

Analyzing Capital to be Developed In Language Learning Among Graduates: A Case Study to Employ Bourdieusian Stances

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Abstract: Language and culture are indispensably inseparable in language learning. The development of capital during language learning is of growing importance in Vietnam's sociocultural context. However, there are very few studies that have explored Vietnamese learners of English use of capital to enhance their employability skills. This qualitative study examined five selected language learners who were graduates with various degrees from higher education institutions and were employed in different jobs. We sought to examine the reflections of participants from different disciplines regarding their capital construction and development, which occurred during English language learning. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1986) stances on *capital* and *field*, data collection primarily concentrated on semi-structured interviews that were thematically analyzed. Findings suggested that students utilized various forms of learning in order to negotiate their capital and think that *field* acts as a driver force behind their use of certain strategies. Language learners were observed as cultural-beings able to make informed decisions on how to develop certain types of capital, based on their sense of agency and formation of multiple identities available in their academic, professional, and social fields. The findings are discussed and implications are presented.

Keywords: Bourdieusian stances, capital, English as a foreign language, learning forms, Vietnamese higher education.

Globalization allows workers and students to choose any destination to develop academically and professionally. The growing number of multilingual English speakers has incentivized the shift to English language learning to adopt a higher level of communication in diverse settings. Additionally, how to use language code, or in other terms, lexical resources and grammatical knowledge appears to be not sufficient in the learning settings, where the learners have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. That is, with mere focus on native-speaker competence, it is quite certain that English learners cannot use English effectively while they are involved in communication with a variety of multilingual users of English (Rehm & Notten, 2016). In fact, English language learning does not require learners to access the target language and culture to let learners' backgrounds influence their learning of English (Canagarajah, 2007). It is also supported that due to the widely recognized status of English as a *lingua franca*, multicultural and multilingual norms have replaced monocultural and monolingual norms to sustain their ideologies and identities (Jenkins, 2009).

In line with the impacts of pluralization, modernization, and globalization, the goals of education in higher education are critical to equipping students with competencies so that they are employable. Within the context of Vietnam, this study aims to explore the practices that Vietnamese learners of English use to successfully develop capital, which ultimately decides their employment prospects. Data were primarily collected through interviews and email

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exchanges. This study is a positive contribution to the existing literature (such as Islam, 2018; Song, 2018; Vu et al., in press; Xiong & Yuan, 2018), which has yet to explore capital-invested English language learning in Vietnamese higher education. A case study examined how Vietnamese students take advantage of capital growth as a result of their engagement in various types of learning, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning (OECD, 2005). Formal learning occurs in educational institutions where students seek degrees or individual courses that provide awards or certificates. However, non-formal learning does not result in formal qualification or evaluation. Lastly, informal learning is exclusively connected to daily work, family or leisure activities (OECD, 2005).

Drawing on Bourdieusian *capital* and *field* stances, this study contributes that Vietnamese learners of English benefit from building a strong foundation that is a competitive advantage for different personal, academic, and professional purposes. Also, this study challenges the argument that Vietnamese learners are passive recipients of knowledge and insufficiently enact their capital because they exercise a certain level of agency and identity. Therefore, this study seems to be offering practical insight regarding intercultural learning for English language learners to gain intercultural competence that they can employ to engage in meaning-making and communicative success in different sociocultural contexts (Göbel & Helmke, 2010). The current research study, which will be outlined following a literature review, offers an understanding about the relationship between culture and language in language learning, as well as English Language Teaching in Vietnam. Results will then be discussed and implications will be presented based on the reviewed literature and current findings.

Language Learning in Vietnam

The Asia-Pacific Region of Vietnam is contextualized in an area of globalization concerned with using English to promote the country's international collaboration and economic growth (Nunan, 2003). With the Ministry of Education and Training proposal in Vietnam, requiring the inclusion of English classes to help Vietnamese students learn English and communicate effectively in multilingual and multicultural environments, it is common that language learning is combined with cultural learning to help learners communicate effectively and appropriately in various contexts (Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat et al., 1999). Concerning English language education in Vietnam, communication competence has been a common main goal, which Canale and Swain (1981) referred to three core components to help English learners obtain grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. According to Canale and Swain (1981), grammatical competence focuses on providing language learners with the linguistic code (e.g. lexical items, word forms, grammar rules, and lexical meanings) which together generate full sentences. Secondly, sociolinguistic competence describes knowledge of the sociocultural rules that influence their formation of language. Thirdly, strategic competence is the employment of suitable strategies to achieve communicative goals.

Language learning in Vietnam, despite its necessity, has primarily involved grammar development under the philosophical model that promotes the language use of native speakers. In this case, due to the absence of speakers who are able to analyze language use according to specific cultural contexts (Kramsch, 1993), speakers are incapable of appropriately facilitating their communication in particular communities (Hymes, 1986). Thus, cultural competence is a required component to accomplish success in this area. There are a great number of benefits associated with frequent interactions with those in communities with many non-native English speakers. Therefore, the facilitation of cultural learning should be taken into account. Paige and Stringer (1997) suggested that to learn about culture effectively, learners should be expected to learn "about the self as a cultural being," "about culture and its impact on human language,

behavior, and identity,” “culture-general meaning” as universally common culture, “culture-specific learning” as a certain language/culture that takes place, and “how to learn about language and culture.” In line with what culture needs to be learned, Paige et al. (1999, 2003) and Paige and Goode (2009) suggested strategies to encourage learners to inform their *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation*. More importantly, the inclusion of cultural competence in language learning (e.g. Porto, 2010; Rehm & Notten, 2016; Risager, 2011), together with language competence, is an empowering means to develop learners’ intercultural sensitivity, and thus intercultural competence (Göbel & Helmke, 2010; Hammer et al., 2003; Martirosyan et al., 2015; Vu & Dinh, 2021).

Bourdieuian Stances on Capital, Field

In this paper, we adopted Bourdieu’s stances on capital, field, and habitus to frame our analysis. Bourdieu (1986) referred to capital as “its objectified or embodied forms, tak[ing] time to accumulate [and] a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form” (pp. 241-242). The current research investigates how Vietnamese learners of English at higher education institutions are engaged in various forms of learning in different learning contexts to develop capital as a support to their current employment. This study highlights English learners as cultural beings who have varying backgrounds in terms of familial, academic, and social engagement. Culture is a critical dimension to understand how social acts are constructed and why people behave in certain ways. To explain how capital emerges and develops differently due to the influential backgrounds above, Bourdieuian stances suggest that *capital* is developed as a result of language learning and *field* as influential social structures.

- **Economic capital** describes someone’s financial wealth which is “immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243);
- **Cultural capital** is connected to someone’s academic credentials and involves experiences that are advantageous to their social standings wherever they live. Cultural capital consists of three sub-forms, including *objectified cultural capital* representing someone’s legal ownership or property which can be transferred to others to yield profit. The second, *incorporated cultural capital*, is knowledge bases, linguistic competencies, and skills to be enriched over a period of time, which are passed over generations. The third, *institutionalized cultural capital*, is similar to the incorporated sub-form but well-regarded (Bourdieu, 1986);
- **Social capital** comprises an aggregation of social networks where someone lives or works. In other words, social benefits that they gain from their memberships in certain groups (Bourdieu, 1986);
- **Symbolic capital** refers to “a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 291), which serves other capital to be recognized as legitimate;
- **Field**, a social field or a field of various forces, is a central understanding of capital in relation to places where the capital is developed (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992);

This study examines patterns of how language competencies serve as enablers or constraints to condition learners to develop capital, according to their cultural backgrounds and intentions. Such patterns are largely missing in the current literature despite increasingly popular empirical studies in other countries, like China (Xiong & Yuan, 2018), South Korea (Song, 2018), and Pakistan (Islam, 2018) and in Vietnam (Truong & Tran, 2015; Vu & Dinh, 2021;

Vu & Do, 2021). From those prior works, those researchers shared their findings based on the fact that English language learning in Asia in general has been very limited to Standard English and inclusively centered on the needs of linguistic functions and sentence formation, meaning that culture was little-to-no included in their teaching and learning contents inside and outside the classroom contexts. This, therefore, reinforced the English learners' sense of disempowerment and marginalization when it comes to estimated benefits of English learning for their communicative or, more broadly, intercultural communicative competence. As previously stated, Vietnamese learners of English are seen as cultural beings engaged in different fields where they can utilize the resources necessary to acquire cultural and language competence (Vu & Dinh, 2021; Vu & Do, 2021). Learning contexts are deemed as important conditions where each field functions based on a set of public rules and informed expectations. As Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) noted, "each field simultaneously presupposes and generates a specific form of interest incommensurable with those that have currency elsewhere" (p. 177). Having said that, it is sought to analyze the field patterns (formal, informal, and non-formal) where English learning happens and learners develop capital used to enter and sustain workplace positions. To fill the gaps of literature on how Vietnamese learners of English were able to develop their capital sources in many forms of learning and how those sources of capital were likely to be shaped in a mutual manner, this research goes to answer the research question:

How would capital be able to be developed among Vietnamese learners in different forms of English language learning?

The Study

This case study involved five language learners who graduated from higher education institutions from various academic disciplines in Southern Vietnam. Aligned with the ideal sample size for qualitative research by Duff (2008), five participants were drawn from a group of 15 students who reported interest to participate in the research project through invitational calls on social networking sites and through personal connections. The researcher used various techniques and considered participants' educational backgrounds, years of English learning experience, level of language proficiency, and willingness to engage in the expected number of interviews for the project. The communication with participants was very important to inform them about the research purpose, agenda, and conflicts to be resolved.

In response to the national shift to a market-oriented economy and globalized sociocultural context, this research examines how five Vietnamese learners of English developed capital transferrable to employability skills supportive of their professional careers. All five participants had been graduates for less than three years and held language proficiency ranging from intermediate to advanced levels. Data collection was primarily conducted with narrative semi-structured interviews, which included available and follow-up questions between April to June, 2020. The interviewer and interviewees did not know each other prior to the research study. Therefore, the interview involved three explored aspects: (i) English-learning experience, (ii) professional work (environment), and (iii) benefits of language competence for professional careers. Five participants were interviewed at their preferred location and time, at least 2 times (1 to 1.5 hours each). The two interviews allowed me to confirm my on-going understanding of the participants concerning my research purposes, and discover what has not been found between the first and second interview. The interviews in L1 – Vietnamese – concerning outcomes (Zhao et al., 2010) were digitally recorded and transcribed and then translated into English for the purpose of presenting quotes. Participants' real names were replaced by pseudonyms, with their demographic information displayed in Table 1. The

particular use of quotes drawn from the one-by-one interviews were used in this study with the agreement of my participants in terms of accuracy and sensitivity.

Before the coding process via N-Vivo, analysis of data was facilitated following deductive and thematic analysis approaches (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Guest et al., 2012), and under the stances of Bourdieu's terms of *capital* and *field*. Bourdieu's stances were specifically used to understand how economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital are developed and reciprocally influenced. Also, why various forms of capital are seen differently among the five participants. This methodology effectively equipped the researcher with the ability to manage an enormous amount of data and discover any trends, particularly allowing the possibility to quantify the frequency of key words and occurring themes. The research findings were completely informed in relation to the literature review, which was previously discussed (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Table 1
Participants' Demographic Information

Information	Participant				
	An	Binh	Chau	Duc	Em
Age	25	24	23	23	24
Years of English learning	14	12	11	12	12
Language proficiency	Advanced	Intermediate-Advanced	Intermediate-Advanced	Advanced	Advanced
Occupation	Data analyst	Teaching Assistant of English	Financial controller	Teacher of English	Translator
Major	Engineering	Medicine	Finance & Economics	English Language Teaching	Translating and Intepreting
Qualifications	Bachelor	Master	Master	Master	Bachelor

Findings and Discussion

Economic Capital

All participants reflected on the influence of ELC (English language competence) on their acquisition of economic capital. In this study, there are two specific components in relation to economic capital, such as access to employment opportunities and professional development activities. Five interviewees stated they agreed that ELC provided them with a more competitive advantage than those without adequate ELC. Firstly, the acquisition of economic capital appears attributable to the high levels of language proficiency shown in two graduates. Regardless of their academic major, being competent users of the English language can increase graduates' chances of receiving job offers in various fields, including domestic or multinational enterprises. Employers are attentive to English speakers in the world of competitive business (Islam, 2018; Koyama & Bialostok, 2015; Song, 2018; Xiong & Yuan, 2018).

I self-studied, had strenuous support from peers, and achieved TOEIC 880, recognized as a good command of English speaking abilities. This advantage enabled me to communicate with the employers very well in multiple thorough interviews in a hiring campaign for fresh

engineering graduates to be trained as future leaders in the technical field. I thought of the convincing communication that I made in order to persuade the recruiters to consider me as a qualified candidate. I finally received a job offer, with an overwhelming salary and benefit package (An);

After I graduated, I chose a career as a freelance translator. I contracted with a number of Vietnamese firms which give me advantageous pay (Em);

In addition, holding English certificates potentially allows new graduates to receive financial support for expensive professional experiences to promote their international and intercultural exposure (Martirosyan et al., 2015; Vu & Dinh, 2021; Vu & Do, 2021). In this regard, findings are clear surrounding recent graduates qualified to apply for short-term programs. Graduates may proceed to job commencement, or alternatively, be sent overseas for professional training to develop job-specific knowledge and skills, domestically and internationally.

I was selected as a recipient of the award that covers travel and program fees to attend a periodic event organized by Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) in a foreign country. To apply for a program, language proficiency is a required component, asking us to submit a certificate or any document which can explain our level of language (Binh);

My English-major degree was a good chance to help me not only become a newly recruited teacher in an Australian high school. The school even sent me abroad to have a 6-month training course while I was fully paid (Duc);

It is equally important that graduates possess sufficient language proficiency implying their great chance to foster their study abroad in an economical manner (Martirosyan et al., 2015). An interviewee expressed the prestige associated with being awarded a scholarship by their graduate school with a certain amount of paid tuition, provided that certain eligibility requirements for admission were met before the scholarship was taken into consideration.

I got an admission letter from a graduate school in England, with 50% of waived Master's course fees. Admissions requested that applicants should have an IELTS score of, or equivalent to, a minimum of 7.0. It helped me a lot to overcome financial hardships (Chau);

Cultural Capital

Language and culture are inseparable components in the teaching of second or foreign languages (Kramsch, 1993). Thus, language teaching and learning are likely to go hand in hand with culture. It is noted that teaching and learning English should consist of the target language/culture, the language/culture of those involved, and the broader world that influences the language use of English users. Cultural capital embodies both culture-general and culture-specific language use in the major-related field and sociocultural context (Paige & Stringer, 1997; Paige et al., 2003). Both types of culture are important in light of various forms of

learning which will be criticized below, but limited to the detrimental effects of their effectiveness of language comprehension and production. In other words, it can be said that context is critical, as context determines the appropriate language use among speakers, and is influenced by their lived experiences. Thus, language use in specific contexts helps speakers to understand how culture impacts speakers' cognition, affection, and behavior in both written and spoken forms (Bourdieu, 1986). Communication regularly involves people who possess diverse backgrounds and expect different communicative purposes (Liddicoat et al., 1999). Therefore, there are several components that cover the meaning of language, involving not only the literal meaning of verbal or non-verbal components, but also the contextual conditions or constraints that support an exploration of social and cultural meaning. The participants below seem to have employed a variety of alternative ways to learn and improve their English language in sociocultural settings where culture plays an indispensable role. In the following section, the three primary forms of formal, informal, and non-formal learning that guide the promotion of cultural capital are presented.

Formal Learning. Provided that learning occurs in a formal learning environment, recent graduates were exposed to various courses. In the following quotes, graduates describe courses required in the English major (e.g., Linguistic and Cultural studies) or other supporting classes for the non-English major (e.g., General English; English for Academic or Professional Purposes) which count towards their degree. Bourdieu (1986) defined such classes as institutionalized cultural capital.

I spent a total of four years in a degree program, in which English was primarily used in the final three years. My major was English language teaching, requiring us to study both applied linguistics and British/American cultures in a variety of subjects. Other than that, I learned about my home country and its culture in a course of Vietnamese studies, which gave me a lot of interesting insights into how I could acquire the skills to communicate effectively in various cultural contexts (Duc);

I found it useful to be in English courses that significantly supported my academic major. Although they were bilingually instructed, I was provided with useful knowledge of not only academic words used in my field but also general daily communication (An);

Unfortunately, a majority of interviewed graduates reported that formal learning was not a contribution to their democratic discourses in which they were free to express their ideas. Despite their belief that instructors provided them with sufficient room to state their arguments, there appeared to be little room to access innovative learning and immersion into inclusive instruction due to heavy emphasis on knowledge lecturing and stressful assessments.

I am reflective of my learning experience which was heavily influenced by the Vietnamese rooted culture of order and obedience between instructors and students. I seemingly knew that my instructor gave us a lot of time to discuss with each other and express ideas in front of peers, but I suspected that it was done for very little impact as instructors needed to be committed to the school's established goals and no autonomy to be given (An);

Non-formal Learning. In contrast with formal learning, graduates' participation in non-formal learning led them to think in a democratic way as they organized their activities, which influenced their learning experience. In this study, these activities enhanced their foreign language use. When in a non-formal and stress-free learning environment, participants described increased personal motivation which contributed to employment prospects. Out of five participants, four graduated from public schools and two graduated from private schools. It was shown that the latter was better able to facilitate students' non-formal learning and cared about their students' employability to improve their institution's reputation and attract future students. Findings suggest that in addition to instructors' effort to promote democratic learning, graduates from private schools managed to disrupt traditional learning methods to foster students' curiosity, critical thinking, and civil engagement.

Alternatively, it was reported that graduates were increasingly capable of using English as a foreign language with the help of non-formal learning (such as student clubs, such as student union associations, foreign language speaking clubs, major-related clubs and departmental clubs), which likely took place on and off campus. While formal learning may cause some frustration due to less room to practice (e.g., speaking and writing), graduates reported immense attention paid to other learning zones, such as extra-curricular activities. Additional learning spaces provide additional chances to use and develop language use, hence profoundly constructing their employability (Tran, 2019).

There was an English speaking club which was co-hosted by the English and my departments. The activities were held bi-weekly in each semester. Initially, I joined as a member and as an organizing team. I had lots of practice with friends in English, especially building a lot of interesting content to engage other students living on campus to enhance their language use. I was proud of developing myself and others as leaders of a university club which was then a good component to write in my resume (Binh);

I was an active member of a student-led organization (Association internationale des étudiants en Sciences économiques et commerciales - the international student-run organization) where a primary means of communication was led in English. I was intrigued to increase my level of language, especially given that I needed to do interviews with foreign students who wished to work in Vietnam as interns. I particularly sought room to enrich my capabilities in all skills so that I could also read and write in plain English and read English-written documents (Chau);

A noteworthy observation is that non-formal learning, which involves intercultural exploration, may enrich graduates' formal learning skills, cognitively, physically, and culturally (Bolten, 1993). Participants reflected that they would be interested in empowering others on grounds of their own competence. Therefore, it is essential to pinpoint that exposure to English as a foreign language via non-formal learning contributes to attitudinal growth. Respect and open-mindedness towards cultural differences could be a positive outcome, enabling learners to minimize their biased perspectives and more actively sympathize with cultural distinctions to respond effectively to cross-cultural and intercultural communication (Bennett et al., 1999).

I developed my skills to work very effectively with other people. I employed this enriched skill in order to impact other classmates while we worked on projects in some English subjects. I managed to plan and assign work to people based on strengths and weaknesses. It was empowering that people recognized me as a good learner of English and have enough level of English to bolster shared outcomes (Chau); I appeared to become more confident, especially when I started to listen more to what people say. I elaborated on how people from an English major in a team tried to simplify their language in order to inspire others of lower level to speak. I learned that I did not need to use English in a complicated way, rather I used a simple one to ease my feelings (Em).

Thanks to engagement in non-formal learning, graduates were increasingly able to construe their acceptance of others' perspectives who have different cultural backgrounds (Bennett, 2004). In regards to attitudinal growth mentioned in the previous paragraph, it is indicated that one respondent translated behavioral growth from their non-formal experience to strengthen their skills in formal (academic) learning (Crozet, 1995; Liddicoat et al., 1997; Paige et al., 1999).

I tended to be careful with language use, which cannot upset ones who had difficulties in language proficiency when we were required to speak English (Em);

It is substantial that non-formal learning directly places graduates in communities where different cultures exist. Domestic or international friends in intercultural communities give people second-to-none opportunities to address their initial anxiety. Anxiety is common in the event of communication between culturally and linguistically diverse speakers (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Learners are encouraged to consider the diversity, inclusion, and privilege of speakers who raise ideas, discussion points, and make decisions. Engagements within these communities are labeled as authentic promotion that language and culture are inseparable (Kirkpatrick, 2000). Hence, learners' choices to learn English non-formally are very helpful to increase motivation and innovative thinking. Given that learners live in others' worlds, reciprocal learning is of utmost significance.

Informal Learning. Fostering improved foreign language proficiency can be attributable to frequent participation in informal learning. By virtue of the Internet serving as a rich source to support cultural comprehension and intercultural competence (Collembet-Sankey, 1997; Harner et al., 2015; Vu & Dinh, 2021; Vu & Do, 2021), inevitably learners were more engaged in an assortment of free-of-charge materials. Such resources can help students learn at their convenience in terms of time and level. Compared to the authenticity of non-formal learning to motivate the development of language competence (Crozet, 1995; Kramsch, 1993), informal learning refers to authentic materials in the form of cultural artifacts (e.g., texts, images, talks, or videos). To their advantage, graduates not only chose the available time which fit their schedule, they freely selected materials aligned with their current level and practice. Four out of five participants shared that they utilized Youtube channels which layed a reliable foundation to access learning materials designed by writers using different varieties of English. The globalized English-speaking environment incentivized familiarity with, interest in, and curiosity about, different accents the presentation of ideas impacted by speakers' deeply-rooted and changing cultures, as defined as structured structure and structuring structure in habitus (Bourdieu, 1986; Burke, 2015).

I paid to attend some digital workshops to train professional translators organized by local enterprises. I recognized some gaps which need to be filled in academic learning. I raised some issues with my lecturer and discussed how to develop those missing skills (Em).

I chose some videos with people speaking slowly because I was between basic and intermediate level, so I believe that I was interested in people using English as non-native speakers like me. Also, my interest is to explore European culture, so I think that non-native European speakers of English can be those I can speak to while they communicate in English. I could understand them even though they were non-native English speakers. I think I could do that, similarly. Through their ways of singing or playing instruments, I find them very open and nice, not just selfish because they tend to be an advocate of competition and individualism (Binh).

I sought to enjoy myself in various entertaining firms to learn about American English, British English, and Australian English. I found them different in terms of accents and language expression. I chose one for me as it fits my personality. I invested more time to listen to American English, which was very straightforward. I changed my ways of thinking before writing in English, now I pursue my American ways in speaking and writing (Chau).

Literature has shown that informal learning plays a role in growing cultural capital. One participant, Em, used English very competently while she was an English-majoring student with a Translating and Interpreting specialization. Interestingly, her engagement in Vietnamese association as a volunteer led her down a path where colleagues with power took her future career-related opportunities into account. As an intern, her significant contributions and skills were the driving force behind her position at work. As Chau and Binh shared their thoughts before making a serious commitment to language learning, they used to have a consistent view with Vietnamese culture, which tends to be collective and non-competitive (Littrell, 2006). However, their progressive experience transformed their mindsets. While Chau described herself as a confident learner actively seeking to show empathy regarding cultural differences, Binh challenged himself as a shy person to overcome personal stereotypes when coming to the realization that there are opinions different than his own. Although Binh had a lower level of English than Chau, he preferred the use of learning materials which primarily involved interactions between non-native speakers. Thus, this made Binh feel comfortable with the learning challenges of non-native speakers. The case of Binh is aligned with the conceptualization of Liddicoat et al. (1999). According to this conceptual model, language competence should go beyond grammatical knowledge and include learners' abilities to use language effectively and appropriately in sociocultural communication contexts. On the contrary, Chau favored the materials that contained knowledge associated with native speakers, as she wanted to improve her accent by consciously engaging herself in relevant contexts. Shown through participants' responses, learners can be embodied with cultural capital under the influence of different capital and fields. It can be said that a Vietnamese collective mindset goes against the unpacking of sociocultural meaning in this study (Littrell, 2006). However, choosing resources produced by native speakers to learn language, as in the case of Chau, does not insist that her experiential learning was exclusively based on native-speakers' perspectives. However, it is beneficial to highlight the learner's evolving intentions and perceptions as her

cultural capital grew in response to her social construction. Additionally, the learner can simultaneously yield economic capital. To reach a consensus, a wealth of cultural experiences would turn negative mindsets to positive mindsets on the way they define, classify, and broaden their knowledge about culture. This is consistent with Bennett (2004), suggesting any users of language focus on moving to their ethno-relativism from their state of ethnocentrism. Rather than being reliant on their own culture, which is considered as universally unique, language users relativize their school of thought and admit cultural differences are of concerning significance, necessity, and importance (Bennett et al., 2003; Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

The following excerpts also showed that English learning offers an engaging space to allow learners to reach beyond ethnocentric perspectives in an attempt to arrive at ethno-relative counterparts, which is essential to deliver employability skills (McCracken et al., 2015). Clearly, informal learning can be considered as an embodied cultural capital where they are able to discover and accumulate their cultural knowledge and skills. The excerpts reveal that informal learning augments the diversification of understanding and consequential expressions which requires one to believe all cultures are valid and hold unique values. As stated above regarding learners' flexibility and autonomy to make informed decisions on learning speed, learners appear to be committed to deep reflection on individual scenes while listening to or watching any material that promotes their receptive skills. Thus, learners' ingrained knowledge can be recalled in order to use the correct expression, showing their skill improvement (Baker, 2015; Nussbaum, 2010; Sercu, 2005). This social capital can be developed among teacher candidates. For example, Duc, who needs to equip himself with various skills to voice a broad range of instructional material as interesting and attractive to students. Additionally, the employment of informal learning via social networking sites can also benefit social capital growth, which will be discussed in the next section.

I developed my cultural understanding through different channels on the Internet. I wished to have positive feelings on how people handle an issue differently. I believe there is no right or wrong answer to that issue because their ways of doing things are reflective of cultural influence in which they immerse in their lived experience. I would love to spread this growth of mindset to let students know that to be an effective speaker of English means to be a builder of interculturality. To achieve such goals I need to develop our tolerance in distinctions rather than seeking similarities only (Duc).

Social Capital

In response to the emergence of cultural capital, and potentially economic capital, through three forms of learning, participants presented widened social acceptance as a result. Argued in this section, is the importance of culture embedded in language learning no matter the form of learning (Porto, 2010; Rehm & Notten, 2016; Risager, 2011; Vu & Dinh, 2021; Vu & Do, 2021) so that cultural and intercultural competence can develop. All participants appeared to try and develop cultural awareness in their practice of foreign language, regardless of their preferred learning mode (e.g., formal, non-formal, and informal learning) in accordance with participants' language proficiency and goals. According to the current findings, social capital is informed by three distinctive areas that other forms of capital develop, such as *academic*, *professional*, and *social*. These findings are also suggested by Bourdieu's concept of *field*. Besides the findings in line with Bourdieu's concepts, the findings align with Tomlinson's (2017) approach to seize needs for graduates and language learners to invest in their social capital as it is a key factor in their career endeavors.

Academic Area. Two respondents discussed how their language competence improved due to their engagement in non-formal learning (such as: AIESEC and English-speaking club), which acted as a curb to help them overcome challenges when working with other people. Clearly, without certain English skills, they would have been unable to access related experiences to acquire and enhance additional skills. For example, with Chau, she learned many important skills as an intern recruiter working for Vietnamese companies. Similar to past findings by Tran (2017, 2019), Chau employed her English competence in a variety of tasks supportive of the recruitment process (e.g., reading documents, scheduling meetings, interviewing candidates, and communicating with partners in English) and was able to enhance her abilities to develop other skills (e.g., planning, critical thinking, cultural understanding, and intercultural skills).

My acquired skills helped me react very positively back to my academic engagement when I worked with my colleagues for their learning at university, which made me able to convince others in terms of assigned responsibilities. I had more friends while I was in different classes based on the credit system, since I appeared to be reliable to other teammates (Chau).

Also noteworthy, Duc tended to strengthen rapports with collegial friends because he wanted to work in language education. In this given field, he is expected to have experience in an academic environment where he can become familiar with new students.

Professional Area. If cultural capital is an indicator of personal development, some skills that learners formed through non-formal and formal language learning likely facilitate their capitalization of social relationships for professional purposes (Vu et al., in press). Em argued that immersion in non-formal learning (e.g., internship) was an effective point of departure to achieve employment success, which is fully supported by Jones et al. (2016).

Having worked as a non-paid intern in a translating company, it broadened my network so that I could find a present job in another foreign-owned company upon graduation. I built relationships with some senior colleagues at some networking events, so when I was ready for full-time employment, by updating my profile on LinkedIn – my current boss knew me through my colleague's reference, invited me to an interview, and offered me a well-paid job (Em);

Binh utilized his formal learning to subconsciously prepare for seeking a professional job. His continuous efforts to achieve academic excellence did not go unnoticed and his instructor wrote a letter of recommendation needed for a vacancy in a multinational company.

I was required to have a supporting letter from my previous instructor to finalize a recruitment process for a teaching assistant position in an international school. I was proud that my instructor agreed to write a good one as part of the application process (Binh);

Social Area. An's experience was quite different from Chau's. Analysis revealed that An concentrated on his formal learning as a way to develop his social capital. To elaborate on An's social capital growth, heavy coursework and course-based field experimentation required him to study intensively to academically succeed and dedicate time to establishing collegial rapport. He specified that his engagement in formal learning, which is interlinked with cultural

capital, was sufficient to yield his improvement in language proficiency. Because of Chau's engagement in non-formal learning that associates with economic capital, he wished to keep in touch with his English instructors as a resource of information, a reference, or language assistance with their application for overseas postgraduate study financial assistance. These contributions likely helped him to become enthusiastic about learning field-related content in English and practice English with his classmates with similar language proficiency.

I kept in touch with my peers after graduation. We sometimes gathered in order to update our occupation and sometimes practice English together on the weekends (An);

I sometimes met my degree course' instructor who was willing to write me a supporting letter to seek jobs. I believe this is useful to maintain this relationship with her (Binh);

Symbolic Capital

Employability forms of capital can become symbolic capital when they are well regarded and valued by others. The five participants capitalized on capital in a distinct way depending on their level of proficiency, academic and professional goals, and personal interests. In this section, the way social capital was developed among participants is described based on their reflections on employment successes. It is recognized that two participants seemed to appreciate what they developed from language learning, which was a key factor in perfecting their work attitudes and becoming influencers in their professional networks. This finding is in line with the study of Islam (2018) who explored Pakistani English learners' acquisition of symbolic capital developed while learning English. As an English teacher candidate, Duc stressed the importance of the construction of cultural knowledge while enhancing both language and teaching skills in degree courses. Thus, the case of Duc means that he was encouraged to place himself in various positions, as needed, to respond to student and instructor sociocultural contexts. For example, taking responsibility as an intercultural promoter and pedagogical designer. This case of Duc supports the theorization of teacher identity (Buns & Richards, 2009; Samimy et al., 2010; Varghese et al., 2005; Vu, 2020) for teacher education programs (Clark, 2008) while others appeared to be convinced by his initiatives and adopted his innovative teaching methods and techniques.

With a large interest in a variety of cultural artifacts, I self-studied Asian musical and cultural performances which locals use English to promote on social networking sites besides YouTube. I can use these sources of inspirational experience as an input to organize classroom activities and share with my students about culture which largely influences language use. One of my students used this experience as a reference to explore his content knowledge to develop a presentation about the emergence and embodiment of Asian culture in the prestigious English speaking contest. He won the contest and he recognized me as his wonderful mentor behind his award (Duc);

Through the case of Duc, it is of significance that another form of capital emerged that promoted his personal and professional gains. This study's data was consistent with a fundamental form of capital suggested by Tomlinson's (2017) framework of graduate employability, which seems responsible for helping this teacher candidate (Duc) to ensure his

completion of goals and attainment of career successes. According to Tomlinson (2017), the author facilitated the growth of a new form of identity capital that helped graduates answer the questions of who they should be and who they are grounded on intercultural competence (Vu & Dinh, 2021; Vu & Do, 2021). Another similar case happened to Binh, who was interested in nurturing his capabilities to use English as an intermediate non-native English speaker. Binh is working as a financial analyst at a European company based in Vietnam. He seemed to be a successful employee because he was familiar with European cultures when he utilized informal learning to grow his proficiency. In comparison to Duc's work environment, Binh employs his capital in both a convergent and divergent way. In relation to convergence, both Duc and Binh shared enormous interest in cultural artifacts of non-native English speakers as a vehicle to facilitate their language proficiency, as they would feel more sympathetic with someone struggling with language learning. The difference lies in their establishment of symbolic capital. Bourdieu (1986) stated habitus likely changes in response to ones' participation of different fields, which aids to inform their decisions and actions. This new contribution of insight is also aligned with Tomlinson (2017) in terms of psychological capital, which was non-existent in Bourdieu (1986) and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992). Psychological capital is just as valuable to develop language learners' mental strength that leads them to have dispositions to translate their positive emotions and beliefs to enact themselves appropriately in various fields. It is essential that they are able to flexibly adapt in order to interact with people of various cultural backgrounds that entail personal, familial, academic, and sociocultural experiences (Vu et al., in press).

I deeply understand European cultures so it was helpful to let me know about how European people work and run their businesses. I was very used to their ways and what they expect of their staff, so I can easily meet their expectations. Also, because they are also non-native speakers, I felt very relieved and delighted to raise my own ideas without being critiqued due to my non-native accent. In all, I moved to a junior position after 1 year, which was faster than normal circumstances. I am proud of who I am and how I used my cultural styles to speak, as well as appreciate how much my colleagues value my culture responses to their work needs which reflects on my culture (Binh);

Conclusion

This paper sought to understand how capital is constructed and developed during language learning among Vietnamese learners of English in the context of the globalized world and different forms of learning. Bourdieusian stances were used to analyze findings in relation to five forms of *capital* and *field*. There were four main themes delivered: economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986). There are multiple contributions that this study has made. Firstly, that language learning is a legitimate means to develop capital and that learners are more than able to adjust their capital according to their capabilities. Secondly, it is implied that capital can be reciprocally developed and language learners appear to continue their growth of capital, which is required in diverse sociocultural settings.

It was first identified that students learned differently, such as through formal, non-formal, and informal learning due to (non-)academic conditions and personal motivation to construe their cultural differences, which contribute to their growth of cultural capital. Consistent with their different academic backgrounds and job needs, they tended to build up

their social capital distinctively, by virtue of academic, professional, and social fields. Economic and symbolic capital can be considered highly correlated with cultural and social capital. Thus, meaning that economic and symbolic capital are the products of participants' engagement to develop cultural and social capital.

The most noticeable finding was that language learners construe their cultural knowledge generally or specifically while they learn English (Göbel & Helmke, 2010; Paige et al., 2003). Each form of learning is unique and offers benefits different from one another. Learning forms produce certain experiences that learners can gain practical knowledge from and apply it. Due to the link between cultural and economic capital, Binh developed English proficiency and related competence that were influential factors to help him win a travel grant to attend a conference overseas. This suggests that cultural capital is important to maintain participants' desire to improve economic gain. Also, cultural capital served as a foundation to increase Binh's profile for future employability. Although his academic study and later professional career were inconsistent. As for a participant with a teaching career, Duc, the relationship between cultural and symbolic capital is of importance. Duc immersed himself in a wealth of knowledge (culture and language on a target culture) to inform his professional practice. Similar to the above participant, Binh, who apparently used culture for personal growth, this participant intended to empower students to engage in the plurality of culture and language of those whose first language is not English. This is an astonishing discovery, that a teacher values an ethno-relative mindset as a language teacher and exercises agency to challenge present stereotypes behind commonly used pedagogies (Vu, 2020; Weng et al., 2019).

Social capital is seen to be connected with economic and symbolic capital. For symbolic capital, investment in her pre-professional career was a vehicle to inform the formation of her present career. With the case of Em, her willingness to work an unpaid position proved to grow her competence (e.g., work outcomes, personal dedication, and diligence) in her job-related field and she became a competitive applicant. She was offered a job, which is a point of emphasis to realize that this connection between two forms of capital exists. Binh reported that his immersion into non-native cultural knowledge gave him a great opportunity to support his student to win a competition. Although he was not directly symbolized based on personal awards which can be quantitatively measured, he was well-regarded in terms of his professional competence and it acted as a benefit for other people who recognized his contribution. In other words, without his support it would have been impossible that his student would win the competition.

If language learning occurs dynamically and socioculturally, these links that were elaborated on can have implications for teaching and learning approaches. Echoing Truong and Tran (2015), encouraging language learners' "efforts on different dimensions: cultural, cognitive, sociolinguistic, affective and physical" (p. 222). These dimensions are recognized to be important in developing intercultural competence. Hence, leading to their employability skills. These links are quite useful, as Pham et al. (2019) argued that learners are able to utilize different strategies and "coat their weaknesses." This goal is closely aligned with the proposal of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam, in order to educate and train Vietnamese learners of English to be able to communicate, study, and work in multicultural and multilingual settings (Government of Vietnam, 2008). Language learning can be a powerful vehicle to grow learners' cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capital. Each is the driving force to increase their ability to work effectively in their social/professional fields and sustain professional success (Tran, 2019; Vu & Dinh, 2021; Vu & Do, 2021).

This study poses some limitations. The five participants are the most qualified language learners, representing an exclusive population of those who succeeded in their fields to a certain extent. Future research is needed to explore additional language learners who were under-

resourced and faced with many constraints in terms of learning. Therefore, attention should be placed into investigating how learners can employ capital to further develop it in language learning and into their career life. Besides more research, it would be beneficial for stakeholders involved to share insights, such as educators, instructors, and employers so that educational initiatives that support pedagogies can pertain to language learners' success.

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