

VietTESOL International Convention 2025

FACTORS INFLUENCING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY: A STUDY ON LEARNING MOTIVATION, AUTONOMY, ENGAGEMENT, AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

Nguyen Thi Phuong Thanh

Nguyen Phuong Trang

Pham Thuc Vi

Pham Ngoc Phuoc An

Foreign Trade University

Can Tho, August 29th 2025

TABLE OF CONTENT

**01. INTRODUCTION
& RESEARCH GAP**

**02. METHODOLOGY
& FINDINGS**

**03. DISCUSSION,
IMPLICATIONS &
CONCLUSION**



01

INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH GAP

BACKGROUND



English proficiency as a **crucial skill** for **international integration**, **access to global knowledge**, **future employability**.

Many non-English-major students struggle to achieve **satisfactory proficiency**, facing **low learning motivation**, **lack of autonomy**, **ineffective strategies**, and **limited classroom engagement**.

=> **Modifiable factors** that educational institutions can **directly target**.

PREVIOUS STUDIES (INTERNATIONAL)

2021

- Viberg and Kukulska-Hulme: examined self-regulation and collaboration in mobile learning
- Context: Digital learning abroad, not Vietnamese universities.

2023

- Alizadeh: immersive flipped classrooms in Japan
- Focusing mainly on student engagement in high-tech settings.

2024

- The AREWL System applied Augmented Reality
- To improve vocabulary learning and motivation in rural schools.

These studies suggest that motivation, autonomy, and engagement do matter, but they are often studied separately, in foreign contexts, or with specific technologies.

PREVIOUS STUDIES (VIETNAM)

HOANG YEN PHUONG AND VO (2019)	Autonomy, involvement, and motivation among English majors	Did not include learning strategies or apply advanced models.
PHAN ET AL. (2020)	Analyzed motivation and learning strategies	Without linking them to overall proficiency
NGUYEN HOANG MINH AND NGUYEN THI DUONG NGOC (2023)	Examined autonomy and motivation	Only in relation to speaking proficiency
DUC AND HANG (2024)	Autonomy and reading comprehension via online platforms	Focused on just one skill

WHY WE NEED ALL FOUR FACTORS?

English proficiency is a multi-dimensional competence, not just speaking or reading. Students need to integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing to succeed academically and professionally.



MOTIVATION

Gives students the drive to start and persist.



AUTONOMY

Enables them to take control and regulate their own learning.



ENGAGEMENT

Reflects their active participation in class and beyond.



STRATEGIES

Provide the concrete methods to study effectively.

Combining all four allows us to see their relative impact and which factors matter most for Vietnamese students.

THE EXPECTANCY - VALUE THEORY

Motivation, autonomy, engagement, and strategies are all shaped by how much students believe they can succeed and how valuable they think English is for their future.

Very few studies in Vietnam have applied Expectancy-Value Theory, especially with non-English-major students.



EXPECTANCY OF SUCCESS

Their belief in their ability to succeed.



VALUE OF THE TASK

How much they value the activity, including enjoyment, usefulness, personal importance, and perceived cost.

RELEVANCE TO FOUR FACTORS

According to the Expectancy-Value Theory, students' learning behaviors depend on their belief in success and the value they assign to the task. This is directly linked to our four variables:

If students **BELIEVE** they can succeed in English and see it as valuable for their future career or personal growth, they will have stronger **MOTIVATION**.

Students with higher **EXPECTANCY** of success feel more confident to take charge of their own learning (**AUTONOMY**), such as setting goals and planning study schedules.

When learners find English **VALUABLE**, they are more willing to participate actively (**ENGAGEMENT**) in class discussions, group work, and extracurricular activities.

Students who **BELIEVE** in their capability are more likely to experiment with and apply effective learning **STRATEGIES**, like metacognitive planning, self-monitoring, or collaborative learning.

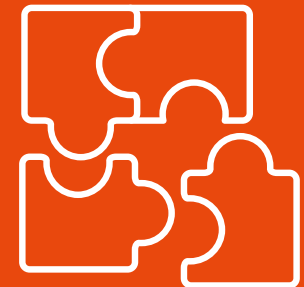
Motivation, autonomy, engagement, and strategies are all shaped by how much students believe they can succeed and how valuable they think English is for their future.

Very few studies in Vietnam have applied Expectancy-Value Theory, especially with non-English-major students.

RESEARCH GAP SUMMARY



NO RESEARCH HAS YET EXAMINED ALL FOUR FACTORS—MOTIVATION, AUTONOMY, ENGAGEMENT, AND STRATEGIES—TOGETHER IN RELATION TO OVERALL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY.



MOST STUDIES IN VIETNAM HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO ISOLATED SKILLS OR FEWER FACTORS, WHILE OUR MODEL TAKES A MORE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH.



THE EXPECTANCY-VALUE FRAMEWORK, THOUGH WIDELY USED INTERNATIONALLY, HAS RARELY BEEN APPLIED IN VIETNAM, ESPECIALLY FOR NON-ENGLISH MAJORS.



02

METHODOLOGY & FINDINGS

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

APPROACH	Quantitative Study
RESEARCH TOOL	A structured questionnaire (20 questions)
SCALE	5-point Likert Scale
SAMPLE SIZE	125 university students
DATA ANALYSIS	Statistical analysis performed using SPSS software



RESEARCH MODEL & VARIABLES



THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Expectancy-Value
Theory
(Eccles & Wigfield,
2000).



DEPENDENT VARIABLE

EP: English Proficiency



INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

- **LM:** Learning Motivation
- **LA:** Learner Autonomy
- **LE:** Learning Engagement
- **LS:** Learning Strategies



GOAL

To measure the impact
of these four factors on
English proficiency

KEY FINDINGS: DATA RELIABILITY

01

HIGH RELIABILITY

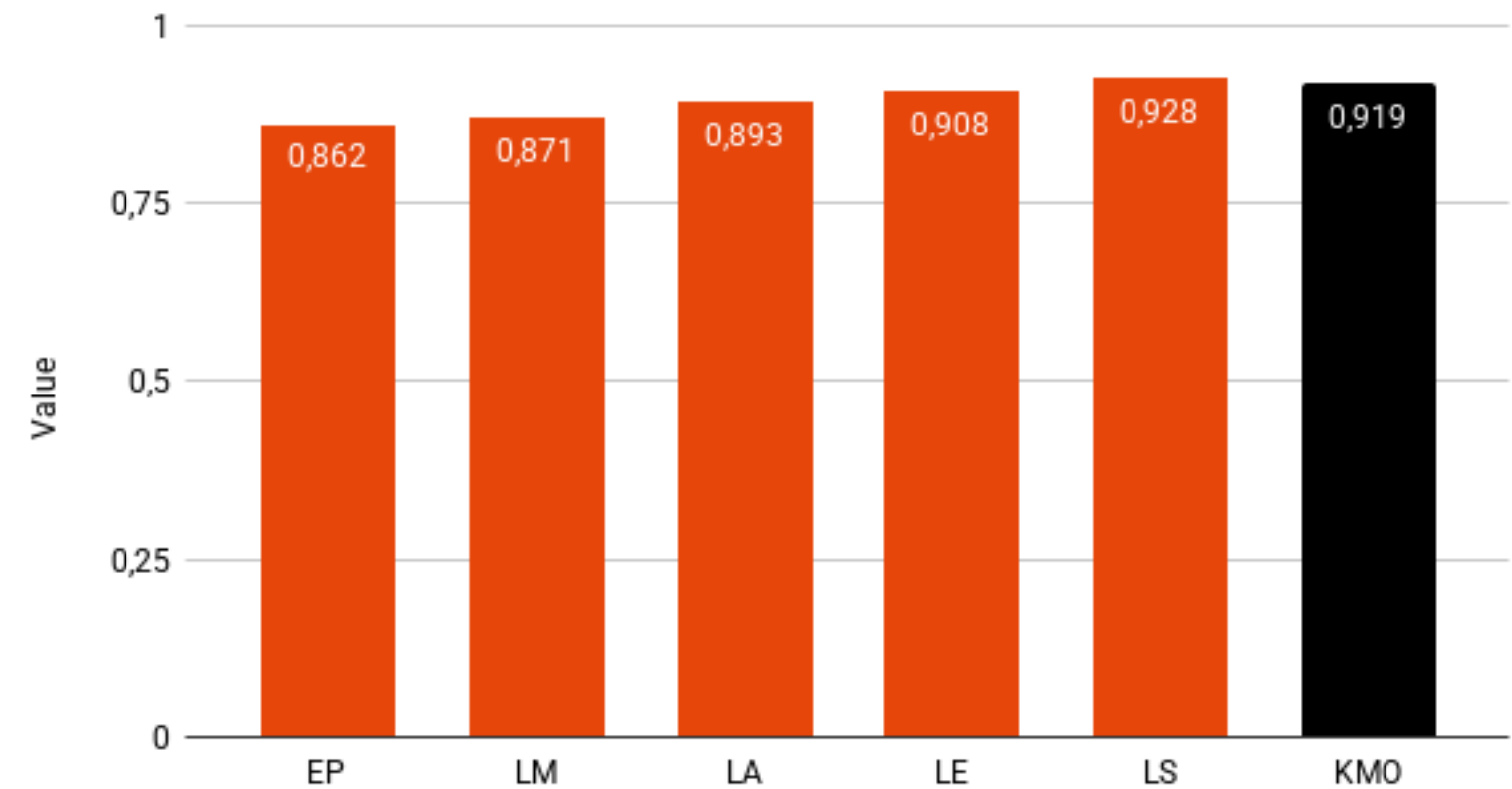
Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs > **0.86**

02

STRONG VALIDITY

KMO Value = **0.919**

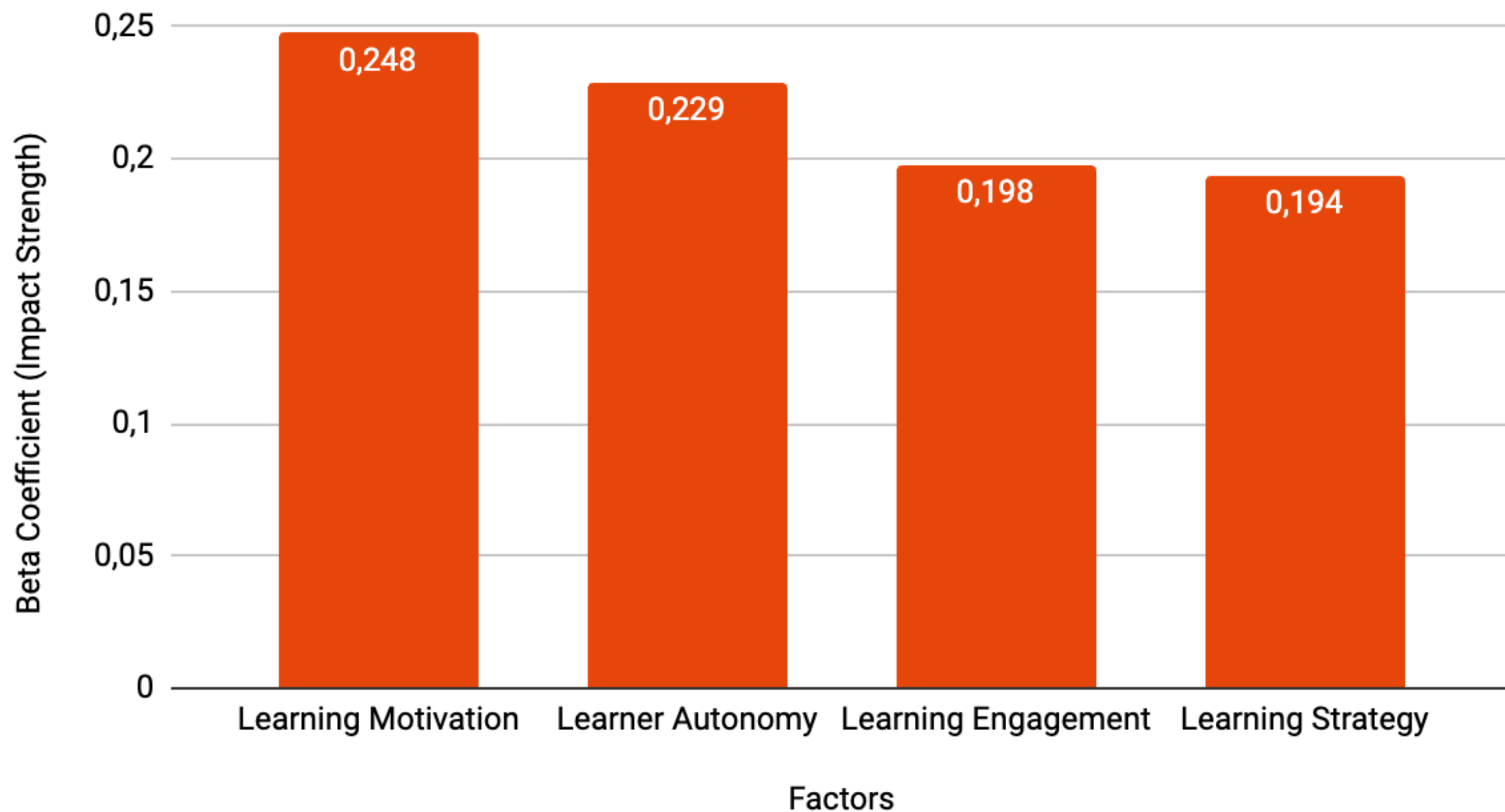
Cronbach's Alpha và KMO Values



KEY FINDINGS: IMPACT ON ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

- **The model is a good fit:** (Sig. = .000)
- **Explanatory power:** The four factors explain **50.9%** (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.509$) of the variance in English proficiency.
- **All four factors are significant:**
 1. **Learning Motivation:** Strongest positive influence ($\beta = .248$, Sig. = .004)
 2. **Learner Autonomy:** Strong positive influence ($\beta = .229$, Sig. = .008)
 3. **Learning Engagement:** Positive influence ($\beta = .198$, Sig. = .040)
 4. **Learning Strategies:** Positive influence ($\beta = .194$, Sig. = .039)

Standardized Impact (Beta Coefficients) on English Proficiency





03

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

a. **CONCLUSION**

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Expectancy–Value Theory (EVT)

OBJECTIVES

Test the model linking four psychological–behavioral factors to English proficiency among university students.

FOUR FACTORS STUDIED

- LM – Learning Motivation
- LA – Learner Autonomy
- LE – Learner Engagement
- LS – Learning Strategies

SAMPLE & METHODS

125 students; Cronbach's Alpha, EFA, and linear regression.

a. **CONCLUSION**

KEY FINDINGS

- All **four factors** have a positive and statistically significant effect on English proficiency.
- Strongest predictors: LM and LA (central role in driving outcomes).
- Other predictors: LE and LS remain significant, though weaker in magnitude, and are still essential.

MODEL FIT

Adjusted $R^2 = \mathbf{0.509}$ → about **50.9%** of variance in proficiency explained by the four factors.

CONSISTENCY

Results align with previous domestic & international research, confirming the importance of psychological and cognitive factors in language learning.

b. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1) FOR ADMINISTRATORS / UNIVERSITIES

- Improvement cannot rely only on increasing hours or content delivery.
- Curriculum design should develop both:
 - Expectancy – students' belief in their ability to learn.
 - Value – awareness of the importance of English for study and careers.
- Integrate courses and activities on self-regulation, goal-setting, reflective practice.
- Provide supportive systems: academic advising, digital learning platforms, extracurricular English activities.

b. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2) FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

- Act as inspirers and mentors, not just knowledge transmitters.
- Foster an engaging learning environment with:
 - Communicative tasks, group projects, timely feedback.
- Specific techniques:
 - Vocabulary memorization through chunks/contexts.
 - Integrated practice of listening–speaking–reading–writing.
 - Encourage self-assessment with checklists/rubrics.
 - Promote SMART goal-setting and progress monitoring.
- Recognize and reward active participation both inside and outside the classroom (e.g., clubs, workshops).

b. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

3) **FOR STUDENTS**

- Shift mindset: learning English requires persistence, planning, and effective methods.
- Strengthen autonomy (LA):
 - Set phased personal goals.
 - Develop self-regulated study schedules.
 - Choose strategies (LS) that fit personal style.
- Increase **engagement (LE)**: discussions, teamwork, English clubs, extracurricular activities.
- Build **intrinsic motivation (LM)**: learn for enjoyment and self-development; link study to career goals.
- Concrete actions: practice with international tests, keep a weekly learning journal, track progress.

b. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4) FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

- Confirms the applicability of EVT in the Vietnamese context.
- Future directions:
 - Larger and more diverse samples.
 - Longitudinal (time-series) designs.
 - Explore mediators/moderators (e.g., anxiety, self-efficacy, digital environment, social support).
- Extend focus from skills/knowledge to psychological, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions.

C. IMPLICATIONS

CONTRIBUTION

Identifies key factors affecting English proficiency of students; provides a foundation for targeted interventions.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

Enhancing foreign language skills = national human resource strategy in the era of global integration.

SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENT

Focus on LM & LA (core drivers), while reinforcing LE & LS (supporting roles) → ensures long-term, sustainable gains in English teaching and learning in Vietnam.

VietTESOL International Convention 2025

THANK

You!

Nguyen Thi Phuong Thanh

Nguyen Phuong Trang

Pham Thuc Vi

Pham Ngoc Phuoc An

Foreign Trade University

Can Tho, August 29th 2025