; Galloway & Rose, 2021). Besides the introduction of new pedagogical methods, involvement of and not limited to Communicative Language Teaching, Content and Language Integrated Learning, Task Based Language Teaching, utilizing ICT in a significant way, and above all, the use of mindfulness techniques, for instance, the Buddhist meditation can remarkably enhance the quality of art and English teaching to students who are engaged in Buddhist Studies. In this research, the author explores the question how 21st century teaching

methods can possibly help the enhancement of English Language Teaching in the Buddhist culture universities of Vietnam. Besides, this piece of work also proposes an integrative pedagogical paradigm that combines English for Academic Purposes, English Medium Instruction, the subject matter of Buddhist Studies related courses, digitally mediated learning approaches as well as contemplative pedagogy (Le Hong Linh, 2026).

LITERATURE REVIEW

English for Academic Purposes and Academic Literacy: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is about getting a handle on some major facets of academies such as academic writing, academic reading, research communication, and even the basic principles of academic discourse in higher education. The significance of EAP goes hand in hand with the needs of the students who have to write essay, prepare research papers, writing thesis and make presentation at conferences that require conformity with the English language standards (Hyland, 2006; Flowerdew, 2013). Academic literacy covers a variety of skills that go far beyond language alone, e.g. Getting to grips with academic discourse, argument structure, citation conventions and disciplinary norms (Lea & Street 1998; Lillis & Scott 2007). When I was eventually appointed as a writing tutor I did a lot of thinking, not only because I myself had been convinced that the line of thought of good academic writing for making an impact is good writing that "the sweet communicating" (= the good writing) that persuaded the readers in the different fields that were felt Therefore EAP lessons need to be mostly centred on the skills that are essential for the students' academic success, e.g. Academically formal writing, research reading, if and how summarizing and paraphrasing can be done effectively, citation skills and academic presentation (Wingate, 2012). When it comes to Buddhist universities, the vital role of EAP is even more significant as students not only have to read and understand articles written by themselves but also write publications in engaging essays that reflect their analyses on Buddhist philosophy as well as present their findings at scientific conferences (Le Hong Linh, 2026).

English Medium Instruction in Higher Education: English Medium Instruction (or EMI) simply means using English to teach various subjects in countries where English isn't the native language (Macaro, 2018). The method of teaching through English has experienced a dramatic and phenomenal increase because of the internationalization of higher education, which in turn is leading to the growing demand for global academic dialogue and communication (Galloway & Rose, 2021). According to Dimova and Kling [11], EMI gives students a chance to enhance their academic English, get to know more about disciplinary vocabulary, and further strengthen their academic communication skills which are the very skills that the globalized world requires for a successful career. However, it's equally important to point out that for EMI to be successful students need to be given suitable language support that involves EAP classes and overall academic literacy teaching (Dafouz & Smit, 2016). Buddhist universities are places that one can hardly find, and so the idea of EMI combined with EAP is one that can be explored there, but this is especially so in the case of Buddhist universities whose students will have to learn not only the language of business science technologies, etc. (as it would be the case at the universities without any specialized focus) but also they'll be engaged in studying how to deal with complex subjects like Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist ethics, Buddhist culture, and scripture in English. Besides, they've to fulfill the target of taking their research results to the global level (Le Hong Linh, 2026).

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): A method that educational institutions employ to support student development is to combine subject matter with language learning jointly in a single session. This strategy has also been named Content and Language Integrated Learning or simply CLIL. At once, pupils explore science or history while sharpening how they speak and write in that context. Think of it like building two abilities side by side during one lesson. Experts such as Coyle and others have looked into this method closely. 2010). With this method of teaching, language learning becomes part of academic content and through that, a more relevant and meaningful connection is made between language acquisition and real life situations (Dalton Puffer, 2011). The 4Cs framework Content Communication Cognition and Culture (Coyle et al. 2010) is the essence of CLIL methodology, a set of four main elements. This perspective is very fitting for Buddhist education, since a learning of Buddhism naturally involves philosophical inquiry, ethical considerations, cultural participation and academic discussions.

In fact, a lot of research has shown the effect of CLIL on various aspects of academic skills development, such as academic vocabulary learning (Garca Amaya et al. 2020), reading comprehension (Daniels & Munafo, 2016), students' motivation (Darn: 2014; Young & Tainio, 1999) and academic writing (Dajlam & Pilcher, in press), etc. So, the most suitable teaching method in terms of English instruction in Buddhist universities is CLIL because these students are given an excellent chance of learning English through the religious route by studying certain holy Buddhist texts (the term given is CT) and doing an in depth internal examination of cultural practices.

Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning: Richards (2006) explains that the main features of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are based on communication and interaction as fundamental elements of human behavior. As a result, their significance is increased substantially vis a vis rules and structures learnt by rote out of context... In case of CLT, students are made to use the language pretty much giving them a chance to raise their communicative ability through making a conversation listening debating and presenting skills. Just as importantly, Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT), is based on the idea that language is learned through doing meaningful and purposeful tasks. For example Ellis 2003 points out that tasks usually include productive writing, making presentations, extensive use of research, translating materials and engaging in stimulating discussions. TBL method proves to be a great help for university students too as they get to connect working on the language and academic work in higher education. Many investigations in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) have demonstrated again and again that speaking communicative and task based are two of the best methods for increasing language proficiency including such skills as critical thinking and academic writing and also presentation skills. Richards (2006) and Ellis (2003) agree with this line of

reasoning. The extent to which this mode of teaching is needed becomes evident, in particular, if we think of higher education, where the students are to use English not merely for a daily talk but to also communicate academically as well as become ready for the demands of their academic disciplines.

Digital Learning and Technology in ELT: Digital learning has been part of the toolkits in 21st century education, of how we deliver and receive education. The convergence of different technological tools has made language learning more effective through a wide range of e learning platforms, extensive academic libraries, easy to use electronic dictionaries, AI driven writing support tools, sophisticated language correction tools, and very effective communication platforms on the Internet (Chapelle 2001) (Warschauer 2000). But, thanks to this groundbreaking digital technology, higher education students have instant access to a wide range of academic journals with the internet serving as a huge library to better their research papers through extensive research. Engaging in such activities helps me collaborate with top international scholars and be part of a community of thinkers who spread the best ideas worldwide. They also get to attend conferences online, which aids in their getting more interested and mind opening through events on the web. Besides that, guiding and motivating the learners to be in charge of their own learning process means that they'll enter working life as self-directed researchers (Kumar, 2020). Discovering ways to use these digital materials isn't only for the sake of enriching one's academic life but making the students ready for graduating college and stepping into a higher tech world.

Mindfulness and Contemplative Pedagogy: Mindfulness and contemplative pedagogy are frequently considered to be revolutionary, deeply changing methods of teaching in colleges and universities. Mindfulness techniques such as breathing exercises, writing through reflections, silent reading for a meaningful time and contemplative discussion, among others, have been demonstrated to significantly enhance one's capacity to focus or concentrate while at the same time reducing levels of anxiety. So, they're proven to be a great overall learning aid (Baer, 2006; Shapiro et al. 2011). Studies reveal that mindfulness practice develops longer attention spans and helps manage emotions, thus boosting learning outcomes in various educational settings (Keng et al. 2011). This is extremely important in Buddhist higher education institutes where the fundamental values supporting educational systems are so tightly wound with meditation, contemplation and ethical reflection that here the importance and potential of language learning through mindfulness can be most recognized. The combination of mindfulness, in this instance being aware of the present moment and experience, and a large part of what's seen in the terminology of Buddhist education isn't a coincidence.

RESULTS

Reviewing related literature, English Language Teaching strategies in Buddhist universities reveal some major discoveries. Primarily, conventional grammar instruction alone wasn't enough for tertiary level students, who required proficiency in English for academic and research purposes (Hyland, 2006; Wingate, 2012). These are the essential skills this group of students must acquire: Writing academic essays, making presentations and carrying out research; of course, they also need intercultural communication skills. Secondly, it's hardly possible to overstress the significance of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English Medium Instruction (EMI) in higher education. Learners are increasingly finding themselves in situations where they must use English, not only to engage with the curriculum content and conduct research but also to publish their findings in leading journals (Macaro, 2018; Galloway & Rose, 2021). Thirdly, the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) educational idea might be the most effective one to the very unique settings of Buddhist universities. The students, on the one hand, can develop their language skills through English and, on the other hand, through their involvement with the content rich area of Buddhist Studies, which encompasses a variety of different disciplines (e.g. Buddhist philosophy, historical texts, ethical guidelines, meditation practices and cultural approach to Buddhism) (Coyle et al. 2010; Dalton Puffer et al. 2011). Also, communicative language teaching or task based learning procedures have been found to make the learners significantly better at speaking, writing academically and delivering presentations (Richards, 2006; Ellis, 2003). Besides, these techniques encourage the immediate use and practice of the language in real life situations, making learning more interesting. Likewise, digital and AI technologies have become indispensable elements in language learning, academic writing, research dissemination as well as international academic collaboration (Chapelle, 2001; Warschauer, 2000). Students utilizing these tools enjoy a wonderful opportunity of discovering and learning in a manner that greatly benefits them. At last, research has demonstrated that using mindfulness based learning techniques helps lower the level of language anxiety, promote greater concentration and facilitate reflective learning of students (Baer, 2006; Keng et al. 2011). A state of mindful awareness enables learners to establish a profound connection with the language and their academic pursuits. In depth research on pedagogical approaches in these settings indicates that a robust argument can be developed for the exploration and practice of English Language Teaching in Buddhist universities by taking perspectives such as English for Academic Purposes, English Medium Instruction (EMI), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), communicative or task based methods of teaching, digital tools for learning and mindfulness based educational frameworks (Le Hong Linh, 2026).

DISCUSSION

Drawing on the results of this multi-faceted study, it is thus evident that the field of English Language Teaching in Buddhist universities in Vietnam needs to shift from a traditional, prescriptive grammar-based pedagogical focus to learning pathways that are more progressive, cross-border, academic and communicative (Hyland 2006; Richards 2007).
A comprehensive and cohesive pedagogical model for English teaching at Buddhist universities must incorporate many core aspects, among others English for Academic Purposes which is focused on developing students' skills in writing scholarly texts and addressing the communication of research results. Furthermore, the aspect of English Medium Instruction is critical for the conducting of Buddhist Studies courses in the English language thus catering to a wider international audience. Also, CLIL is important as it integrates the studying of English with Buddhist Studies. Similarly, Communicative Language Teaching needs to be a major component within the curriculum whereby the emphasis is placed on fostering

speaking and discussion skills that will allow for interaction and participation. In addition, it provides guidance on Task-Based Learning to help students with other academic tasks that are integral for success including writing assignments and presentation skills. By incorporating Digital Learning and advanced AI tools, we can potentially add new dimensions to the learning experience to students with innovative resources and technical approaches. Contemplative pedagogy and Mindfulness-Based Learning can provide great tools to complement and enhance this educational approach, ultimately fostering emotional and spiritual development alongside cognitive learning. Likewise, intercultural competence and global dialogue should feature prominently to equip students with the tools they need for success in a globalizing context.

This model provides a holistic, integrative approach to teaching that can help develop students' language proficiency as well as their academic literacy; research; cross-cultural communication; critical thinking and ethical competencies (Deardorff, 2006; Byram, 1997).

Furthermore, English language teaching in Buddhist universities should provide preventative support for the success of international publishing activities, conference opportunities, and broader academic collaboration (Flowerdew 2013; Hyland 2009). Thus, English education should continue to be closely tied to research training and academic writing skills, which fosters presentation skills for scholarly dialogue.

The harmonious combination of language learning, Buddhist Studies, academic research and mindfulness education in bilingual higher education helps to develop an extremely unique model for English education at Buddhist universities integrating scholarly knowledge with ethics education and contemplation (Le Hong Linh, 2026).

CONCLUSION

Through clearly communicating its objectives and major points, the paper reveals that a range of recent pedagogical movements in the 21st century stand out as the main ones to have brought about transformations in English Language Teaching delivering positive results for Buddhist Studies in Vietnam. The findings suggest that traditional LSP still has a focus on teaching grammar, therefore such models may fail to serve the needs of university students who want to use English for their academic learning and research in the future (Hyland, 2006). With the help of doing a thorough literature review combined with analysis, the findings indicate that Buddhist universities' English language teaching should incorporate different methods in the form of English for Academic Purposes, English Medium Instruction, Content and Language Integrated Learning, communicative teaching methods and task based environments as well as online contexts and even mindfulness based instruction (Macaro 2018; Coyle et al. 2010; Ellis 2003; Baer 2006). The article presents a strong case for an integrated pedagogical model that seamlessly combines language learning, academic literacy development, the specialized content of Buddhist Studies, state of the art digital technologies and contemplative approaches to teaching learning. The authors hope that the pandemic model will serve as a means to significantly raise the standard of English language teaching at Buddhist colleges across Vietnam, and also aid in increasing academic research projects and international scholarly exchanges (Le Hong Linh, 2026). Besides that, learning or teaching English language in the setting of Buddhist universities wasn't simply about acquiring language skills but was also aimed at facilitating academic communication which is necessary for enhancing ethical education on campuses along with contemplative learning experience and expanding global engagement across traditions. This integrative context holds the promise of making substantial contributions to the globalization of Buddhist higher education and serving as a trigger for the paradigm shift of English Language Teaching in Vietnam throughout the 21st century.

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