

**REVIEWER'S REPORT**

Manuscript No.: IJAR-55881

Title: English Language Teaching in Vietnam Buddhist University in Ha Noi City: Academic competence, cultural ethics, and pedagogical practice

Recommendation:

Accept as it is
 Accept after minor revision.....
 Accept after major revision
 Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	...			
Techn. Quality		...		
Clarity		...		
Significance	...			

Reviewer Name: Dr. Ishrat Fatima

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The paper offers a rich, context-sensitive exploration of English Language Teaching (ELT) at Vietnam Buddhist University (VBU), Ha Noi City, positioning it at the intersection of academic literacies, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and Buddhist ethical philosophy. Its central purpose is to challenge deficit-based and homogenizing models of ELT by demonstrating how English teaching can function simultaneously as a linguistic, academic, ethical, and intercultural practice. The study is significant because it addresses a notable gap in ELT scholarship: the relative absence of faith-based higher education contexts, particularly Buddhist institutions, in mainstream ELT and EAP research. By foregrounding Buddhist epistemology and moral pedagogy, the paper contributes meaningfully to debates on localization, ethics, and pluralism in global English education. The paper is theoretically grounded in the academic literacies framework, drawing heavily on Lea and Street, Hyland, Ivanić, Canagarajah, and Pennycook. This framework is well chosen, as it allows the authors to move beyond skills-based models of ELT and treat academic English as socially situated, ideologically loaded, and identity-forming. A major conceptual strength lies in the integration of Buddhist principles such as mindfulness, right speech, ethical intention, and reflective learning into discussions of academic writing, citation practices, and classroom interaction. The argument that academic discourse is inherently ethical is persuasive and well supported through both Buddhist philosophy and applied linguistics literature. The paper convincingly reframes practices like citation, paraphrasing, and plagiarism as moral and relational acts, rather than purely technical skills.

Although the paper does not adopt a rigid empirical methodology, it functions effectively as a qualitative, interpretive case study. The descriptive and analytical discussion of classroom practices, assessment rubrics, teacher mediation, and institutional philosophy provides sufficient depth to justify its claims. However, one limitation is the absence of explicit methodological detail. The paper would have been strengthened by clarifying whether the analysis is based on classroom observation, curriculum analysis, interviews, or practitioner reflection. Despite this, the rich contextual description still allows readers to understand how ELT is enacted at VBU in practice. The discussion of pedagogy is one of the paper's strongest sections. ELT at VBU is portrayed as deeply reflective and dialogic, incorporating genre-based reading, slow and mindful engagement with texts, reflective discussion, and ethical writing instruction. Academic writing is taught not merely as argument construction but as a process of identity negotiation and moral responsibility. The treatment of plagiarism and academic dishonesty is particularly nuanced. Instead of punitive approaches, the paper aligns Buddhist pedagogy with developmental views of plagiarism, drawing on Pecorari and Howard to frame "patchwriting" as a transitional literacy practice. This perspective is both pedagogically humane and theoretically sound, especially in EFL contexts. The paper excels in its analysis of intercultural communicative competence. It highlights the tension students experience between Western academic

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expectations (assertiveness, critique, authorial voice) and Buddhist values (humility, harmony, ethical restraint). Rather than viewing this tension as problematic, the authors interpret it as a productive “third space” where hybrid academic identities are formed. This discussion is well supported by references to Bhabha, Byram, Norton, and Ivanič, and it reinforces the argument that ELT should support students in becoming globally legible without erasing local epistemologies.

The paper thoughtfully addresses assessment practices, emphasizing coherence, ethical source use, rhetorical effectiveness, and reflective engagement rather than native-like accuracy alone. This aligns well with contemporary critiques of form-focused assessment in EAP.

The discussion of English Medium Instruction (EMI) is balanced and critical. EMI is presented as a scaffolded and selective strategy, supported by EAP classes and bilingual resources, rather than as an unquestioned marker of internationalization. This nuanced stance adds credibility to the institutional model described. The paper’s major contribution lies in reconceptualizing ELT as an ethical academic practice embedded in local moral philosophies. It successfully challenges the assumption that Western academic discourse norms are universally neutral or superior. Instead, it advocates for a pluralist, context-aware approach to academic English that recognizes multiple epistemologies and communicative traditions. By doing so, the study extends discussions on localization, intercultural ethics, and academic identity, offering a valuable alternative model for ELT in culturally and religiously grounded institutions.

Despite its strengths, the paper has some limitations. The methodological stance is implicit rather than explicit, which may raise questions for empirically oriented readers. The writing occasionally suffers from repetition, stylistic inconsistency, and minor language errors, which could be improved through careful editing. The paper would benefit from concrete classroom data (examples of student writing, excerpts from assessment rubrics, or teacher reflections) to further substantiate its claims. Overall, this paper is a theoretically rich, ethically grounded, and intellectually compelling contribution to ELT and EAP scholarship. Its originality lies in foregrounding Buddhist educational philosophy as a legitimate and productive framework for academic English teaching. The study successfully demonstrates that ELT need not be culturally homogenizing but can instead function as a bridge between global academic participation and local moral traditions. The paper is especially valuable for researchers, teacher educators, and policymakers interested in contextualized pedagogies, faith-based education, academic literacies, and ethical dimensions of language teaching.