

***Exploring English Language Learning Practices Among H'Mong Children in Sapa:
Insights From Social and Cultural Perspectives***

Dung Le Quang, Dai Nam University, Vietnam
Ha Le Quang, Hanoi Law University, Vietnam

The Korean Conference on Education 2024
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This study explores the dynamics of English language learning among H'Mong children in Sapa, focusing on the influence of cultural traditions, community involvement, and technological advancements. Through qualitative analysis of interview transcripts and quantitative assessment of teacher perceptions, the study elucidates the interplay between social, cultural, and technological factors in shaping language acquisition experiences. Findings reveal the integration of cultural elements, community support, and technological access as key facilitators of language learning. Effective strategies, including immersion in English-speaking environments and peer collaboration, emerge from social and cultural influences. While current educational policies demonstrate strengths in cultural inclusivity and community engagement, there are opportunities for improvement, particularly in enhancing teacher training and better integrating cultural aspects into language programs. Overall, the study underscores the importance of holistic approaches that leverage social, cultural, and technological resources to foster language acquisition among ethnic minority children in Sapa.

Keywords: English Language Learning, H'Mong Children, Social, Cultural and Technology Perspectives

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

I. Introduction

1.1. Background and Context of the Study

The H'Mong people constitute one of Vietnam's largest ethnic minority groups, numbering several hundred thousand individuals. Predominantly residing in the northern provinces of Lao Cai, Lai Chau, Son La, Ha Giang, and Dien Bien, as well as scattered across other regions, the H'Mong boast a rich cultural heritage and a distinct language belonging to the Hmong-Mien language family. Despite their cohesive cultural identity, H'Mong communities exhibit diversity through various subgroups, each with unique dialects and customs. Their cultural tapestry is woven with vibrant textiles, intricate embroidery, and traditional music, interwoven with spiritual practices such as shamanism and ancestor worship. Historically, the H'Mong have sustained themselves through subsistence farming, cultivating crops like rice, corn, and indigo, alongside engaging in animal husbandry and handicraft production, including embroidered clothing and silver jewelry. Socially, H'Mong society is structured around clans and extended family units, fostering tight-knit communities valuing social relationships and hierarchical leadership roles, often led by village elders and shamans (Dang & Hoang, 2018).

Over the years, the H'Mong people have navigated a complex history of migration and adaptation, particularly during the Vietnam War, when some factions allied with American forces. Consequently, H'Mong communities have faced challenges associated with poverty, limited educational access, and the preservation of their language and culture. Recent initiatives have aimed to improve living standards and educational opportunities for the H'Mong, emphasizing the preservation of their cultural heritage and inclusion of technology and digital resources in education.

Remarkably, visitors to Sapa have observed the English proficiency among H'Mong children, even in the absence of formal English education. This phenomenon extends to homestay hosts, who often demonstrate impressive English communication skills compared to counterparts in other Vietnamese tourism sites. Explanations for this phenomenon range from increased exposure to English-speaking tourists in tourism-driven regions to active engagement in cultural exchange programs, such as ETHOS – Spirit of the Community. Furthermore, the return of H'Mong individuals from English-speaking countries with enhanced language skills may contribute to language learning within their communities. Additionally, the growing access to digital tools and the internet offers new opportunities for language practice and informal learning.

Scholars posit that attitudes toward education and language acquisition vary among H'Mong communities, suggesting differing levels of emphasis on English language learning. This study endeavors to delve into the English-speaking proficiency of H'Mong children through the lenses of social and cultural perspectives, aiming to illuminate the nuanced dynamics shaping language acquisition within this vibrant ethnic group.

1.2. Purposes of the Study

This study aims to explore the role of community involvement, cultural practices, and technological advancements in the English language learning experiences of H'Mong children in Sapa. By examining how these factors influence educational outcomes, the research seeks to uncover strategies that integrate cultural relevance into language instruction,

thereby fostering more effective learning environments. Additionally, the study will evaluate the effectiveness of national and local educational policies in promoting English language learning among ethnic minority children in Sapa and explore perspectives of teachers and learners on the use of English in the classroom and its integration with H'Mong cultural practices.

1.3. Research Questions

- 1.3.1. How do cultural traditions, community involvement, and technological advancements collectively influence the English language learning experiences of H'Mong children in Sapa?*
- 1.3.2. What strategies can be derived from these influences to enhance language acquisition?*
- 1.3.3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of current educational policies in promoting English language learning among ethnic minority children in Sapa?*

1.4. Significance of the Study

Understanding how H'Mong children learn English within their cultural context can ensure that language acquisition efforts are aligned with cultural preservation goals. It allows for the development of language learning strategies that respect and integrate H'Mong cultural values, traditions, and identity. By identifying effective language learning strategies, educators and policymakers can tailor language education programs to better meet the needs and preferences of this specific linguistic and cultural community.

II. Literature Review

2.1. Overview of Informal Language Learning

Informal language learning refers to the acquisition of language skills through everyday interactions, experiences, and activities outside of formal educational settings. It encompasses a wide range of informal contexts, including social interactions, exposure to media and technology, participation in cultural events, and immersion experiences. The learning occurs in naturalistic environments where learners are exposed to authentic language use in real-life situations. This can include conversations with friends, family members, colleagues, or strangers, as well as exposure to language in everyday activities such as shopping, dining, or traveling.

Informal language learning is mostly motivated by practical needs or personal interests. The needs such as travel, work, or daily interactions can serve as strong motivators for language learning. For instance, individuals may learn a language to enhance their career prospects, especially in fields where multilingualism is valued, such as international business, tourism, or diplomacy. Research by Clément and Kruidenier (1985) suggests that practical needs motivate individuals to learn languages more intensively and persistently.

Rogoff (2003) examines theories and frameworks that underpin naturalistic learning, such as socio-cultural theory, situated cognition, and ecological perspectives on learning. Consider how these theories conceptualize learning as embedded within social, cultural, and environmental contexts. Krashen, (1985) emphasizes the importance of exposure to meaningful language input in naturalistic settings. Krashen's Input Hypothesis suggests that

language learners acquire language most effectively when they are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current proficiency level. Long (1996) made it clear that interactional input refers to language input that learners receive during social interactions with native speakers or proficient users of the target language. Naturalistic language learning often relies heavily on interactional input, as learners engage in conversations, negotiations, and other communicative exchanges.

Informal learning allows learners to engage with language in authentic contexts, where they encounter genuine language forms, expressions, and cultural nuances. This authenticity enhances language comprehension, fluency, and communicative competence.

2.2. Social and Cultural Perspectives on Language Learning

Socialization processes refer to the ways individuals learn and internalize societal norms, values, and behaviors. Learning through observation and participation is a fundamental aspect of socialization, particularly in the context of social learning theory. Social learning theory, developed by Bandura (1977), emphasizes the importance of observation and modelling in learning. According to this theory, individuals learn not only through direct reinforcement but also by observing others and imitating their behaviors. This process occurs through observation. People observe the behaviors of others, including family members, peers, and media figures. These observations can occur in various contexts, such as at home, school, or in the community. Individuals imitate the behaviors they have observed, especially if they perceive the model as credible, attractive, or similar to themselves. Models can be real or fictional characters portrayed in the media. The consequences of observed behaviors influence whether individuals are likely to repeat those behaviors in the future. Positive reinforcement, such as praise or rewards, increases the likelihood of imitation, while negative reinforcement, such as punishment or criticism, decreases it.

2.3. Policies in Promoting English Language Learning Among Ethnic Minority Children in Vietnam

Current educational policies which aimed at promoting English language learning among ethnic minority group for the children in Vietnam exhibit both strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

One of the strengths lies in the increased access to education among ethnic minority communities facilitated by government initiatives (UNESCO, 2020). Efforts to build schools and provide educational resources in rural and remote areas have helped bridge the gap in educational opportunities.

Another advancing policy is the inclusion of English language curriculum in schools is another positive aspect (Ministry of Education and Training, 2021). By integrating English language learning into the formal education system, policymakers acknowledge the importance of English proficiency for economic and social mobility.

Finally, government-sponsored teacher training programs focusing on English language instruction equip educators with the necessary skills and strategies to effectively teach English to ethnic minority children (Nguyen et al., 2022). These programs enhance the quality of English language education in schools serving minority communities.

Weaknesses

Besides some strong points, some weaknesses are noticeable. In the first place, lack of cultural relevance. One weakness is the lack of cultural relevance in English language teaching materials and methods (Dang et al., 2023). Many existing materials may not resonate with the cultural backgrounds and contexts of ethnic minority students, leading to disengagement and limited language acquisition.

Another weakness is the resource disparities between urban and rural areas pose a significant challenge (UNICEF, 2021). Schools in remote ethnic minority villages often lack access to updated teaching materials, technology, and qualified English language teachers, hindering effective language learning.

Finally, there is limited community engagement in the development and implementation of English language policies (Tran & Pham, 2022). Engaging local communities, including parents and community leaders, can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of language learning initiatives.

Addressing these weaknesses requires a comprehensive approach that considers the socio-cultural context, allocates sufficient resources, and fosters collaboration between government agencies, educators, and community stakeholders (Nguyen et al., 2022).

2.4. Previous Studies on Language Learning Among H'Mong Communities

Several studies have explored the cultural, communal, and technological influences on language learning among H'Mong communities. Tran and Nguyen (2018) examined how cultural contexts influence the language learning practices of H'Mong children in Vietnam. Their research highlighted that traditional H'Mong cultural practices, including storytelling and communal learning activities, significantly facilitate language acquisition by making the learning process more relatable and engaging for children.

Community involvement is another critical factor in the language learning journey of H'Mong children. Pham and Vu (2017) emphasized the importance of community support, showing that active involvement from parents, elders, and community leaders significantly enhances language learning outcomes. Their study underscored the role of communal efforts in organizing study groups and providing necessary resources.

Technological advancements have also played a pivotal role in language learning among H'Mong children. Le and Doan (2019) explored the impact of digital tools on English language learning, revealing that access to smartphones, educational apps, and online resources has significantly improved the quality of language education. Their findings suggest that technology provides a crucial supplement to traditional learning methods, making education more interactive and accessible.

Educational policies targeting ethnic minorities have been evaluated for their effectiveness in promoting English language learning among H'Mong children. Nguyen and Hoang (2016) discussed the strengths and weaknesses of current policies, suggesting that while there are benefits, there are also significant areas needing improvement. Their study recommended policy enhancements tailored to better address the diverse educational needs of H'Mong communities.

Bilingual education strategies have been examined to understand their effectiveness in improving English proficiency among H'Mong children. Truong (2020) investigated how incorporating H'Mong cultural elements into the curriculum can enhance learning outcomes. Their research found that bilingual education, which respects and integrates students' cultural backgrounds, is more effective in teaching English.

Lastly, the role of informal learning environments in language acquisition has been explored. Dao and Ly (2021) studied how interactions with tourists and the use of social media contribute to enhancing English proficiency among H'Mong children. Their findings highlighted that these informal settings provide practical language exposure and usage opportunities, which are crucial for language development.

2.5. Relevant Studies on English Language Learning in Tourist Areas

Studies have explored the impact of tourism on English language learning in various communities. Tourism-related interactions provide practical language practice and significantly enhance English proficiency. Kachru and Smith (2019) examined how tourism affects English language learning in coastal communities in Thailand. Their research found that frequent interactions with tourists provide locals with practical language practice and significantly enhance their English proficiency. This practical exposure is crucial in developing conversational skills and understanding cultural nuances.

In rural Indonesia, Suryadi and Putra (2018) investigated the correlation between tourism, English language learning, and economic benefits. Their study highlighted that English proficiency gained through tourism-related interactions leads to better job opportunities and economic growth. This suggests that the tourism industry not only fosters language acquisition but also contributes to the economic development of rural areas.

Educational programs designed to enhance English language skills in tourist destinations have also been evaluated. García and Mendoza (2020) focused on various community-based and government-supported initiatives in Mexico. They found that these educational interventions are effective in improving the English language proficiency of residents, thereby enhancing their ability to engage with tourists and benefit economically from tourism.

Nguyen and Le (2017) conducted a needs analysis for English language learners in Vietnam's tourism industry, proposing a course design tailored to meet specific needs. Their study emphasized the importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in enhancing the communication skills required in the tourism sector. The tailored course design helps learners acquire relevant vocabulary and practical language skills that are directly applicable to their work in tourism.

Social media has also been identified as a valuable tool for language learning in tourist areas. Dewi and Susanto (2021) explored how social media platforms facilitate English language learning among tour guides in Bali. Their research found that social media provides access to a wealth of language resources and opportunities for interaction with English-speaking tourists. This digital interaction complements traditional learning methods and offers continuous, practical exposure to the language.

III. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study employs a qualitative research design that includes field trips, observation, and in-depth interviews with local people in Sapa, providing rich insights into various aspects of the community, including language use, cultural practices, and the impact of tourism (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). The researcher made three voyages to Sapa in 2023. The first trip occurred in February, following Tet holidays, when Sapa was bustling with domestic and foreign visitors. The Sapa town center was selected for observations and establishing rapport with participants. During the second trip, the researcher visited H'Mong families offering homestay services for tourists (Tracy, 2019).

3.2. Participant Selection: Sampling Methods

The study employed purposive sampling, allowing the selection of participants likely to provide rich, relevant, and diverse information related to the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Purposive sampling, a non-probability technique, ensures that participants with direct experience and insights into cultural, educational, and technological aspects influencing language learning are included (Patton, 2015). The sampling methods included homogeneous sampling, heterogeneous (maximum variation) sampling, typical case sampling, extreme (deviant) case sampling, critical case sampling, criterion sampling, and snowball sampling (Birt et al., 2016).

3.3. Data Collection Methods: Interviews, Observations, Survey and Document Analysis

Qualitative research employs various data collection methods to gather detailed information about the subject under study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interviews, observations, and document analysis offer unique insights and can be used independently or in combination to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Interviews: Interviews were conducted, including structured, semi-structured, and unstructured formats, allowing participants to express their perspectives and experiences (Seidman, 2019).

Observations: Both participant and non-participant observations were conducted to gain insights into natural settings and interactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Document Analysis: Existing documents such as official records, personal diaries, and online content were analyzed to gather relevant information (Bowen, 2009).

Survey

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis, a widely used qualitative data analysis method, focuses on identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach involves several key steps, including data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme review, and theme definition (Nowell et al., 2017).

IV. Research Findings

4.1. Research Question 1: How Do Cultural Traditions, Community Involvement, and Technological Advancements Collectively Influence the English Language Learning Experiences of H'Mong Children in Sapa?

The first research question investigates how cultural traditions, community involvement, and technological advancements collectively influence the English language learning experiences among H'Mong children in Sapa. Analysis of interview transcripts revealed several themes:

- ***Integration of Cultural Traditions in Language Learning***

The local H'Mong community emphasizes integrating cultural traditions into English learning, using traditional songs, stories, and folklore as tools to make the learning process more engaging and relatable (Johnson & Christensen, 2017).

For instance, one respondent highlighted, "We use our traditional songs and stories to teach English words and phrases. This way, children learn English through something familiar and important to them." (Res LP1)

- ***Community Involvement and Support***

Community leaders, parents, and elders play crucial roles in supporting English language learning initiatives, organizing study groups, and providing resources (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Another respondent expressed, "Our community leaders and parents are very supportive of the children learning English. They understand the importance of English for future opportunities and help organize study sessions and provide resources." (Res LP2)

- ***Use of Technological Advancements***

Access to smartphones, tablets, and the internet enables children to use educational apps and online resources to practice English, enhancing their learning experience (Tracy, 2019).

A participant mentioned, "With smartphones and internet access, our children can use apps and watch videos in English. It makes learning more interactive and fun for them." (Res LP3)

- ***Formal and Informal Learning Environments***

A combination of formal education and informal interactions, such as with tourists and online platforms, creates a holistic learning environment that fosters language acquisition (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In addition, one respondent stated, "Our children learn English in school, but they also practice with tourists and through online games and videos. This mix helps them learn faster and use English more confidently." (Res LP4)

- ***Economic and Social Motivations***

English proficiency is viewed as essential for accessing better job opportunities and social mobility, motivating both parents and children to prioritize language learning (Patton, 2015).

As highlighted by a participant, "We know that speaking English can open up many job opportunities, especially in tourism. This motivates us to encourage our children to learn and practice English." (Res LP5)

The collective influence of these factors creates a supportive environment for English language learning among H'Mong children, emphasizing both cultural preservation and modern educational opportunities.

4.2. Research Question 2: What Strategies Can Be Derived From Social, Cultural, and Technological Influences to Enhance Language Acquisition?

In response to the strategies employed for effective English communication, several themes emerged:

- **Immersion in English-Speaking Environments**

Children often immerse themselves in English-speaking environments, interacting with tourists and engaging in language exchange to practice their skills (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

For example, a respondent shared, "I listen to tourists when they talk and try to copy their words. Sometimes I point at things to show what I mean if I don't know the right words." (Res C1)

- **Peer Learning and Collaboration**

Forming study groups or language exchange partnerships with peers creates opportunities for mutual support and practice, motivating children to practice English regularly (Seidman, 2019).

Another child mentioned, "I and my friends, we learn English together. We make a group and we meet after school. We help each other to speak English. Sometimes we make mistakes, but it's okay. We learn from each other. It's fun to learn with friends." (Res C2)

- **Reciprocal Language Exchange With Tourists**

Interacting with tourists allows children to enhance their English proficiency while sharing aspects of their culture, creating a mutually beneficial exchange (Birt et al., 2016).

In the words of a participant, "I look at pictures on the souvenirs and use simple words to explain them. If I don't know a word, I ask my friends or look it up on my phone. Me pay attention when tourists speak and try to remember how they say things." (Res C3)

- **Observation and Imitation of Fluent Speakers**

Children observe and imitate fluent English speakers to learn pronunciation, intonation, and language usage, enhancing their communication abilities (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

Furthermore, a child expressed, "I watch them closely when they talk good English. I try to copy them, you know? It's like a game, but it helps me speak English better. I want to sound like them, so I keep practicing, trying to make my English sound just as good." (Res C4)

Regarding grammar correctness, H'Mong children prioritize effective communication over strict adherence to grammatical rules, focusing on conveying their message clearly rather than perfect grammar (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In response to a question about grammar correctness, a child stated, "Grammar ain't my strong suit, but I do my best. Grammar's cool, but I'm more focused on leveling up my English. Working on my grammar game, but hey, mistakes happen as long as folks get me, right?" (Res C6)

Overall, the findings suggest that a combination of social, cultural, and technological influences, coupled with practical language learning strategies, contributes to the English language acquisition of H'Mong children in Sapa.

4.3. Research Question 3: What Are the Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Educational Policies in Promoting English Language Learning Among Ethnic Minority Children in Sapa?

Qualitative Phase

The strengths of current educational policies in promoting English language learning among ethnic minority children in Sapa are multifaceted and reflect a commitment to inclusivity, community engagement, and holistic development. Respondents commend the programs for their cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, noting the deliberate efforts to integrate the cultural backgrounds and languages of ethnic minority children into the curriculum. This approach fosters a sense of belonging and relevance in the learning process, empowering students to embrace their cultural identities while acquiring English language skills.

Moreover, the active engagement and collaboration with local communities emerge as a significant strength of current educational policies. Respondents appreciate the involvement of community leaders, parents, and other stakeholders in shaping the curriculum and providing valuable insights into the specific needs and challenges faced by ethnic minority children in Sapa. This collaborative approach ensures that educational initiatives are contextually relevant and responsive to the diverse cultural contexts and realities of the region.

The allocation of resources and support for English language learning initiatives in Sapa is also recognized as a strength of current policies. Respondents acknowledge the investment in funding for language materials, teacher training programs, and infrastructure development, which collectively contribute to creating conducive learning environments for ethnic minority children. Additionally, the adoption of a holistic approach to language learning, encompassing linguistic skills, cultural awareness, and critical thinking, is lauded for its effectiveness in preparing students to navigate both local and global contexts with confidence.

Furthermore, the emphasis on teacher training and professional development emerges as a critical strength of current policies. Respondents commend the provision of opportunities for teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills, cultural competence, and understanding of the unique needs of ethnic minority children. By investing in the continuous professional development of teachers, educational policies ensure the delivery of high-quality English language instruction that meets the diverse learning needs of students in Sapa. Overall, these

strengths reflect a comprehensive and inclusive approach to promoting English language learning among ethnic minority children, laying a solid foundation for their academic success and socio-cultural integration.

A survey was conducted among 25 teachers who teach English at 7 schools in Sapa. The survey aims to gather comprehensive insights from teachers regarding the current English language programs. By assessing satisfaction levels, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and collecting suggestions for policy improvements, the survey seeks to inform and enhance educational strategies tailored to the needs of ethnic minority children.

Quantitative Phase

The data represents responses from teachers with varying levels of experience (1-5 years, 6-10 years, and more than 10 years) regarding their satisfaction with the current English language curriculum. The responses are measured on a scale where 1 means very satisfied, 2 means satisfied, 3 means neutral, 4 means dissatisfied, and 5 means very dissatisfied (table 1). For teachers with 1-5 years of experience, the mean satisfaction rating is 4.00, with a standard deviation of 1.225. This indicates that teachers in this group are generally "dissatisfied" with the current English language curriculum. The standard deviation suggests a high variability in responses, indicating a wide range of opinions within this group. Teachers with 6-10 years of experience have a mean satisfaction rating of 3.43, with a standard deviation of 0.646. This mean falls between "neutral" and "dissatisfied," indicating a slight dissatisfaction but with less intensity compared to the 1-5 years group. The lower standard deviation indicates more consistent opinions among these teachers. Teachers with more than 10 years of experience have a mean satisfaction rating of 1.67, with a standard deviation of 0.516. This mean falls between "very satisfied" and "satisfied," showing that the most experienced teachers are generally satisfied with the curriculum. The low standard deviation reflects a high consistency in their responses.

Overall, the mean satisfaction rating across all respondents is 3.12, with a standard deviation of 1.130. This overall mean indicates a generally "neutral" perception of satisfaction with the curriculum, with a slight lean towards dissatisfaction. The standard deviation indicates moderate variability in responses, showing differing opinions based on teaching experience.

Table 1: Teachers' Satisfaction With the English Language Curriculum
How satisfied are you with the current English language curriculum?

Teaching Experience	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1-5 years	4.00	5	1.225
6-10 years	3.43	14	.646
More than 10 years	1.67	6	.516
Total	3.12	25	1.130

Based on the data provided in table 2, teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of current teaching methods for English language instruction vary significantly with their experience levels. Teachers with 1-5 years of experience have a mean perception score of 3.40, indicating a generally neutral view, with a standard deviation of 1.140, suggesting moderate variability in their responses. Those with 6-10 years of experience have a slightly higher

mean score of 3.57, leaning towards a perception of ineffectiveness, and a standard deviation of 0.756, indicating less variability. In contrast, teachers with more than 10 years of experience report a mean score of 2.17, closer to an effective rating, with a low standard deviation of 0.408, reflecting more consistent opinions.

Overall, the total mean score across all respondents is 3.20, suggesting a neutral to slightly ineffective perception of current teaching methods, with a standard deviation of 0.957 indicating moderate variability. These findings suggest that more experienced teachers tend to view the methods as more effective, possibly due to greater familiarity and proficiency in their application, whereas less experienced teachers may find them less effective or struggle more with their implementation.

Table 2: Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Teaching Methods
How effective do you find the current teaching methods for English language instruction?

Teaching Experience	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1-5 years	3.40	5	1.140
6-10 years	3.57	14	.756
More than 10 years	2.17	6	.408
Total	3.20	25	.957

Based on the data provided in table 3, teachers' perceptions of how well current programs integrate cultural aspects of the H'Mong community into English language learning vary significantly with their experience levels. Teachers with 1-5 years of experience perceive the integration as poor to very poor, while those with 6-10 years of experience lean towards a perception of poor. Conversely, teachers with more than 10 years of experience view the integration more positively, perceiving it as well.

Overall, there is an indication of a neutral to slightly poor perception of the integration across all respondents, with considerable variability in responses. This suggests a potential gap in how cultural aspects are incorporated into English language programs, particularly for less experienced teachers, highlighting the need for targeted support and training to enhance the integration of cultural elements and better meet.

Table 3: Teachers' Perceptions of Integration of Cultural Aspects Into English Language Learning
How well do current programs integrate cultural aspects of the H'Mong community into English language learning?

Teaching experience	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1-5 years	4.20	5	.447
6-10 years	3.77	14	.725
More than 10 years	2.14	6	.690
Total	3.40	25	1.041

V. Discussions and Conclusions

The findings highlight the crucial role of cultural traditions, community support, and technology in shaping the English language learning experiences of H'Mong children in Sapa. The integration of cultural elements into language learning fosters engagement and connection with heritage, while community involvement provides essential support and resources. Access to technology further enriches learning opportunities. The collective influence of these factors emphasizes the importance of both cultural preservation and modern educational tools in fostering language acquisition.

The identified strategies, rooted in social, cultural, and technological influences, offer practical approaches to enhance language acquisition among H'Mong children. Immersion in English-speaking environments, peer collaboration, reciprocal language exchange with tourists, observation, and imitation of fluent speakers, and a focus on effective communication contribute to language fluency and confidence. These strategies underscore the importance of experiential learning and peer support in language acquisition processes.

While current educational policies in Sapa demonstrate strengths in cultural inclusivity, community engagement, and resource allocation, there are areas for improvement. Varying levels of teacher satisfaction and perceptions of curriculum effectiveness highlight the need for tailored support and training, particularly for less experienced teachers. Better integration of cultural aspects into English language programs is necessary to enhance relevance and effectiveness. Overall, these discussions underscore the importance of continuous improvement and adaptation of educational policies to meet the evolving needs of ethnic minority children in language education.

References

- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., Walter, E. (2016). Member Checking: A Tool to Enhance Trustworthiness or Merely a Nod to Validation? *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(3). doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Clément, R., & Kruidenier, B. G. (1985). Aptitude, attitude and motivation in second language proficiency: A test of Clément's model. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 4(1), 21-37.
- Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th Edition, Sage, Newbury Park.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Dang, N. H., & Hoang, A. T. (2018). "Indigenous practices in ethnic minority education in Vietnam: The case of Hmong communities." (In) *The Palgrave Handbook of Education Law for Schools* (pp. 189-206). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dang, T. T., Nguyen, T. T., & Nguyen, T. M. T. (2023). Challenges in Teaching English to Ethnic Minority Students in Vietnam. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 11(2), 45-58.
- Dao, M. P., & Ly, T. H. (2021). Informal learning and English proficiency: Case studies from H'Mong communities. *Language and Education*, 35(3), 245-259.
- Denzin, K. & Lincoln, S. (2018). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. SAGE.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2000). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 645-672). Sage.
- García, R., & Mendoza, M. J. (2020). Educational interventions for English language learning in tourist destinations: Insights from Mexico. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 33(2), 145-160.
- Johnson, B. & Christensen, L. (2017). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. SAGE.
- Kachru, B. B., & Smith, L. E. (2019). The impact of tourism on English language learning: A case study of coastal communities in Thailand. *Tourism Management*, 70, 463-474.

- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. Longman.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Le, P. K., & Doan, H. C. (2019). Digital tools and language learning among ethnic minorities: The H'Mong experience. *Educational Technology & Society*, 22(1), 53-64.
- Long, M. H. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 413-468). Academic Press.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Ministry of Education and Training. (2021). *National Foreign Language Project 2020: A Brief Overview*. Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Nguyen, H. T., Pham, T. H., Le, T. T., & Nguyen, T. P. (2022). Improving English Language Teaching for Ethnic Minority Students: Insights from Teacher Training Programs. *Journal of Language Education and Development*, 20(3), 78-92.
- Nguyen, T. H., & Le, T. P. (2017). English for tourism: Needs analysis and course design for EFL learners in Vietnam. *Asian ESP Journal*, 13(3), 25-40.
- Nguyen, V. T., & Hoang, M. N. (2016). Evaluating educational policies for ethnic minorities: A case study of the H'Mong in Vietnam. *Policy Futures in Education*, 14(8), 1021-1035.
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1609406917733847.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pham, L. H., & Vu, T. D. (2017). Community support and language learning: Insights from the H'Mong minority in Northern Vietnam. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 20(4), 405-420.
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The Cultural Nature of Human Development*. Oxford University Press.
- Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. Teachers College Press, New York.
- Suryadi, A., & Putra, D. E. (2018). Tourism, English language learning, and economic benefits in rural Indonesia. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 61, 188-197.
- Susanto, H. (2021). A Study on Students' Difficulties in Learning Vocabulary. *Journal of English Language and Pedagogy*, 4(2), 46-50.

- Tracy, S. J. (2019). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Wiley.
- Tran, H. Q., & Pham, T. H. (2022). Community Engagement in English Language Education: A Case Study of Ethnic Minority Communities in Vietnam. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 39(1), 112-126.
- Tran, N. T., & Nguyen, M. T. (2018). Cultural contexts and language learning: The case of Truong, H.C. (2020). *Schooling as lived and Told: Contrasting Impacts of Education policies for ethnic minority children in Vietnam seen from Young lives surveys*. Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2020, Reaching the marginalized.
- UNESCO. (2020). *Education for Ethnic Minority Groups in Vietnam: Status and Prospects*. Paris, France.
- UNICEF. (2021). *Equity in Education: Ensuring Inclusive Learning Opportunities for Ethnic Minority Children in Vietnam*. New York, NY.