

EFL Learners' Perceptions and Practices of Integrating Patriotism into Bilingual Materials at UD-UFLS: A Project-Based Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study examines EFL learners' perceptions and practices regarding the integration of patriotism into bilingual materials at University of Foreign Language Studies, the University of Danang (UD-UFLS). Grounded in Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), the study features the implementation of a student-led project in which students designed and developed a digital platform, THE PATRIO, offering content-rich bilingual materials embedding themes of Vietnamese patriotism. A mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected through two rounds of questionnaires administered to 451 and 429 students, respectively. Qualitative insights were gathered via a semi-structured interview with 25 students evaluating user experience and perceived effectiveness of the platform, and learner reflections on their experience in conducting the project. The findings reveal strong awareness of patriotic content and high demands for culturally integrated bilingual materials from the part of EFL learners, acknowledging limited availability of such resources. Students also expressed positive perceptions of THE PATRIO, noting improvements in both patriotic awareness and language competence, particularly in reading and vocabulary development. The study highlights the potential of promoting student-led, project-based digital platforms with culturally dense bilingual materials to bridge resource gaps and to enhance both language competence and national awareness in English language education.

Index terms: bilingual materials; patriotism; EFL learners; digital learning platform; project-based learning; cultural integration; language proficiency; THE PATRIO

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, English has become a critical medium for communication, education, and professional development. In response to broader socio-economic integration, countries such as Vietnam are increasingly prioritizing English language education. However, concerns have emerged that globally oriented English-learning materials often underrepresent local contexts, potentially weakening learners' cultural identity and sense of belonging. As Jalolovna (2025) argues, "English language teaching is no longer just about mastering grammar and vocabulary; it has expanded to encompass the richness of the cultures that speak the language", which highlights the inseparability of language and culture (p. 552). What is more, the absence of local cultural content in English-learning materials may limit learners' ability to connect language learning with their own cultural identity.

Within the broader goal of preserving cultural identity, patriotism emerges as a key educational value to be nurtured among young learners (Hamdamovich, 2026). Patriotism may be understood as a sense of pride in one's country, coupled with an appreciation and responsibility for its cultural heritage. Embedding patriotism into language instruction is therefore much needed, and such integration should not be merely a cultural addition but a pedagogical necessity for fostering both communicative and cultural competence (Jalolovna, 2025). For

Vietnamese learners of English, allowing access to language content in both Vietnamese and English can enhance learners' comprehension of the materials while reinforcing their cultural identity. This immersion can be further enhanced with emerging digital technologies and multimodal input from a myriad of websites and digital platforms, allowing more meaningful learner experience with supportive features like accessibility, flexibility, and interactivity, alongside increasing motivation and engagement.

In such a context, the present study aims to develop and evaluate a bilingual digital platform, a student-led project that provides carefully curated content on Vietnamese culture and patriotism. More specifically, it investigates EFL learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of the platform as well as its influence on both language development and content awareness. The research focuses on English-major students at University of Foreign Language Studies, The University of Da Nang (UD-UFLS), and addresses the following research questions:

- (1) What are EFL learners' perceptions of integrating patriotism content into bilingual materials at UD-UFLS?
- (2) How do these EFL learners reflect on their practices while engaging with THE PATRIO website featuring bilingual materials embedded with patriotic content?
- (3) What are the EFL learners' experience and perceived effectiveness of THE PATRIO website?

Background to the Study

Revisiting Key Concepts

Patriotism in Language Education

Patriotism can be conceptualized as a multidimensional notion that combines both psychological and behavioral features of a person's attitude towards their motherland based on their national identity, ethics, and actions. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, patriotism involves feelings of love and pride toward one's nation. Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) posit that patriotism constitutes an emotional bond and distinguish it from nationalism. In this study, patriotism is conceptualized as positive attitudes to one's country, pride in its history, and appreciation of its culture.

The typology of patriotism has traditionally been treated as a multidimensional concept that encompasses both affective, cognitive, and ethical components of the phenomenon (e.g., Zheng & Han, 2025). Based on the typology suggested by Agapova (2008) and Luneva et al. (2019), four major aspects of patriotism education can be identified: (i) developing spiritual values focused on love for the country; (ii) promoting interest in national history; (iii) teaching to live a humanistic life; and (iv) forming moral ideals inspired by heroes of the country.

Drawing on this theoretical basis, the present study establishes four principal categories that help guide the selection of materials for the digital platform. These include: (i) Echoes of History - the promotion of historical awareness; (ii) Heroic Ideals - the development of moral ideals rooted in heroic narratives; (iii) Humanistic Values - the emphasis on humanistic values; and (iv) National Spirit - the cultivation of spiritual attachment and respect for the homeland.

With a better understanding of patriotism, it is now necessary to consider its importance in language education. Many scholars have recognized that language education not only promotes communication but also helps with the transmission of cultural values. Byram (1997) suggests that language education should encourage learners to become intercultural speakers by having them engage with different value systems. Shrestha (2017) holds the view that language represents a social practice where cultural meanings emerge.

Language classrooms thus play an essential role in cultivating national pride, and in this sense, Vietnamese learners of English need to possess certain level of communicative competence to make effective use of English in promoting Vietnamese culture.

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Project-based learning (PBL) is a learner-centered approach involving students in activities that have genuine links to the outside world through posing questions, developing plans, collecting and analyzing information, and sharing the results of their studies with others (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). It emphasizes the necessity of conducting ongoing research that develops self-regulation while resolving actual problems (Thomas, 2000). Put differently, project-based activities allow students to participate actively in their learning process while acquiring deeper insights into their subject matters and applying their knowledge to real-life situations.

Thomas (2000) outlines specific features characterizing PBL: (i) centrality, implying that projects become a core of a curriculum; (ii) a driving question that guides learning; (iii) constructive exploration through inquiry and knowledge construction; (iv) student autonomy in decision making and project completion; (v) realism meaning involvement in authentic real-world activities. These position PBL as an approach that promotes active, student-centered learning through meaningful as well as context-relevant tasks.

Building on the principles outlined above, Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) propose seven essential elements of PBL. These include (i) A need to know - stimulating learners' curiosity and driving their inquiry into content and ideas; (ii) A driving question, defining the central problem or focus of the project; (iii) Student voice and choice, reflecting learners' active role in shaping and developing their projects; (iv) 21st-century skills, encompassing collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, time management, and communication; (v) Inquiry and innovation, where students explore, research, and make connections across different areas of knowledge; (vi) Feedback and revision, enabling learners to monitor their progress and improve their work; and (vii) A publicly presented product, through which students demonstrate their learning outcomes.

The PBL implementation in this study is adapted from the practical guide developed by Edutopia (2007), providing a structured framework for organizing project-based activities with seven steps being sequenced like this: Driving Question → Designing Plan → Creating a Schedule → Monitoring Progress → Assessing Student Learning → Evaluating the experience.

Content-Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is referred to as an approach that combines learning subject content with developing language skills (Coyle et al., 2010). In this framework, English acts as a tool for exploring meaningful, real-world content and for creating a genuine context for language use. Cabau (2016) points out that more exposure to the target language and culture improves learners' understanding of academic and communication practices. This exposure also allows them to engage with content from various perspectives. Central to the CLIL model is the 4Cs Framework (Coyle, 2018), including four components: (i) Content (subject knowledge), (ii) Communication (language proficiency), (iii) Cognition (higher-order thinking), and (iv) Culture (intercultural awareness and identity). This framework offers a solid foundation for designing and evaluating bilingual education.

In this study, the 4Cs model supports the inclusion of patriotism via bilingual materials. Content is developed through learning about national history and cultural heritage. Communication can be achieved by having learners use language to express patriotic ideas. Cognition is embodied through enhanced reading by means of interpreting and evaluating patriotic texts. Culture is represented through building the national identity and promoting global citizenship. Indeed, the framework illustrates how bilingual, technology-supported resources like THE PATRIO can encourage linguistic, cognitive, and patriotic growth in a PBL language environment.

CLIL and PBL in Language Education

CLIL and PBL are two important methodologies in language teaching yet have different purposes in this study. CLIL facilitates the incorporation of language and content learning, allowing learners to enhance their language abilities through rich content and cultural interaction (e.g., Coyle et al., 2010). In recent CLIL studies, such gain in language development has shown to be more credible in receptive skills than in productive skills (Lee et al., 2023). However, as Soto-Corominas et al. (2024) point out, this limit can be alleviated by integrating explicit

output tasks when designing CLIL programmes. This brings to the fore the role of project-based initiatives that support meaningful language learning. As PBL promotes knowledge acquisition through the creation of products (Thomas, 2000), CLIL and PBL may serve as a methodological tool and as an approach to producing output for language instruction. For this present study, PBL can be seen through the design of THE PATRIO website, while CLIL methodology is manifested in bilingual content with patriotism-embedded language input. In this way, CLIL and PBL are complimentary: CLIL serves as a basis for designing instructional content and PBL supports the production of instructional output.

Bilingual Materials in Language Education

Bilingual materials are generally understood as dual language materials that present information in two languages within a single learning context (May, 2017; García, 2009). Beyond serving as linguistic tools, such materials can also integrate cultural content to support meaning-making. In this study, bilingual materials refer to dual-language resources to support both formal instruction and self-directed learning among EFL students.

García (2009) classifies bilingual materials into two types: parallel materials and integrated materials. The former provide equivalent content provided in two languages either simultaneously or separately, enabling learners to construct meaning through cross-language comparison. The latter, by contrast, combine both languages within the same text or communicative unit. Digital learning materials refer to resources accessed using digital platforms and often incorporate multimodal elements such as text, visuals, and audio (Mayer, 2009; Reinders & White, 2016). Accordingly, digital bilingual materials in this study are defined as digitally delivered parallel bilingual resources (English and Vietnamese) featuring multimodal components - text and visuals.

Review of Previous Studies

Prior research has consistently highlighted the importance of integrating meaningful content into language teaching. Lyster and Ballinger (2011) argue that Content-Based Instruction (CBI) facilitates language acquisition through engagement with disciplinary knowledge, while De Graaff et al. (2007) provide empirical evidence that content inclusion promotes language and subject learning. The widespread adoption of this integrated approach across educational contexts has also been acknowledged by Cenoz (2015), although questions remain regarding the extent to which language and content can be effectively balanced in instructional practice. In addition, a systematic review of technology-enhanced CLIL studies conducted by Hu et al. (2025) found that integrating content learning into language instruction can support language development and subject knowledge acquisition through multimodal input and meaningful engagement with content.

Within this perspective, scholars have emphasized the role of language education in fostering cultural understanding and national values. Byram (1997) identifies intercultural understanding as a central component of language learning, while McKay (2003) argues that materials connected to learners' own culture can strengthen their sense of affinity and cultural attachment. Shrestha (2017) further notes the challenges teachers face in addressing cultural issues in language classrooms, stating that "it is challenging for teachers to have proficiency in target culture, target language and native culture and ways of teaching them" (p. 112). While these studies underscore the significance of culture in language education, they tend to conceptualize culture broadly rather than examining patriotism as a distinct dimension of national identity.

More recent studies have begun to address this gap. Du (2023), for example, argues that the integration of patriotism into language education should be systematic to nurture national pride whereas Shi and Gopal (2024) emphasize culturally relevant approaches that allow coexistence of both global citizenship and national pride. These studies suggest that language education can serve as an effective medium for fostering patriotic awareness.

Research on Project-Based Learning (PBL) further supports the integration of value-based materials through authentic and meaningful learning experiences. Thomas (2000) highlights the role of authentic tasks in promoting learner engagement, while Chang et al. (2024) explore the impact of authentic contexts in higher education PBL, resulting in higher levels of emotional and cognitive engagement. Although PBL has been widely associated with the development of social and cultural values, limited attention has been paid to patriotism as a specific educational construct. Moreover, little research has explored how patriotism can be

integrated into digital bilingual resources through student-led projects. This gap provides the central rationale for the present study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Research Methods

This study adopts the mixed-methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. Among the four types of mixed method, the study draws on the sequential explanatory design with two main phases. In the first phase, quantitative data was collected through a survey questionnaire administered to EFL students at UD-UFLS to assess the need for bilingual resources of the web-based application. After the project implementation phase, THE PATRIO website was launched with patriotic content available in bilingual format for EFL learners as an extensive reading activity.

Following the launch of the website, the second survey was conducted focusing on EFL learners' attitudes and responses upon using the website. This was immediately followed by the collection of qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with selected participants. The technique was employed to further explore learners' experiences, expectations, and reflections in greater depth, particularly regarding the use of bilingual materials and the features of the website. Through this process, more detailed insights into the benefits, challenges, and practical implications of the platform were identified, thereby complementing and clarifying the quantitative findings. In these situations, the results could be carefully examined by making use of qualitative data without being limited by theory-based perspectives (Creswell., 2018).

Research Procedures

Drawing from Edutopia (2007), the procedures for this study are detailed as follows:

Step 1 - Start with the Essential Question: At this initial step, the driving question: "How can we assist EFL students at UD-UFLS in fostering patriotism while learning English?" was formulated with its main goal to foster patriotism among EFL learners through a digital platform.

Step 2 - Design a Plan for the Project: Based on the central guiding question, a website and a corresponding social media page were created. This website is to provide users with curated bilingual (English - Vietnamese) reading materials embedded with patriotic elements. This is informed by principles comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985), emphasizing that learners acquire language most effectively when exposed to input that is slightly above their current proficiency level but still understandable.

Step 3 - Create a Schedule: A detailed timetable was planned for THE PATRIO project, including due dates, milestones, and key activities - content creation, website design, and fan pages launch.

Step 4 - Monitor Students and Project Progress: This was undertaken with regular monitoring, communication, and coordination from other group members to deal with all issues arising during project implementation. The instructor was informed of the project progress to ensure timely feedback was given.

Step 5. Assess Student Learning: In this final stage, both the instructor and the research team analyzed their entire project experience with THE PATRIO, examining every single phase and discovered areas where improvement was suggested for better functionality of the website and quality of content.

Research Setting, Population and Sampling

This study was conducted at UD-UFLS with the quantitative collecting phase spanning over three and a half months, from October-November 2025 to February-mid-March 2026, followed by semi-structured interviews. The population comprised EFL students from all four academic years, who are frequent users of English and familiar with digital learning platforms.

A total population sampling approach was adopted. There were 451 students who were invited to participate in a needs analysis survey. However, 429 students responded to a questionnaire evaluating THE PATRIO website, of which 377 valid responses were included.

Participants were mainly from two English majors amongst those offered at UD-UFLS, namely English Language Studies and English Language Teaching, with the majority belonging to the English Language Studies, mainly in their second and third year. Additionally, 25 students were purposely selected for semi-structured interviews to provide deeper insights into their experiences.

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected through two questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

Questionnaires

The data was collected using two 5-point Likert scale questionnaires tailored to the study objectives: (i) Needs Assessment: A researcher-developed 15-item survey evaluated the necessity of a digital bilingual cultural platform within the Vietnamese EFL context; and (ii) Website Evaluation where participants assessed THE PATRIO website across two sections - User Experience where an adapted Questionnaire for Website Usability (QWU) was used to measure satisfaction and usability, and Perceived Effectiveness with a 14-item scale adapted from Mohamad et al. (2021) and Kosterman and Feshbach (1989), assessing the impact of the site on fostering learner patriotism and language development. A screening process ensured data integrity by including only respondents who fully engaged with the website.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore learners' experiences with bilingual materials and their evaluation of THE PATRIO website. This adaptable approach combined pre-planned questions with the flexibility, allowing researchers to delve deeper into participants' responses (Borg, 2006; Minichiello et al., 2008). The open-ended questions specifically targeted patriotism awareness, website features, and suggestions for improvement, which makes it easier for participants to provide detailed, qualitative feedback.

More specifically, a purposively selected smaller sample of participants who had completed the survey formed the sample for the qualitative study. The interviews were completed on each participant for approximately 15-25 minutes, depending on participant availability, either in-person or via an online platform. The interviews of all participants were recorded with their expressed permission, allowing accurate and systematic collection of the data.

Qualitative data also involves group discussions with individual evaluations on the design and development of THE PATRIO platform. These personal reflections provide rich insights into the real practices experienced by both the platform designers and other EFL learners at UD-UFLS as direct beneficiaries of this integration.

Data Analysis

The collected data was cleaned by the research team involving the process of identifying and removing duplicate entries, and data visualization. The descriptive statistics method was then used to analyze the cleaned dataset. The data was analyzed using the SPSS software version 26.0. For qualitative results, thematic analysis was used to process the data. The analysis adhered to Creswell's (2018) suggested three-step approach. Initially, the transcripts were thoroughly read to become acquainted with the entire dataset.

Then, initial codes were generated to systematically organise meaningful segments of data. In the subsequent stage, these codes were classified into broader themes that are related to research questions. Prior to drafting the analysis, both themes and codes underwent review to ensure accuracy and relevance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

EFL Students’ Perceptions of integrating patriotism into bilingual materials

Awareness and perceived importance of patriotism

In answering Research Question 1, the study relied on quantitative data collected via the first questionnaire survey to 451 students of English majors at UD-UFLS. The data collected can be shown in the table below.

Table 1. Awareness & Perceived Importance of Patriotism

ITEMS	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - The concept of patriotism is still relevant for young people in today’s modern, globalized world.	4.60	0.60
Item 2 - Educational content should include lessons that promote patriotic values.	4.55	0.56
Item 3 - Learning about national culture and history can help me develop a sense of responsibility toward my country.	4.43	0.63
Item 4 - Learning about national humanistic ways of life and heroic images can help me develop a sense of responsibility toward my country.	4.28	0.79
Item 5 - Patriotism should be strengthened through cultural and historical learning rather than conventional textbooks.	4.38	0.67

Table 1 indicates a strong consensus that patriotism remains highly relevant in a globalized world. Item 1 recorded the highest mean (M=4.60), with students viewing patriotism as an essential foundation for preserving cultural identity. Learners also reported demands for patriotism lessons (Item 2, M=4.55). These findings are in line with what has been suggested by Byram (1997) that language education should encourage learners to become intercultural speakers by having them engage with different value systems, showing a clear need for pedagogical shifts from traditional textbooks toward more interactive, context-based learning. Participants’ responses also support this finding: “If we forget the history of the very country where we grew up, we would eventually forget the roots” (R2), or “They may know the names of important historical events...but they might not fully understand the cultural significance” (R4).

Perspectives on Bilingual/Digital Reading Materials

Table 2. Perspectives on Bilingual/Digital Reading Materials

ITEMS	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - I am able to find digital bilingual reading materials that include patriotic and cultural values easily.	2.06	0.83
Item 2 - There are enough online bilingual materials that incorporate patriotic values including national culture and history.	2.01	0.95
Item 3 - There are enough online bilingual materials that incorporate patriotic values including humanistic and heroic ideas.	2.12	0.96
Item 4 - I am aware of online platforms that offer bilingual content about national culture and patriotism.	2.16	0.96
Item 5 - Universities and educational institutions usually provide access to digital bilingual materials related to patriotic values.	1.96	0.93

As **Table 2** shows, in stark contrast to their high interest, students reported substantial barriers to accessing relevant materials. In particular, a critical lack of institutional support in providing digital bilingual materials embedded with patriotic themes was highlighted by respondents (M=1.96). Nevertheless, it is shown by the results that students expressed a strong preference for digital formats due to their convenience and accessibility. This misalignment underscores the urgent need for the development of more structured, high-quality digital bilingual platforms. The qualitative data further support this finding: “Many articles are only written in Vietnamese or only in English” (R1) or “These kinds of materials are kind of rare... you need to find really old versions” (R2).

Interest in the Proposed Website and its Perceived Effectiveness

Table 3. Interest in the Proposed Website and Its Perceived Effectiveness

ITEM	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - I am interested in learning about patriotism through digital bilingual content.	4.50	0.65
Item 2 - I am receptive to learning about patriotism outside traditional classroom settings.	4.44	0.64
Item 3 - I would be willing to try a bilingual cultural website that provides bilingual reading materials incorporating patriotic ideas.	4.46	0.66
Item 4 - Such a website would help me better understand national values and identity.	4.47	0.66
Item 5 - Such a website would be a useful learning resource to expand my vocabulary repertoire and improve my English reading comprehension.	4.48	0.66
Item 6 - Such a website would be a useful learning resource to improve my writing and speaking skills.	4.75	0.45

As shown in **Table 3**, learners expressed strong appreciation toward the proposed digital platform. They particularly valued its dual capacity to facilitate language acquisition and cultural enrichment (Item 4, M = 4.47; Item 5, M = 4.48). The demand for patriotism embedded materials reflects the position of McKay (2003), showing that texts related to learners' culture can increase their feeling of affinity and love toward their own culture. The platform was perceived not just as a supplement, but as a primary tool for skill development (Item 6, M=4.75). Overall, the proposed website is viewed as a significant bridge that fills the current resource gap while catering learners’ preferences for digital and flexible learning environments. Below are some comments:

“Such a website would help me learn about our beautiful history and improve my English” (R9).

“Online resources are more convenient because people can easily access them anytime and anywhere” (R7).

EFL Learners’ Practices of Patriotic Content Integration via THE PATRIO Website

Self-Evaluations from the Website Developers at UD-UFLS

The design of THE PATRIO project was grounded in the complementary frameworks of CLIL and PBL. From the CLIL perspective, the project integrates patriotic content with English as the medium of instruction. Specifically, Communication is supported through providing bilingual materials with scaffolding in learning language, Cognition is promoted via discussion tasks that stimulate critical thinking skills, while Culture is reinforced by strengthening learners’ national identity and cultural appreciation through materials embedded with patriotic content. During implementation, challenges concerning copyright restrictions and unreliable sources were encountered. In such context, the team established stricter selection criteria, shifting the focus to official government websites and credible academic or literary materials to ensure linguistic accuracy and cultural appropriateness. From a PBL viewpoint, the project reflected key characteristics of experiential learning through problem-solving, collaboration, and interdisciplinary skills. Working with a developer team, the researchers designed an interactive website aimed at fostering patriotic awareness alongside English language

proficiency, with user engagement data and instructor feedback serving as key indicators of effectiveness to confirm the website’s effectiveness in fostering patriotism while improving English skills.

On the whole, the project demonstrates how the integration of CLIL principles and PBL can support the development of educational resources that extend beyond traditional textbook-based approaches, offering learning experiences that are both interactive and contextually meaningful.

Reflections from EFL Learners at UD-UFLS

EFL learners’ reflections on their practices while using THE PATRIO website indicate a clear awareness of how bilingual materials embedded with patriotic content facilitate both language development and content comprehension. Many students reported utilizing the dual-language format as an effective strategy to support their understanding. They referred to the Vietnamese version as a cognitive scaffold to comprehend unfamiliar content and then returned to the English text. For instance, one learner stated:

“I can follow both versions on the same page... it helps me understand the meaning more clearly” (R2).

Such practices suggest a degree of metacognitive engagement, as learners actively monitor and regulate their reading processes. In general, there were also a variety of responses regarding how English learning integrating with patriotic content shaped students’ reading experiences, such as:

"I can learn about our amazing history, while also learning English." (R9)

In addition, these responses align with the principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) proposed by Coyle et al. (2010) and Coyle (2018), in which learners simultaneously develop language competence and content knowledge through meaningful subject matter. In this study, patriotic themes served not only as learning content but also as a context that increased learners’ engagement and personal connection to the reading materials. For instance, many expressed a sense of pride and personal connection to the content, which enhanced their interest and willingness to engage.

“I feel proud when I can understand stories about Vietnam in English” (R7).

“I feel more motivated to read because the topics are interesting and meaningful” (R6).

This indicates that culturally relevant and patriotic content can improve the motivation of learners intrinsically and increase engagement with learning materials. However, several learners experienced difficulties regarding exposure to complex vocabulary and had to resort to reading from the Vietnamese version of the text:

“I usually read the Vietnamese version first because the vocabulary can be difficult at times.” (R10).

The results indicated that throughout the learning experience, each learner reflected strategically, emotionally, or evaluatively about their practices in developing language skills and patriotic awareness.

Perceived Effectiveness and Learners’ Experience of THE PATRIO Website with Bilingual Materials Embedding Patriotism-Relevant Content

Effectiveness of the website

Table 4. Effectiveness of the website

ITEM	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - When I use this website, there is very little waiting time between my actions and its response.	4.26	0.94
Item 2 - It is easy to find the materials that I need.	4.25	0.95
Item 3 - It takes very few clicks to find the specific materials I am looking for.	4.17	0.91

As can be seen from **Table 4**, THE PATRIO is highly regarded as an efficient website by users, which is reflected in all average scores rated above 4.17. The responsiveness of the system’s technology (M=4.26) and lack of any delays is vital for keeping users engaged, with respondents appreciating the advantage of easy access from any electronic device. Such responsiveness makes using the system enjoyable and allows learners to adapt to more up-to-date trends of language learning. In addition, the structure of the site (M=4.25) ensures that any user will put in the minimum effort to use the website effectively.

Efficiency and User-friendliness of the website

Table 5. Efficiency and user-friendliness of the website

ITEM	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - It is simple to use this website.	4.13	0.94
Item 2 - I can successfully complete my tasks (e.g., adding materials to collection, reading the materials) without errors.	4.10	0.99
Item 3 - All buttons work correctly.	4.15	0.96

As shown in **Table 5**, THE PATRIO is highly efficient in assisting language learning. The technical efficiency is the highest-rated feature (M=4.15), which ensures that there are no interruptions, thereby building user confidence and engagement. This, in addition to simplicity (M=4.13), makes the use of THE PATRIO less cognitively demanding since it provides an easy access point to information. While all students were able to complete learning activities with little to no error (M=4.10), additional features such as built-in vocabulary help optimize this.

Users’ Satisfaction with the Website

Table 6. Users’ satisfaction with the website

ITEM	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - I feel comfortable using this website.	4.05	1.00
Item 2 - This website has all the functions and capabilities I expect it to have.	3.94	1.04
Item 3 - I am satisfied with how easy it is to use this website.	4.21	1.00
Item 4 - I feel confident using this website without any difficulties.	4.31	0.94
Item 5 - I am happy with my experience on this platform.	4.21	0.91

Table 6 shows high user satisfaction with the platform as the students exhibit significant levels of confidence and happiness while working on it (M=4.31). Emotional connection stems from the double benefit, since it involves language and cultural growth at once. These findings are consistent with TAM2, according to which user satisfaction is achieved through utility and usability that contribute to emotional engagement. Satisfaction was also established via the interactive use of multimedia that provided students with a positive learning experience (M=4.21). The platform successfully combines language learning with cultural knowledge.

Accessibility to the Website

Table 7. Accessibility to the Website

ITEM	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - It is easy to search for this website via search engines.	3.36	1.15

Moderate ratings ($M=3.36$) were recorded in relation to the platform’s accessibility, thus exposing a disparity between the high-quality internally and poor searchability externally. High standard deviation ($SD=1.15$) suggests that searching for this particular platform is not an easy task since students found out that they cannot find this particular platform on Google directly. Though the platform is structured professionally and creates less confusion once reached, its ability to be found is still an issue.

Website navigation

Table 8. Website navigation

ITEM	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - I can easily navigate this website.	4.79	0.52
Item 2 - I feel in control when I am using this website.	4.17	0.93
Item 3 - I get what I expect when I click on things on this website.	4.00	1.10
Item 4 - The labels are clear for me to navigate this website.	4.92	0.31
Item 5 - It is easy to move to the next page or back to the previous page.	4.62	0.73

The average mean scores as shown in **Table 8** ranging from 4.00 to 4.92 indicate that on the whole, the website is perceived as user friendly. According to the responses, having clear labels ($M=4.92$) and easy navigation ($M=4.79$) are among the noticeable strengths of the website. These features made it easier for survey respondents to find out where to click and to navigate through the site smoothly. Although most users can find their way around the site easily, some users experience uncertainty during the interaction because the experience does not fully meet their expectations ($M=4.00$), resulting in confusion.

Content of the website

Table 9. Content of the website

ITEM	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - The materials provided by this website are sufficient and varied.	3.92	1.10
Item 2 - This website adequately meets my need for bilingual materials fostering patriotism.	3.98	0.99
Item 3 - The materials provided by this website are clear and authentic.	4.18	1.02
Item 4 - The materials provided by this website are current and regularly updated.	3.68	1.13
Item 5 - The materials maintain cultural relevance rather than being a literal word-for-word conversion.	4.28	0.99
Item 6 - The materials are of high enough quality to be used for educational purposes, including learning English and fostering patriotism.	3.94	1.11

As presented in **Table 9**, users tend to positively evaluate the website’s content, with mean scores ranging from 3.68 to 4.28. Cultural relevance is the strongest aspect ($M=4.28$), reflecting strong appreciation for culturally adaptive rather than literally translated content. Following closely is the clarity and authenticity ($M=4.18$), although some variation suggests ongoing challenges in conveying cultural nuances. This is directly aligned with the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) framework by Byram’s (1997), which posits that learners function as intercultural mediators while consolidating their cultural identity, further substantiated by participant responses:

“In general, I think that Vietnamese versions are more emotional while English is more direct. It is quite interesting to notice the difference when you have a chance to interact with both versions simultaneously.” (R8)

“Some cultural meanings are difficult to translate directly and the translators have to keep the original version. That’s when I realize there’s something called untranslatability.” (R4)

Furthermore, students rated the materials positively for educational value (M=3.94) and relevance to learners' needs (M=3.98), reflecting the materials' utility for contextual vocabulary development and cultural understanding. The variety of resources added to the user's level of engagement (M=3.92), which is in agreement with Krashen's (1985) principles of CLIL (integrate content) and through the development of meaningful language acquisition. However, content updates receive the lowest score (M=3.68), suggesting more frequent updates.

Website Interface and Design

Table 10. Interface and Design of the website

ITEM	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - This website repeats the same structure, components and overall look across pages.	4.95	0.24
Item 2 - This website is presented in an attractive way (i.e. colors, images, layout, etc).	4.82	0.53
Item 3 - The design of this website makes tasks (e.g., adding materials to collection, reading the materials) easier.	4.23	1.00
Item 4 - The interface of this website is pleasant.	4.29	0.94
Item 5 - The choice of typography and fonts is legible.	4.28	0.95
Item 6 - Visual cues (icons, buttons, and banners) are culturally neutral and universally understood.	4.26	0.94
Item 7 - The color palette enhances readability and does not distract from the bilingual content.	4.08	1.02

From **Table 10**, the users' evaluation of the site showed very high marks for all factors, with each scoring more than 4.00. The most consensus score was achieved in website consistency (M=4.95), which indicated great and coherent organization. Visual attractiveness motivated users to stay longer, thus highlighting multimodal properties of digital media, as outlined by Mayer (2009).

Nevertheless, low ratings for color scheme (M=4.08) and efficiency (M=4.23) revealed possible improvements. High variance in colors pointed to the need for optimizing readability of bilingual texts by improving color contrasts and making backgrounds less intricate.

Users' Intention to Reuse

Table 11. Users' intention to reuse

ITEM	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - I intend to use this website as my primary source for these bilingual materials.	3.78	1.13
Item 2 - This website is my first choice compared to other available bilingual platforms.	3.93	1.07
Item 3 - I see myself using this website frequently in the coming months.	4.18	1.00
Item 4 - The value provided by this site encourages me to bookmark it for future use.	4.48	0.91

The results in **Table 11** show that users demonstrate a high likeliness to reuse the platform with the average score being 4.48. Bookmarking for future use scores the highest (M=4.18), which means the platform is becoming a part of their study routine, reflecting the TAM2 model. Similarly, many users expect to use the website frequently in time to come (M=4.18).

Furthermore, the website remains a preferred option compared to others (M=3.93). While the intention to use the site as a main source received the lowest score (M=3.78), it remains within the positive range, reflecting a solid overall preference for the platform.

Effectiveness Regarding Fostering Patriotism

Table 12. Effectiveness regarding fostering patriotism

ITEM	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - Reading digital bilingual materials has increased my pride in Vietnamese cultural history, custom and tradition	4.68	0.65
Item 2 - The bilingual materials helped me feel more emotionally attached to Vietnam and its traditions.	4.33	0.96
Item 3 - Reading digital bilingual materials made me more committed to preserving and promoting Vietnamese values (e.g., unity, resilience, family loyalty).	4.30	0.99
Item 4 - I get to appreciate my cultural history, custom and tradition after reading digital bilingual materials.	4.51	0.77
Item 5 - I became more interested in learning about Vietnam’s history, custom and tradition after reading digital bilingual materials.	4.38	0.88
Item 6 - Reading digital bilingual stories strengthened my sense of national identity in the context of globalization.	4.77	0.57
Item 7 - After engaging with the bilingual content, I feel better equipped to express ideas about Vietnamese patriotism or national identity in English.	4.10	1.04

As **Table 12** reveals, digital bilingual resources are a strong catalyst for nurturing patriotism. Item 6 received the highest mean score (M=4.77), meaning that these stories help promote national identity as a secure anchor in an interconnected world – an approach that aligns with Byram’s (1997) model of intercultural competence whereby self-culture knowledge plays an important role in international communication. Moreover, such success can be explained using the Input Hypothesis offered by Krashen. In this case, familiar cultural topics served as i+1 input which made it possible for students to comprehend complex English constructions as well as build up emotional connection (Item 2, M=4.33) and patriotic feelings (Item 1, M=4.68). Recent studies also support these findings. For instance, Shi and Gopal (2024) demonstrate that integrating cultural heritage into digital learning environments has a significant impact on both student engagement and language acquisition. Similarly, Du (2023) highlights the role of English classrooms as spaces for cultivating cultural identity and patriotic awareness. Finally, the interactive form of digital learning generated higher levels of engagement compared to traditional formats. Item 7 received the lowest mean score (M=4.10), implying that students experience a conflict between internalized pride and lack of linguistic self-confidence. Nevertheless, by integrating the 4Cs models of CLIL, bilingual materials transform language learning into a vehicle for patriotic growth, effectively cultivating patriotism as a distinct, measurable construct while enhancing both linguistic proficiency and national commitment. This result is further clarified by participants’ responses:

“I feel a sense of pride when reading these stories” **(R2)**.

“Patriotism helps individuals stay connected to their roots while engaging with other cultures” **(R7)**.

“I know the ideas but sometimes I don’t know how to express them clearly in English” **(R1)**.

Effectiveness regarding language development

Table 13. Effectiveness regarding language development

ITEM	MEAN	SD
Item 1 - The traditional cultural content in these digital bilingual materials motivated me to learn English more because it connected to my own Vietnamese identity.	4.49	0.79
Item 2 – I can learn language better when I am able to relate the topics and themes of the materials to my cultural background.	4.18	0.97
Item 3 - After reading digital bilingual materials, my vocabulary has been enhanced.	4.63	0.71
Item 4 - After reading digital bilingual materials, my reading skills have been enhanced.	4.70	0.62

Item 5 - After reading digital bilingual materials, my writing skills have been enhanced.	4.08	1.08
Item 6 - After reading digital bilingual materials, my speaking skills have been enhanced.	3.79	1.09
Item 7 - After engaging with the digital bilingual content, I feel better equipped to express ideas about Vietnamese patriotism or national identity in English.	4.02	1.12

Table 13 shows that THE PATRIO promotes language acquisition through its compliance with the objective set out in the General Education Programme 2018 about transcending Vietnamese cultural values via English. Receptive skills such as reading (Item 4; M=4.70) and vocabulary (Item 3; M=4.63) received high scores. These findings are consistent with those of Hu et al. (2025) who concluded that learners’ receptive skills can be enhanced effectively in technological CLIL environments by providing multimodal input and meaningful engagement with the integrated content. The other major factor motivating the participants is the Source Culture (Item 1; M=4.49), an affective value of patriotism mentioned by Kosterman and Feshbach (1989).

On the contrary, the effect on productive skills was inconsistent, especially writing (Item 5, M=4.08) and speaking (Item 6, M=3.79). This difference supports Lee et al. (2023) idea that programmes adopting the CLIL framework were generally less effective in developing productive skills than receptive skills. However, recent studies show that well-designed CLIL programs can also enhance productive skills when explicit output tasks are integrated. Soto-Corominas et al. (2024) reported positive effects on both receptive and productive skills when meaningful production tasks are integrated. This suggests that adding speaking and writing tasks to THE PATRIO could help address the current limitations in productive skills. Notably, the online platform contributes to the development of ICC by empowering learners to convey their national identity in English (Item 7, M=4.02). In Byram’s (1997) terms, the use of the website can turn learners into intercultural speakers, meaning those able to mediate their culture through language.

“The topics are interesting and closely related to my cultural background, so I pay more attention to new vocabulary and how it is used.” (R20).

“Reading has become less stressful thanks to interesting stories” (R14).

“I don’t think my speaking has improved much because I mostly read.” (R13).

The Patrio Project

THE PATRIO is a digital educational platform developed with an aim to support English language learners with a more contextualized, familiar and engaging learning experience. Specifically designed for Vietnamese EFL learners, this platform introduces users with bilingual materials that integrate traditional values of Vietnam to foster students’ patriotism and language proficiency. Below is a QR code for easy accessibility the website (Figure 1), followed by different sections shot on the webpage with culturally rich input of patriotism.

Figure 1. The Patrio Website



Figure 2. The Stories Section and its Features



Regarding the functions, THE PATRIO offers a rich and immersive language learning experience not only through providing patriotic bilingual materials but also integrating advanced interactive functions. These materials are organized into four main themes: Echoes of History, Heroic Ideals, Humanistic Values, and National Spirit. As users read, new vocabulary at B1 level and above is introduced by pop-up features that provide users with proper pronunciation, Vietnamese equivalent meaning and examples with clear contexts. Each story is further enriched with a Do You Know section that delivers interesting cultural insights and background information, along with Discussion Questions designed to foster learners' high-order thinking skills by encouraging them to reflect critically on the stories. In addition, to support long-term retention, the website incorporates smart digital flashcards featuring the word's spelling, IPA pronunciation, Vietnamese meaning, and practical example sentences. Additionally, the Collection feature allows learners to store their favourite stories and flashcards into a personalized digital library, which helps learners review and organize materials at ease. Lastly, the website also provides reading strategies to help learners develop effective reading skills.

CONCLUSIONS

This mixed-methods study with combined quantitative and qualitative data has revealed interesting findings showing that while learners value patriotism, their understanding remains superficial due to a lack of quality bilingual resources and ineffective teaching methods, which implies a critical gap in existing educational practices. The initiative of THE PATRIO project was thus developed, grounded in PBL and the 4Cs of CLIL to foster learners' English language competence while deepening their connection to national heritage through an interactive digital platform. Both qualitative and quantitative evidence supports the effectiveness of this platform in promoting their cultural awareness, enriching their vocabulary, and supporting their reading comprehension, though its impact on productive skills varied. Overall, it is suggested that PBL and the 4Cs framework constitute a potentially effective approach to simultaneously fostering patriotism and language development within a

globalised digital context. Pedagogically, the study findings imply that language learning curriculum should be in favour of culturally contextualised content while educational institutions are encouraged to improve the accessibility of high-quality bilingual resources to address the gap between learner motivation and resource availability. Moreover, the perceived effectiveness of THE PATRIO underscores the importance of incorporating learner-centred, interactive, and user-friendly designs in language learning. It is recommended for future digital tools to prioritize personalized, adaptive content that integrates language acquisition with patriotic education. Eventually, the study emphasizes technological integration as a key factor in providing a dual pedagogical benefit by fostering both linguistic competency and national culture awareness for language learners in a globalized world.

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