

Research Article

Cite this article: Loi, N. T., & Hong, B. V. (2025). Enhancing Vietnamese Students' English Language Proficiency and Perspectives: Implementing a Proposed Framework of Integrated Skills Approach. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 17, e2025371.
<https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.17.371>

Received May 27, 2025

Accepted July 13, 2025

Published Online August 12, 2025

Keywords: Integrated skills approach, pedagogical framework, students' English proficiency, students' perspectives, General English classrooms

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Enhancing Vietnamese Students' English Language Proficiency and Perspectives: Implementing a Proposed Framework of Integrated Skills Approach

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Abstract

Background/purpose. The integrated skills approach has enhanced students' English proficiency and classroom engagement, yet challenges persist in its effective implementation. This study examines the impact of a pedagogical framework, based on six fundamental teaching stages, on students' English proficiency in General English classrooms and explores students' perspectives on participating in integrated skills lessons. Grounded in second language acquisition theory (Krashen, 1982) and the four-strand principles (Nation, 2007), the framework includes six stages: 1) lead-in, 2) meaning-focused input, 3) language-focused learning, 4) meaning-focused output, 5) feedback and assessment, and 6) follow-up activities.

Materials/methods. A quasi-experimental design was used with 90 students divided into control and experimental groups. Forty-five students in the control group participated in isolated skills classes, while forty-five students in the experimental group participated in integrated skills classes following the proposed framework. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests and interviews.

Results. Both groups showed improvement after treatment. However, students in the experimental group (integrated skills) achieved significantly higher post-test scores than those in the control group (isolated skills). Additionally, the integrated skills group demonstrated better overall proficiency and expressed more positive opinions about the lessons compared to the isolated skills group.

Conclusion. This outcome aligns with previous research, demonstrating that integrating skills significantly enhances students' overall language proficiency. However, the results in this study show a higher level of improvement compared to past findings. This highlights the importance of integrating all four skills in General English courses to further boost proficiency and student engagement.

1. Introduction

English language proficiency has grown increasingly important over the last decade, significantly contributing to effective communication, understanding, and collaboration in science, education, and business (Salomone & Salomone, 2022; Zha & Liu, 2023). Since 1995, Vietnam has focused on improving students' English proficiency for local and international cooperation (Lap et al., 2025). However, many Vietnamese university graduates struggle to use English effectively for exchanging ideas and expressing thoughts (Le, 2020). This issue is often linked to ineffective teaching methods that fail to achieve the desired outcomes. As a result, students struggle to communicate proficiently, highlighting the gap between teaching practices and learning outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2024). Therefore, innovating teaching methods is an essential responsibility of universities and teachers, contributing to improved teaching quality.

Second language literature highlights several advantages of providing students with integrated skills. The integrated skills approach improves "the framework of English instruction, teacher-student communication, and learner interest and motivation for meaningful interaction" (Shago et al., 2024, p.2). This approach benefits both teachers and students by motivating teachers to adapt teaching activities that engage students in a dynamic, natural environment. It also fosters students' ability to generate ideas and express themselves, ultimately boosting learning achievement (Darjati & Başar, 2024; Kalsum et al., 2023; Pardede, 2019). Numerous studies also found that combining listening and reading enhances reading competence, particularly for low-proficiency learners (Aka, 2024; Hui & Godfroid, 2025; Hui, 2024). Additionally, integrating all four skills can improve speaking fluency, especially in English-major classes in Japan, allowing students to perform at higher levels by promoting automatization (Onoda, 2013). Integrated reading directly impacts writing quality by positively influencing literacy development, helping students understand writing genres effectively (Al-Dosari, 2016; Alhujaylan, 2020; Deane & Philippakos, 2024; Kim et al., 2025; Tantipidok, 2025; Yerukneh et al., 2023; Zhang & Li, 2023). Integrating listening and speaking activities also helps students better comprehend messages, improving production practice (Hocaoglu & Ocak, 2024; Sadeghi & Bakhshi, 2025; Mart, 2020).

In Vietnam, the General English program has been implemented in many educational institutions for years, and it is considered compulsory in the context of globalization (Thao & Mai, 2022). General English aims to develop students' skills and ability to use English in their work. The program is designed to ensure that teaching objectives, content, and methods enable students to use English fluently for their studies and future careers. As a result, teaching General English to students is put under pressure how to enhance students' English language proficiency (Lam, 2019).

With a long history of language teaching, English teaching methods in Vietnam have been regularly innovated; however, the outcomes still show significant shortcomings. Teachers are also confronted with various methods currently in use, and there is ongoing debate about the most appropriate teaching approach. In response to these challenges, integrated skills approaches are favored by numerous educational experts and practitioners for their potential to reinforce students' language proficiency across all four skills, provide more authentic communicative experiences, and better approximate the natural way languages are learned compared to separate skills instruction (Neupane, 2024; Owusu & Maomou, 2024; Spiro, 2013). This approach integrates all four language skills - listening, reading, writing, and speaking- and language components, such as vocabulary and grammar, within a single instructional session (Kalsum et al., 2023; Owusu & Maomou, 2024).

While previous studies have been conducted investigating the impacts of implementing integrated skills approach on students' language performance, insufficient studies have been conducted to examine the extent of its impact and how the interconnection of all four skills can be equally enhanced. This study addresses this important gap by examining how much the proposed

pedagogical framework enhances students' English proficiency and exploring students' perspectives on the integrated skills class. Given the usefulness of the integrated skills approach and the lack of a pedagogical framework to facilitate its implementation, this study proposes the development of a teaching framework to improve students' English proficiency. The study will address the following two questions:

RQ1. Are there statistically significant differences in English proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) between students exposed to the proposed integrated skills framework and those taught English in a traditional classroom setting?

RQ2. What are students' perspectives on learning English through the integrated skills approach?

The significance of this study lies in its theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it is expected to enhance the understanding of language acquisition and English as a Foreign Language education by proposing a pedagogical framework for teachers to apply in their classrooms. This framework integrates all four language skills, addressing the challenges English as a Foreign Language students face in a way traditional methods have failed to achieve. The findings could have broader implications for English as a Foreign Language teaching practices. This study applies the integrated skills framework to enhance students' English proficiency and may assist teachers in Vietnam by providing an effective teaching framework to improve students' language skills.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Review of Related Studies

The integrated skills approach combines the four language skills into teaching activities to develop students' language proficiency (Aljahdali & Alshakhi, 2021; Kalsum et al., 2023). According to Herda et al. (2024), teaching integrated skills requires teachers' attempts to implement activities in a sequenced and coherent way, and they also dedicate their time to designing lessons to help students improve their language performance. The review of related studies shows that applying an integrated skills approach in the classroom fosters students' English proficiency and promotes positive perspectives compared to traditional unstructured methods.

The challenges of integration are clearly raised in language teaching. Yerukneh et al. (2023) stated that teaching one skill helps students develop proficiency in others, as skills are interconnected. For example, teaching reading skills enhances students' grammar and vocabulary, which in turn develops their speaking skills (Mart, 2012). However, Kalsum et al.'s (2023) findings revealed that teachers rarely integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in language teaching. Teachers typically integrate two or three language skills in English, except for one teacher who implemented all four skills in a lesson.

Numerous studies have examined the impact of the integrated skills approach on students' overall English competence and specific listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. For example, Ahmadnattaj and Ostovar-Namaghi (2020) conducted a meta-analysis to synthesize the effects of 22 studies on the impact of the integrated skills approach on language skills. The results showed that the integrated skills approach significantly benefits advanced learners and those at the tertiary level. In addition, Al-Busaidi (2013) analyzed how integrating reading and writing enhances the effectiveness of teaching and learning foreign languages. The study proposed and examined the effectiveness of a linear sequence of tasks, including six stages: 1) discussion and vocabulary work, 2) reading text, 3) comprehension questions, 4) a mix of activities and study tips, 5) writing assignments, and 6) writing tasks with practice on writing processes and mechanics. The findings showed that the way teachers use materials to integrate reading and writing skills was ineffective due to unclear guidelines or criteria for integration. The findings also revealed that teachers' implementation of sequenced tasks lacked interconnection. Furthermore, Park (2015) examined the extent to which

extensive reading can improve students' writing skills. Unlike Al-Busaidi's (2013) findings, this study showed that students who engaged more in listening and reading significantly improved their overall scores on the post-test. Students in the extensive reading class also outperformed those in the traditional class in content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Hadi's (2006) study also found that reading-focused activities boost students' confidence and encourage involvement in listening, speaking, and writing activities related to daily communication.

Mekheimer and Aldosari (2013) investigated the impacts of an integrated skills approach on students' language performance. The participants involved in this study included fifty-two students. Students took the pre-test before treatment and the post-test after the intervention. The findings indicated interconnecting skills helped students develop their language skills in all skills. Notably, although writing is more challenging than other language skills, students improved this skill more in the intervention group than in the control group. This result contributed to the theory of integrating skills; however, the intervention stage did not present the teaching procedure or framework for future teachers to apply in their classrooms. Onoda (2013) later examined the impacts of using integrated skills in Japanese university classrooms, which closely link skills and sequence tasks based on the exact text but use various language skills to improve English fluency. Students were guided to read a newspaper article, then watch a TV news story that covers the same theme, answer fill-in-the-blanks comprehension questions, write a summary, work on dictogloss, and discuss their reactions with partners. The participants included 86 third-year students. The treatment group was designed in an interconnected four-skills teaching format, while the control group was created in a less combined four-skills teaching instruction. The findings indicated that students demonstrated better speaking fluency performance as measured by both tests, thus supporting the integration of adaptation skills. These studies confirmed the effectiveness of integrating skills into the English language classroom.

Regarding students' perspectives, Bresnihan (2014) investigated students' perceptions of the integrated skills approach and how input, output, and interaction helped improve their performance and the development of their language skills. Sixty-six students participated in this study. The questionnaire was used to collect data. Students were first required to read the text at home or in class, write down information, opinions, and ideas related to the material they had read, and finally discuss it with a partner or in groups. The findings indicated the students recognized the importance of all three components of input, output, and interaction activities, which require using all four skills based on the same material to develop their language proficiency. Although investigating students' perceptions toward engaging in integrated skills classrooms is necessary, this study does not measure students' proficiency development.

The recent research from 2020 to 2024 also discusses this topic, reconfirming the importance of integrating skills in the classroom and calling for continuous exploration. Newton and Nation (2020) offered the sequenced skills activity of listening and reading in which students can read and listen to the text simultaneously to perform better for language focus during the activity. This stage enhanced students' listening perspectives and word segmentation skills more effectively than listening-only activities. Mart (2020) further examined the impact of emphasizing listening with top-down and bottom-up processes on developing students' oral production. The participants in this research included forty-five first-year students. Students took the test of four skills before the treatment to confirm the same proficiency and after the treatment to compare the differences in students' performance between the two groups. The findings indicate that combining listening and speaking skills significantly improves students' speech production. Exposure to language input by listening is essential for both conversation skills and language development. In the same year, Ramadhan and Hussein (2020) also evaluated the impact of integrating listening and speaking on students' speaking skills. The results indicated that this integration boosts students' speaking skills and increases their

motivation to communicate and engage in the listening and speaking classes. However, students face difficulties with self-consciousness when speaking in front of the whole class.

Miao (2021) later investigated if integrating listening and reading in dictation helps students improve listening learning results. Seventy-eight Chinese university students participated in the two groups, including the traditional and the integrated listening and reading dictation classes. Students took dictation tests and filled in open-ended questions, serving for collecting data. Students were instructed to complete dictation tasks with two requirements: integrating listening and reading and listening only. The findings showed that reading and listening dictation students demonstrated better performance regarding learning gains from hearing and that their effect was commensurate with dictation text difficulty. The findings also indicated that a dictation that integrates reading and listening skills fosters students' confidence and interest and helps them use strategies possible during listening.

In a subsequent study, Hajar (2022) explored the characteristics of integrating skills in writing class and examined the contribution of skills integration toward supporting students with writing English compositions. Twenty students participated in this study. Tests were used to gather the data. The experimental class with the connected skills sequence includes four skills integration and happened in four phases: 1) Students read and analyzed the materials and then chose one of them to discuss with their peers, 2) Students worked in groups to discuss their topic, answered questions, and wrote down the group's summary, 3) students took turn to read out their conclusion while their peers made notes, and 4) students discussed in the whole class and suggested comments and questions for their classmates. The findings found that 1) this skill integration led students to be involved in learning activities enthusiastically, 2) the skills sequence allows students to exchange ideas about writing topics, and 3) implementing this integrated skills approach positively impacts students' English written ability. The study proved that the intervention of four phases could lead to students' language proficiency. Still, the framework focused on the input stage without clearly indicating language focus practice. This hinders students from collecting grammar and vocabulary to build up for the production stage. In addition, the study examined writing only, while the other three skills were not measured. Therefore, researchers need to explore implementing an integrated skills approach to improving four language skills. Furthermore, the four phases of the treatment did not clearly state the input and output connections.

Carrying out a study in the Vietnamese context, Nguyen (2022) investigated students' perceptions of the impacts of integrating reading and writing on their writing skills. The participants included 103 students. The questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used to collect data. The results showed that students acknowledged the benefits of the reading and writing combination of writing lessons concerning content, communicative performance, language, organization, assessment, and effectiveness. Another study by Tajzad and Ostovar-Namaghi (2014) and Azis (2023) also investigated the effects of connecting skills on students' motivation and involvement. The findings showed that this pedagogical instruction promotes students' learning engagement and motivation. Especially, the study acknowledged the value of making students' learning interconnected and enjoyable. In another study, Elshahawy (2023) investigated the effectiveness of integrated listening and writing skills. The findings indicated that students had outstanding performance regarding developing their listening and writing competence. In addition, students are enthusiastic and motivated to engage in writing paragraph and essay activities.

In a similar line of inquiry, Yerukneh et al. (2023) explored how extended reading strategy training impacted students' writing performance. Sixty-one first-year students participated in the study. The study collected tests from students and then interviewed them to collect the data. The treatment was conducted in four steps, namely 1) involving students in self-study through extended reading, 2) letting students read the text extensively to brainstorm and get ideas from the texts, 3) instructing

students to relate ideas to the writing process, and 4) applying their prior ideas to use and produce language independently. The study indicated that attending extended reading strategy classes helps students enhance their writing performance and boost their motivation toward learning. The findings also showed a powerful connection between students' writing abilities and extended reading strategy training. However, the framework applied in this study may be a challenge for teachers to have time to assess students' performance and provide students with feedback. This is considered a shortcoming for the design of the classroom practice. Additionally, Zhang and Li's (2023) study indicated that collaborative reading for writing positively impacted students' learning by engaging them in developing their reading strategies and enhancing their knowledge and attention to form. However, this study did not indicate the potential in writing skills that the reading process contributes to.

Usman and Mahmud (2024) aimed to address the challenges of low speaking proficiency and motivation among forty-one second-year students by proposing and applying the integrated strategy framework. The framework involved dividing students into small groups to select topics for speaking and a practical application of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in speaking contexts. The results demonstrated significant improvements in both speaking performance and student engagement.

In a recent study, Wu (2025) explored the main phases and sub-stages during reading-to-write time. Thirty-six Chinese students participated in interviews and reflective journals to collect the data. The results indicated three primary phases, pre-reading, reading for writing, and writing from reading, which were utilized to implement the integrated lesson. Additionally, qualitative findings revealed that a new model was established, providing attention equally to the combination of reading and writing and considering students' agency. While prior models primarily focus on the writing phase, this new model provides teachers and students with balanced weight to the reading and writing phases.

2.2. Proposed Theoretical Framework

The related studies mentioned above call for an ideal framework for teachers to confidently implement in their classroom, contributing to the most effective teaching quality. This study's proposed integrated skills framework shares similarities with Krashen (1982) and Nation (2007). Therefore, the proposed integrated skills framework is developed based on two theories: second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982) and four-strands principles (Nation, 2007). The second language acquisition theory elaborates on the learners' learning process and reminds teachers to follow the teaching framework (Krashen, 1982). The principles of the four strands of language recommend that teachers guarantee the four strands, including input, output, language practice, and fluency development (Nation, 2007). Teaching language has to follow the sequence of activities or how skills are ordered in the lesson, including teachers as organizers or task assigners and students as participants to get involved in the learning activities. English should be taught in order and integrated into a pedagogical framework. Listening serves as a basement for speaking, and reading is a good input for listening. Listening and speaking support reading and writing conversely. The selected theory provides the stages of teaching listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as presented in the proposed integrated skills framework.

Han and Liddell (2014) indicated the interconnection between an integrated skills approach and an application of second language acquisition in the classroom. In detail, Han and Liddell (2014) emphasized that studies about second language acquisition could be used to design the model or framework for teaching effectively with many stages of learning, learning styles, and learning motivation in a relevant way. Similarly, Bresnihan (2014) also indicated the components of input and output in teaching integrated skills, which is compatible with the second language acquisition

theory's three components of input, output, and interaction. Bresnihan (2014) also mentioned the Nation's (2007) four principles of teaching foreign language, namely 1) meaning-focused input with receptive skills of listening and reading, 2) language-focused learning, 3) meaning-focused output with productive skills of speaking and writing, and 4) fluency practice to provide directions for teachers to follow the stages to conduct in teaching integrated skills lessons. Nation and Macalister (2020) claimed that applying these four principles in teaching foreign languages will support teachers in having a structured and coherent lesson with clear guidelines or a framework, and this also supports teachers in choosing the activities to conduct the lesson better.

In addition to the theory of second language acquisition and four principles of teaching foreign language, the proposed framework was also synthesized from the previous studies about the integrated skills framework (Azis, 2023; Bresnihan, 2014; Hajar, 2022; Mart, 2020; Miao, 2021; Newton & Nation, 2020; Onoda, 2013; Usman & Mahmud, 2024; Wu, 2025; Yerukneh et al., 2023) to develop the new integrated skills framework. The proposed framework integrates the four language skills-listening, speaking, reading, and writing-along with essential language components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar into a cohesive learning experience. The framework covers six stages, including 1) lead-in, 2) learning with meaning-focused input, 3) language-focused learning, 4) practicing meaning-focused output, 5) feedback and assessment, and 6) follow-up activities (Figure 1). The expected outcome of this study is the development of students' English language proficiency.

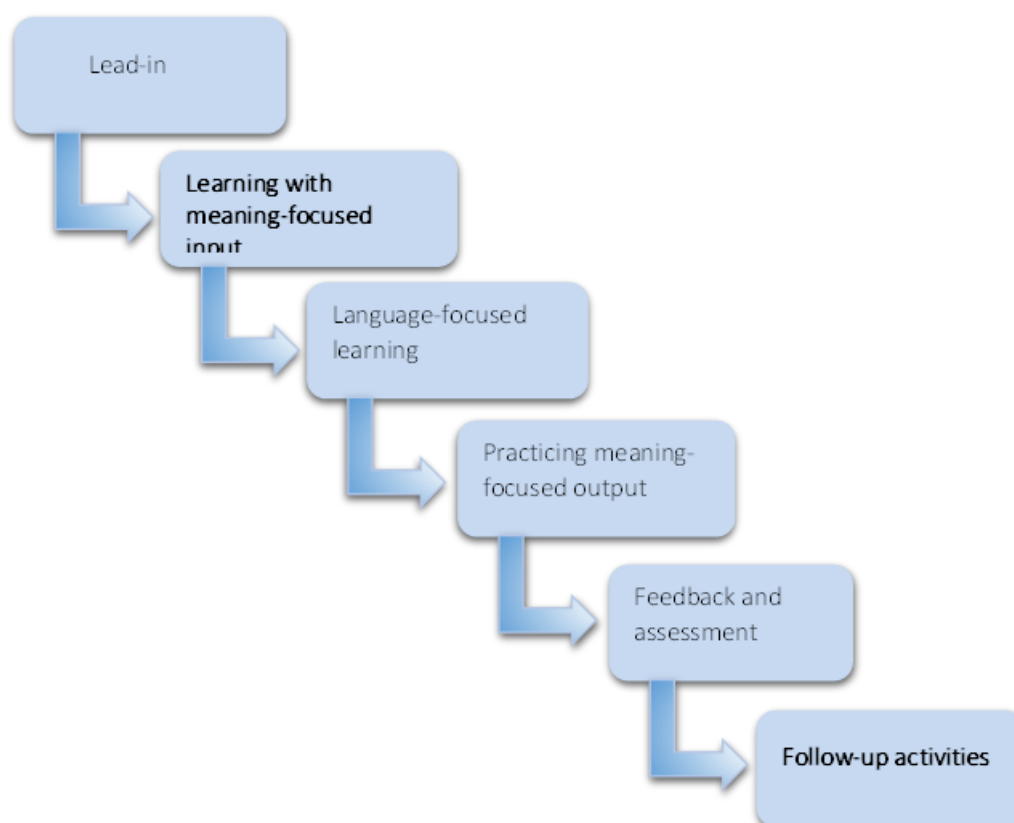


Figure 1. The proposed integrated skills framework

The first stage is the lead-in. In this stage, the teacher and students prepare for the reading and listening theme. The teacher stimulates students' foundation knowledge, which is previous life experience, making them curious about what will happen and enhancing their brains to get them to learn more new things. The teacher encourages students to guess the lesson's topic by providing them with many learning cues such as pictures, titles or book descriptions, songs, classroom facilities, or websites. The teacher could also initiate the group discussion about topics or request students to choose the answer based on the questions. No matter whether the students choose any answers,

students' ability to guess is helpful for teachers to interact with the texts. Lead-in or warm-up is an important activity to begin the lesson; however, the teacher should not spend much time on this part. Bin-Hady & Abdulsafi (2018) recommend that teachers use five minutes for a lesson and forty-five minutes for warm-up activities. Therefore, with a lesson with four periods, the teacher should use fifteen minutes for a lead-in activity.

The second stage is learning with meaning-focused input. The teacher provides students with input through listening or reading to help them get ready and become confident to produce their answers through speaking and writing. This stage equips them with ideas and vocabulary to help them confidently speak and write. Acting as a model, the teacher presents steps for students, which allows them readily to work in independent and collaborative environments. The teacher gives students a short presentation about the topic and then presents a picture or a short video clip followed by questions for discussion. A typical example of this stage is a video and reading text activity. The teacher stimulates students' previous knowledge about video and reading text. The instructions for this activity are that students watch the video clip and answer the questions. Students watch the video clip once without sound, infer the answer based on the pictures they see in the video, and watch it again with sound to complete the answer. Finally, they watch it to check the answer. Within the group of four members, students received reading text and scanned it to collect and share the information with other groups. They received new words and found their relationship without using a dictionary. They later share the results with different groups, which fosters their guessing and scanning skills, learning new words in context, and simultaneously developing their cooperation skills.

The third stage is language-focused learning. This stage helps students practice grammar structures and vocabulary that they learn in meaning-focused input based on stage 2, preparing them for productive activities for the next stage. The teacher designs questions and tasks for students to apply, thereby evaluating students' lesson understanding based on input comprehension. The teacher pays attention to how input will connect with output coherently, maximizing students' learning experience. In terms of vocabulary, based on listening and reading input, the teacher should select words with frequent appearances. The teacher could use real objects, actions, drawings, and pictures or provide synonyms or antonyms. The teacher attracts students' attention by highlighting, coloring, capitalizing the key components of grammar structures, and then finalizing the form or rules of grammar structure. The teacher instructs students to discuss or equip them with essential clues to help them master these structures. The students practice these grammatical structures with controlled accuracy and produce sentences freely.

The fourth stage is practicing meaning-focused output. This stage aims to help students use language from the same topic from input materials through listening or reading. In the second stage, it emphasizes transitions from input comprehension to output production to evaluate students' understanding and signals for students' readiness for speaking and writing. It also leads students from controlled practice to free practice. The suggested activities for this stage include dialogues, discussions and debates, information-gap activities, and dictation. In the dialogue activity, a teacher arranges students in pairs to make a dialogue. The teacher lets them choose their role, practice a conversation, and present their product to the class. In discussion and debate activities, a teacher puts students in groups and assigns them subtopics for discussion. Students work in groups to provide ideas and convince their ideas. Students then take turns to present their product by speaking in front of the class. In information-gap activities, students are allowed to work in pairs to look at pictures that look similar to those of their classmates. Students collaborate with their team members to investigate the differences among their pictures without letting other students see them. Students raise questions and describe at the same time to identify these differences. In a dictation activity, a teacher asks students to listen in pairs and write what they hear. Students could ask their partners in

pairs to repeat or spell the words and take turns practicing with their partners. In this stage, a teacher plays the role of a facilitator to manage the classroom and support the students with language.

The fifth stage is feedback and assessment. In this stage, a teacher provides students with feedback and evaluation to determine the lesson objectives and outcomes. The teacher collects the students' answer sheets, then replies to students with their strengths and weaknesses and recommends that they develop skills.

Follow-up activities are the final stage. This stage allows students to apply what they learn in the classroom to situations outside of school. A teacher asks students to work in pairs or groups to discuss the main idea of the reading passage and then explore extra vocabulary and analyze sentence structure. A teacher can also let students participate in specific events in the reading text to develop reading skills further. The teacher could flexibly allocate the following activities: explaining the difficult words and writing the words on the board, responding to listening, and correcting pronunciation mistakes.

This theoretical framework could bring more beneficial outcomes regarding students' English language proficiency and attitude toward learning. This synthesis ensures that the proposed framework maintains a combination and coherence among language skills, emphasizing practical application in General English classrooms and, thereby, addressing a gap in the previous framework.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study applied a mixed-methods design, namely an explanatory sequential research design, to obtain and analyze data comprehensively and holistically (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This design connects both quantitative and qualitative data, with the qualitative findings serving to enrich quantitative results (Berman, 2017). The quantitative component consisted of a quasi-experimental design with control and experimental groups. The qualitative section provided insights into students' opinions regarding the effects of the integrated skills approach. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-tests to assess the improvement in English language proficiency, while qualitative data were gathered from semi-structured interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the full range of effects of integrated skills teaching on students' language proficiency.

A quasi-experimental design was employed to compare students' English language performance between the experimental and control groups. Quasi-experimental designs are used because it is not feasible or ethical to randomly assign participants to different interventions (Seliger, 1989). To compare pre-test and post-test results, one intact class (N=45 students) was conveniently selected for the experimental group, and one intact class (N=45 students) was selected for the control group. The conditions concerning the school, education level, instructor, and teaching content were kept consistent for both groups. Specifically, students in both the experimental and control groups took the pre-test to ensure an equal baseline level for participation in the experimental study (Ross et al., 2005). The students then took the post-test after 19 weeks of instruction to determine whether they improved their skills. The results from both groups were compared before and after the experiment, and the post-experiment results were also compared between the two groups.

3.2. Research Participants

Convenience sampling was employed, and two intact classes were chosen because the researchers could not randomly assign participants. The two intact classes were randomly assigned to the experimental group (n=45 students) and the control group (n=45 students). Students in the experimental group studied using the integrated skills approach, while students in the control group

were taught using the isolated skills approach. The students were selected conveniently according to the researchers' teaching schedule.

The participants were second-year university students enrolled in the compulsory General English course at a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. These students had completed the two previous General English courses. General English is a compulsory subject, and students must pass its exam to meet graduation requirements. The course covers four skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The sample size was chosen to ensure adequate statistical power and representativeness, allowing meaningful comparisons and reliable conclusions. Based on the study's design and anticipated effect sizes, a sample size of thirty participants per group provides adequate statistical power to detect meaningful effects (Kraft, 2020). Results from both groups were compared before and after the experiment. The students studied once a week for four periods per meeting, lasting 19 weeks with a total of 75 periods. Both classes used the same textbook, PET.

The courses were taught by the same instructor, who also acted as the teacher-researcher for this study at a public university in Vietnam. Both classes followed the same instructional goals and curriculum. The instructor holds a Master of TESOL degree and has seven years of teaching experience. To ensure accuracy and objectivity of the experimental data, the instructor, course materials, teaching schedule, and number of class hours were consistent across both classes. Students were excluded if they failed to attend at least 80% of all class meetings.

3.3. Research Variables

The current study includes the following variables

Independent variables: Teaching Method (Integrated skills approach and Isolated skills approach)

Dependent variables: the students' English language proficiency (listening, speaking, and writing) and students' perspectives

3.4. Research Instrument

3.4.1. English Language Proficiency Tests

Two tests were used to collect data for the experimental study: the pre-test and the post-test. Both tests comprised listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, each weighted at 100%. The purpose of the tests was to measure students' improvement in English proficiency before and after attending the isolated and integrated skills classes. The pre- and post-tests were intentionally designed to ensure similarity in difficulty, featuring the same items to assess consistency in students' knowledge acquisition. The questions in both tests were different but covered the same content and topics. The types of questions and the content of the tasks were chosen from the teaching curriculum, ensuring that the content in both the pre-test and post-test was consistent. The topics for the tasks were familiar to students' life, studies, or future work, helping them communicate confidently. The tests were developed based on the Preliminary English Test (PET) from Cambridge University Press, a globally accepted and popular test. Two teachers holding Master's Degrees in English Language Teaching examined the test.

This test assesses the four language skills at an intermediate B1 level (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). The reading section includes five parts, with 35 multiple-choice questions. The writing section covers three parts, namely five sentences with filling in missing words, one task with writing an email, and one task with completing a letter or story. The listening section comprises four parts, including 19 multiple-choice questions and five questions that involve filling in missing words. The speaking section comprises four parts with both paired and individual answers. Teachers who did not officially attend the treatment process marked the students' tests. The researchers did not reveal the pre- or post-test papers. The tests were measured based on four

criteria: content, organization, language, and grammatical accuracy. Scores were calculated using a 10-point scale to comply with the Vietnamese assessment system. The researchers conducted pilot tests to adjust any errors. These tests showed high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.72 for the pre-test and 0.86 for the post-test ($p > .05$), indicating strong internal consistency in assessing students' English language proficiency.

3.4.2. Semi-structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was used as the follow-up instrument for this study. Semi-structured interviews allowed researchers to ask participants for additional information. These interviews were conducted with students from both the experimental and control groups to further investigate their opinions and experiences. The interview questions were adapted from Bresnihan's (2014) study with four questions. Based on students' scores in the post-test, six students from each of the three performance levels – high, middle, and low – were randomly selected to participate in the interview. The sample comprised three representatives from each level. The interviews were conducted one week after the intervention. Three teachers in English Language Teaching validated the interview questions using the item-objective congruence index (IOC), which resulted in a score of 0.90, indicating that the instruments were valid. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to prevent the second language from negatively impacting participants' thinking processes. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes per group.

3.5. Research Procedure

In this study, the proposed pedagogical framework with six stages was used to implement the integrated skills class. The intervention lasted for 19 weeks. The teaching unit consisted of eight units. The topics of the course were selected with students' agreement and colleagues' consultation. Students attended the integrated skills approach classroom based on weekly topics: Week 1 - Course introduction; Week 2 and 3 – Unit 1: Homes and habits; Week 4 and 5 – Unit 2: Student days; Week 6 and 7 – Unit 3: Fun time; Week 8 and 9 – Unit 4: Our world; Week 10: Midterm test; Week 11 and 12 – Unit 5: Feelings; Week 13 and 14 – Unit 6: Leisure and fashion; Week 15 and 16 – Unit 7: Out and about; Week 17 and 18 – Unit 8: This is me!; Week 19: Course review and Wrap-up. The class met once a week for a total of four periods (200 minutes).

The Experimental Group

Students in both the experimental and control groups were taught the same coursebook. The themes for both groups were similar. Students in the experimental group studied using the integrated skills approach, while students in the control group studied using the isolated skills approach. The integrated pedagogical framework was designed and applied in the General English class with the integrated skills approach, including six stages: 1) lead-in, 2) learning with meaning-focused input, 3) language-focused learning, 4) practicing meaning-focused output, 5) feedback and assessment, 6) follow-up activities (Table 1).

Table 1. A proposal of a pedagogical framework of integrated skills approach

Stage	Purpose	Time allocation
1. Lead-in	Establish the context of the lesson and stimulate students with previous knowledge about the topic	15 minutes
2. Learning with meaning-focused input	Provide students with knowledge about the topic and equip them with input through listening and reading, enabling them to obtain adequate knowledge to produce speaking and writing	45 minutes
3. Language-focused learning	Help students learn grammatical structure and vocabulary used in the reading and listening from stage 2 to prepare them for productive activities	30 minutes
4. Practicing meaning-focused output	Transition the input to output, allowing students to use the input from listening and reading to produce speaking and writing both accurately and fluently	60 minutes
5. Feedback and assessment	Comment on and evaluate students' performance, measuring whether students' outcomes satisfy the objectives of the lesson	20 minutes
6. Follow-up activities	Provide students with more opportunities to consolidate the knowledge they have learned	30 minutes

The Control Group

Like the experimental group, students in the control group also attended the General English class for 19 weeks. Each lesson followed the teaching cycle, which included several stages. First, the warm-up usually related to current trends to attract students' attention. The teacher designed games to help groups compete against each other, making the class atmosphere more engaging (30 minutes). Second, the teacher conducted the reading and vocabulary section. The teacher introduced reading strategies and then instructed the students to work on vocabulary in the textbook (80 minutes). Third, the teacher presented grammar and asked students to practice. Specifically, the teacher explained the instructions in the textbook, demonstrated a sample, and let students complete the grammar exercises in the textbook. Finally, the teacher focused on teaching reading and listening. The teacher introduced strategies for the reading and listening sections. After students finished the reading and listening tasks, the teacher explained the answers to the students. Based on the themes of the reading and listening tasks, the teacher designed additional exercises on reading and listening for further practice, helping students relate the content to their lives (80 minutes). The differences between the experimental and control groups were: 1) the order in which the skills were presented, 2) the number of skills combined, 3) the time allocated to each skill, 4) the selection of activities, and 5) the sequencing of the skills.

3.6. Data Collection

The pre-test was administered one week before the intervention, and the post-test was administered one week after the intervention. The students took two different tests of the same level to avoid repetition bias. Students took the paper test and were not allowed to use electronic devices during the test. Data from participants who were absent from some treatment sessions were discarded from the analysis. Accordingly, the number of students in both groups remained at 45 students per group. The researchers' colleagues served as test examiners to observe the testing process, ensuring the reliability and fairness of the two groups. Two teachers worked as raters and

evaluated students' speaking performance. Their ratings showed consistency and agreement without conflicts. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all variables ($p > .05$) indicated that the raters' scores were highly reliable. One-on-one interviews were then conducted to obtain qualitative accounts of the participants' integrated skills learning. Six students agreed to participate in the interviews. All interviews followed the same guidelines. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes. Follow-up questions were asked when necessary to clarify any ambiguity in the students' responses. The interviews were audio-recorded for future transcription, review, and thematic analysis.

3.7. Data Analysis

To address the objective of the study, methods of both quantitative and qualitative analysis were applied. Quantitatively, after gathering the data through tests, the scores of each group were calculated and compared with each other. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was utilized to analyze the data. First, the researchers ran Levene's tests to confirm the normal distribution of the data. Then, the researchers performed independent and paired samples t-tests to obtain the final results. The analyses involved reporting means, standard deviations (Std. Dev.), Min, Max, Mean Difference, and significance (Sig.) for each within-group and between-group comparison. Qualitatively, Nvivo software was utilized to transcribe and export the interview data. The themes were identified and used for the coding process. Finally, a researcher double-checked the coding to ensure reliability, identifying and summarizing key themes. Representative excerpts were selected to illustrate students' perspectives (Johnson & Christensen, 2024).

3.8. Equivalence of Study Groups

The normality of both the pretest and posttest score distributions was assessed using Levene's test. The results indicated that the distribution of test scores was normal. An Independent Samples T-test was conducted to examine the hypothesis regarding the mean difference between the experimental and control groups (Table 2). The results showed no significant differences in variances.

Table 2. Independent Samples T-test (Pre-test for Both Groups)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	7.840	.006	-1.291	88	.200
Equal variances not assumed			-1.291	66.211	.201

The results from Table 2 suggest no significant differences in variances between the groups. Therefore, the t-test results assuming equal variances were used. Additionally, the difference between the groups was not significant ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that both groups were at the same level prior to receiving the treatment.

An Independent Samples T-test was also conducted to examine the hypothesis regarding the mean difference between the experimental and control groups on the post-test (Table 3).

Table 3. Independent Samples T-test (Post-test for Both Groups)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	19.333	.000	15.018	88	.000
Equal variances not assumed			15.018	63.713	.000

The results from Table 3 indicate that the significance level (Sig = .000) is lower than 0.05, suggesting a significant difference in variances between the two groups. These differences are unlikely to have occurred by chance.

3.9. Ethical Consideration

Participants were assigned anonymously, and the data was used solely for research purposes, without any other intentions. The names of universities and students were kept confidential to ensure ethical standards were upheld.

4. Results

4.1. The Impact of Proposed Integrated Skills Approach Framework

The first research question concerned whether there are statistically significant differences in the English language proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) between the students who are exposed to the proposed integrated skills approach framework and those who are taught English language skills in a traditional classroom setting.

4.1.1. Initial Differences Between Treatment Groups (Pre-Test)

The independent t-test was used to determine whether there was any significant difference in the pre-test scores between the experimental and control groups before the intervention. The relevant data are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Group Statistics between two Groups (Pre-test)

Skills	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Listening	Exp.	45	3.36	0.67	2.00	5.20
	Control	45	4.02	0.51	2.80	4.80
Speaking	Exp.	45	4.42	0.75	3.00	6.50
	Control	45	4.47	0.51	3.50	5.50
Reading	Exp.	45	4.79	0.72	3.50	6.50
	Control	45	4.60	0.69	3.60	6.80
Writing	Exp.	45	4.50	0.97	3.00	7.60
	Control	45	4.43	0.58	3.00	5.60
Total	Exp.	45	4.30	0.60	3.20	6.20
	Control	45	4.43	0.31	3.80	5.20

Table 4 shows that before the intervention, the control group and the experimental group had no significant differences in overall language proficiency ($M = 4.43$ vs. 4.30). The control group also exhibited greater consistency ($SD = 0.31$ vs. 0.60), suggesting a more homogeneous participant profile. Skill-specific results indicate that the experimental group was weaker in Listening ($M = 3.36$ vs. 4.02) compared to the control group and showed little difference with the other skills, including Speaking ($M = 4.42$ vs. 4.47), Reading ($M = 4.79$ vs. 4.60), and Writing ($M = 4.50$ vs. 4.43). Overall, while the two groups were generally comparable, the experimental group and control group were equal in conducting the treatment.

Table 5. Independent Samples T-test between two Groups (Pre-test)

Skills	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference	Sig.
Listening	Exp.	45	3.36	0.67	-0.66	0.00
	Control	45	4.02	0.51		
Speaking	Exp.	45	4.42	0.75	-0.55	0.68
	Control	45	4.47	0.51		
Reading	Exp.	45	4.79	0.72	0.18	0.22
	Control	45	4.60	0.69		
Writing	Exp.	45	4.50	0.97	0.68	0.68
	Control	45	4.43	0.58		
Total	Exp.	45	4.30	0.60	-0.13	0.20
	Control	45	4.43	0.31		

Table 5 presents the results of independent samples t-tests comparing the experimental and control groups prior to intervention. While mean differences were observed across all skills—most notably in Listening (-0.66) and less so in Speaking (-0.55), Reading (0.18), Writing (0.68), and Total scores (-0.13)—the statistical significance levels indicate that, apart from Listening, none of these differences were meaningful. Specifically, p-values for Speaking ($p = 0.68$), Reading ($p = 0.22$), Writing ($p = 0.68$), and the Total score ($p = 0.20$) were all greater than 0.05 , suggesting no significant differences between the two groups in these domains. Only in Listening was a statistically significant difference found ($p = 0.00$), favoring the control group. This indicates that while participants were largely equivalent across most language skills before the intervention, attention must be taken in interpreting Listening outcomes post-treatment, as the groups were not fully matched in this area at baseline.

4.1.2. Longitudinal Differences Within Each Treatment Group (Pre vs. Post-Test)

To determine whether teaching with proposed integrated framework and traditional current framework have positive impact on students' language proficiency, the researcher conducted a paired samples t-test to compare the mean of the pre-test's and post-test's scores of both the control group and experimental group. The relevant data are presented in Table 6-7-8-9.

Table 6. Paired Samples Statistics of Control Group (Pre-and Post-test)

Pair	Skills	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
1	Listening	Pre-test	45	3.36	0.67	2.00	5.20
		Post-test	45	5.41	0.81	3.20	7.20
2	Speaking	Pre-test	45	4.42	0.75	3.00	6.50
		Post-test	45	7.44	0.84	6.00	8.50
3	Reading	Pre-test	45	4.79	0.72	3.50	6.50
		Post-test	45	7.23	0.56	5.00	8.00
4	Writing	Pre-test	45	4.50	0.97	3.00	7.60
		Post-test	45	7.31	0.65	5.90	8.50
5	Total	Pre-test	45	4.30	0.60	3.20	6.20
		Post-test	45	6.87	0.56	5.10	7.80

Table 6 presents the paired samples statistics comparing the experimental group's pre- and post-test results. Clear improvements were observed across all four language skills and the total score after the integrated instruction intervention. Listening scores rose significantly, with the mean increasing from 3.36 (SD = 0.67) to 5.41 (SD = 0.81), reflecting a noticeable upward shift in both minimum and maximum values. Similarly, Speaking skills improved, as evidenced by the increase in mean scores from 4.42 (SD = 0.75) to 7.44 (SD = 0.84), with a narrowed score range indicating greater overall proficiency. Reading and Writing also demonstrated substantial gains. The Reading mean rose from 4.79 to 7.23, while Writing improved from 4.50 to 7.31. Reductions in standard deviations for Reading and Writing suggest not only mean improvement but also enhanced consistency among learners. The total average score increased from 4.30 (SD = 0.60) to 6.87 (SD = 0.56), confirming that the integrated instruction approach fostered comprehensive advancement in students' English language abilities.

Table 7. Paired Samples T-test of Control Group (Pre-and Post-test)

Pair	Skills	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference	Sig.
1	Listening	Pre-test	45	3.36	0.67	-2.05	0.00
		Post-test	45	5.41	0.81		
2	Speaking	Pre-test	45	4.42	0.75	-3.02	0.00
		Post-test	45	7.44	0.84		
3	Reading	Pre-test	45	4.79	0.72	-2.44	0.00
		Post-test	45	7.23	0.56		
4	Writing	Pre-test	45	4.50	0.97	-2.80	0.00
		Post-test	45	7.31	0.65		
5	Total	Pre-test	45	4.30	0.60	-2.57	0.00
		Post-test	45	6.87	0.56		

Table 7 presents the results of paired samples t-tests examining pre- and post-test differences in the experimental group. Statistically significant improvements were found across all four language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) as well as in the overall proficiency scores. The two-tailed significance values for all skill areas and the total score were $p = 0.00$, well below the conventional 0.05 threshold, confirming that the observed improvements were highly significant. The mean differences were substantial: 2.05 for Listening, 3.02 for Speaking, 2.44 for Reading, 2.80 for Writing, and 2.57 for the total score, indicating marked gains following the integrated instruction intervention.

Table 8. Paired Samples Statistics of Experimental Group (Pre-and Post-test)

Pair	Skills	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
6	Listening	Pre-test	45	4.02	0.51	2.80	4.80
		Post-test	45	4.68	0.48	3.60	5.60
7	Speaking	Pre-test	45	4.47	0.51	3.50	5.50
		Post-test	45	5.65	0.52	5.00	6.50
8	Reading	Pre-test	45	4.60	0.69	3.60	6.80
		Post-test	45	5.73	0.61	5.00	7.00
9	Writing	Pre-test	45	4.43	0.58	3.00	5.60
		Post-test	45	5.67	0.49	4.50	6.60
10	Total	Pre-test	45	4.43	0.31	3.80	5.20
		Post-test	45	5.47	0.27	4.90	6.00

Table 8 indicates a general improvement in students' performance across all four language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) and overall proficiency in the control group after the intervention period. For Listening (Pair 6), the mean score increased from 4.02 (SD = 0.51) to 4.68 (SD = 0.48), with post-test scores ranging from 3.60 to 5.60. In Speaking (Pair 7), students showed a notable improvement from a mean of 4.47 (SD = 0.51) to 5.65 (SD = 0.52). Reading scores (Pair 8) also rose from a mean of 4.60 (SD = 0.69) to 5.73 (SD = 0.61). Similarly, in Writing (Pair 9), the mean increased from 4.43 (SD = 0.58) to 5.67 (SD = 0.49). Overall, the total average score (Pair 10) improved from 4.43 (SD = 0.31) to 5.47 (SD = 0.27).

Table 9. Paired Samples T-test of Experimental Group (Pre-and Post-test)

Pair	Skills	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference	Sig.
6	Listening	Pre-test	45	4.02	0.51	-0.65	0.00
		Post-test	45	4.68	0.48		
7	Speaking	Pre-test	45	4.47	0.51	-1.17	0.00
		Post-test	45	5.65	0.52		
8	Reading	Pre-test	45	4.60	0.69	-1.12	0.00
		Post-test	45	5.73	0.61		
9	Writing	Pre-test	45	4.43	0.58	-1.24	0.00
		Post-test	45	5.67	0.49		
10	Total	Pre-test	45	4.43	0.31	-1.04	0.00
		Post-test	45	5.47	0.27		

Table 9 shows statistically significant improvements in all four language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) and the overall proficiency scores among students in the experimental group. Specifically, all five pairs (Pairs 6–10) recorded two-tailed significance values of 0.00, indicating significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores. Mean differences were as follows: Listening (-0.65), Speaking (-1.17), Reading (-1.12), Writing (-1.24), and Overall (-1.04).

4.1.3. Final Differences Between Treatment Groups (Post-Test)

Finally, the researchers ran an independent sample t-test to analyze the difference in the post-test scores of the control and the experimental groups. The relevant data are presented in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10. Group Statistics between two Groups (Post-test)

Skills	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Listening	Exp.	45	5.41	0.81	3.20	7.20
	Control	45	4.68	0.48	3.60	5.60
Speaking	Exp.	45	7.44	0.84	6.00	8.50
	Control	45	5.65	0.52	5.00	6.50
Reading	Exp.	45	7.23	0.56	5.00	8.00
	Control	45	5.73	0.61	5.00	7.00
Writing	Exp.	45	7.31	0.65	5.90	8.50
	Control	45	5.67	0.49	4.50	6.60
Total	Exp.	45	6.87	0.56	5.10	7.80
	Control	45	5.47	0.27	4.90	6.00

Table 10 shows that the experimental group (integrated skills approach) outperformed the control group (independent skills approach) in all skills. The experimental group had a higher overall mean score (6.87) compared to the control group (5.47), with scores ranging from 6.00 to 7.80 for the experimental group, and 4.90 to 6.00 for the control group. In listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the experimental group also scored higher, with notable differences in mean scores. For example, the experimental group's mean in speaking was 7.44 compared to 5.65 in the control group, and in reading, the experimental group scored 7.23 compared to 5.73 in the control group. Overall, these results indicate that the integrated skills approach had a positive impact on students' English proficiency.

Table 11. Independent Samples T-test between two Groups (Post-test)

Skills	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference	Sig.
Listening	Exp.	45	5.41	0.81	0.73	0.00
	Control	45	4.68	0.48		
Speaking	Exp.	45	7.44	0.84	1.78	0.00
	Control	45	5.65	0.52		
Reading	Exp.	45	7.23	0.56	1.49	0.00
	Control	45	5.73	0.61		
Writing	Exp.	45	7.31	0.65	1.63	0.00
	Control	45	5.67	0.49		
Total	Exp.	45	6.87	0.56	1.40	0.00
	Control	45	5.47	0.27		

The independent samples t-test results in Table 11 demonstrate statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups across all language skills and total scores ($p = 0.00$ for all comparisons). The experimental group's notably higher mean scores - particularly in Speaking (+1.78) and Writing (+1.63) - suggest that integrated skill instruction fosters stronger language development than traditional isolated-skill teaching. These findings imply that integrated approaches promote not only broader linguistic proficiency but also deeper communicative competence by enabling students to apply multiple skills in authentic contexts. The data provide robust evidence that integrated teaching methods offer substantial educational advantages, better preparing learners for real-world language use.

4.2. Students' Perspectives

The second research question concerned students' perspectives toward learning English through an integrated skills approach. These findings were corroborated by interviews conducted with three students from the control group and three students from the experimental group after the experimental study. The results revealed that students acknowledged that integrating the four skills in the classroom boosted their learning engagement. From the interviews, four key themes emerged: perspectives about the connection between listening, speaking, reading, and writing; meaning-focused input; activities that involved other skills; and a combination of various skill-based activities.

A Connection between Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

In the interviews, more than half of the participants (4/6) acknowledged that there is a close relationship among the four language skills. For example, one student explained, "The four skills-listening, speaking, reading, and writing-are closely connected. When I read a lot, I learn how to use vocabulary, which helps me write better. When I listen often, I learn pronunciation and how to respond more quickly, which improves my speaking skills. These skills are not separate; they support, complement, and develop alongside one another." Another student stated, "In my opinion, four skills are related, but I think skills should be taught separately to help me learn knowledge in depth. This is because if I learn four skills in the same lesson, knowledge is not focused." This suggests that students understand the skills are closely linked but they still believe that skills should be taught separately to foster deeper knowledge.

Meaning-Focused Input

During the interviews, all participants (3/3) in the experimental group acknowledged the importance of using receptive skills (listening and reading) as a foundation for producing speaking and writing skills, while almost students (2/3) in the control group considered receptive skills as less important for their learning process. For example, student 1 in experimental group stated, "I feel interested because approaching a lesson through listening and reading provides more information about the topic, making it easier to practice and improve speaking and writing skills. This also forms a solid foundation for developing those productive skills." Unlike students in experimental group, student 1 in the control group said, "I think speaking and writing skills are more important for me to learn English because it requires me to think and develop ideas. I feel that it is extremely for me. By contrast, listening and reading skills do not require me to produce a response. As a result, I participate more enthusiastically in class and no longer feel afraid of making mistakes as when speaking or writing. I think teachers could skip listening and reading. It is fine for me." This implies that students who are not taught in an integrated skills classroom, where receptive skills do not come first, are not provided with opportunities to use materials from listening and reading to support their productive skills, which limits their ability to speak and write. By contrast, students in integrated skills classes performed better in listening, reading, writing and speaking skills.

Activities that Involved Other Skills

Among the six interviewees, all students in the experimental group (3/3) and one student (1/3) in the control group reported that activities involving multiple skills were more enjoyable. One participant in the experimental group shared, "Taking part in activities that integrate multiple skills under the same topic helps me understand the lesson more deeply. Combining different skills around one theme is like 'seeing the whole picture' instead of just looking at one clue. When I listen, read, and also practice speaking and writing, I retain the knowledge longer, make better connections between pieces of information, and use English more effectively." One participant in the control group added, "combining various activities from different skills helps me improve my speaking and writing skills much more effectively. When I focus only on practicing speaking or writing separately, sometimes I run out of ideas or feel uncertain about how to express myself. However, when I listen and read beforehand, I gain more data to apply, which makes my speaking sound more natural and my writing more coherent." This feedback suggests that skills are interconnected, and integrating different activities can help students stay engaged and motivated to learn English.

A Combination of Various Skill-Based Activities

Through the interview, all students in the experimental group (3/3) and one student (1/3) in the control group acknowledged the effectiveness of combining various skill-based activities in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. One participant in the control group shared, "I feel that when I combine multiple skills in one lesson, I learn more effectively. Practicing listening and reading helps me learn new vocabulary and expressions, which I can then apply to speaking and writing. Compared to practicing each skill separately, this approach clearly improves my speaking and writing skills." One participant in the control group expressed, "I am interested in studying English for each skill separately because I could deeply understand the lesson and focus on what I want to discover". This feedback suggests that not all students recognize the importance of integrating different activities in the classroom; the value of the integrated skills approach cannot be denied. Therefore, teachers should integrate all four skills into their lessons. Emphasizing the importance of input materials and language practice will support students by providing them with the necessary ideas, grammar, and vocabulary to effectively engage in speaking and writing.

5. Discussion

The study aimed to see if there was a significant difference in overall English language skills enhancement between the proposed integrated skills approach and unconnected skills teaching. The results show that the method applied with the proposed integrated skills achieved higher success in the experimental group, thus determining that the method is effective in language teaching. The experimental group was treated with various integrated skills activities including dialogues, discussions and debates, information-gap activities, and dictation where students had chances to interact with classmates and teachers exchange ideas, present their role in a conversation, express their opinion in front of the class, and receive feedback from the teacher and other classmates.

One possible reason for the significant improvement in students' overall English language skills is the input students are exposed to. Students could watch a video clip and be provided with a reading text. They were then asked to have a short presentation about the topic and then present a picture or a short video clip, followed by questions for discussion. The theories that support this finding are the theory of second language acquisition and the four-strand principles of foreign language teaching, which propose an integrated skills teaching framework as an effective and innovative approach to General English lessons. The outcome is consistent with previous studies (Mekheimer & Aldosari, 2013; Onoda, 2013), which found that integrated skills approaches - using linked tasks across four skills and sequential tasks based on a single text - enhanced English fluency in university classrooms. Similarly, Hajar (2022) found that an integrated skills approach in writing classes facilitated students' ability to compose in English. The positive impact of the proposed framework can be attributed to the inclusion of varied input materials (Busaidi, 2013). These findings reinforce the validity of the framework in enhancing overall language skills in foreign language classrooms.

This study offers two key advantages compared to previous research (Busaidi, 2013; Hajar, 2022; Mekheimer & Aldosari, 2013; Onoda, 2013). First, the proposed framework enhances students' proficiency across all language skills, rather than focusing on just one or two. While many previous studies have concentrated on frameworks that target specific skills, this study's approach supports the development of both receptive and productive skills. Second, the framework provides a foundation that teachers can officially implement in future General English classrooms.

The findings also indicate that the framework positively influences students' engagement in General English classrooms. The students expressed significantly higher levels of satisfaction due to the application of the integrated skills teaching framework. This aligns with the findings of Azis (2023), Bresnihan (2014) and Nguyen (2022), who reported that integrated pedagogical approaches enhance learners' motivation and engagement. Several factors may explain why integrated skills teaching fosters higher motivation and engagement. Students are given opportunities to assume various roles in different activities, participate in conversations, and interact with classmates by changing seats. These activities allow students to continuously engage, think critically, respond, and stimulate their minds. Consequently, students valued the opportunities to practice skills with peers, which they could recycle across different language tasks (Pardede, 2019). As a result, students in the integrated skills class consistently expressed positive opinions about their learning experience. The insights gained from this process could further inform the development of frameworks integrating the four language skills.

Overall, this study supports previous research. By employing an experimental design that compared the proposed framework with a traditional teaching model, the study confirms that the integrated skills framework is more effective in improving students' language proficiency and fostering positive attitudes toward learning English with higher language proficiency. This finding highlights the framework's superiority over traditional instructional models and underscores its value in teaching General English.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to enhance students' English proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) through an integrated skills approach based on the proposed framework. The findings demonstrate that the framework effectively improved students' overall proficiency, fostering a collaborative and active learning environment. In a General English classroom, receptive skills (listening and reading) alone are insufficient; they must be combined with productive skills (writing and speaking) to create a more meaningful and comprehensive lesson. Post-test results showed that students in the integrated skills group, using the proposed six-stage framework, outperformed those in the independent skills group across all four language skills. This approach not only improved students' language performance but also enriched their learning experience. A semi-structured interview revealed that most students in the experimental group believed the integrated approach - combining listening, speaking, reading, and writing - enhanced both their language performance and engagement while students in the control group did not recognize the importance of learning in integrated skills lessons. Consequently, it is recommended that the proposed framework be implemented in various classrooms, with further empirical studies dedicated to evaluating its potential. These results offer important pedagogical insights for language teachers, highlighting the benefits of the integrated skills approach for students studying English as a general subject.

7. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

The study acknowledges several limitations and suggests several potential directions for future research. First, while the study significantly impacted the proposed integrated skills framework on students' overall language proficiency, it did not examine the long-term sustainability of this effectiveness. Future studies should investigate the permanent effects of this suggested framework on whether students' language performance is sustained over a more extended period. Second, the study utilized a convenience sampling method coupled with a quasi-experimental design to select students for the treatment and control groups, which could limit the power of statistical results. It is suggested that a more comprehensive experiment, which uses a random sampling method with a true experimental design, be conducted to broaden the findings comprehensively. Third, the study was conducted with a small sample size of participants in a single school, which could limit the generalizability of the findings to other research settings. It is recommended that future studies be conducted with larger and more diverse samples.

Declarations

Author Contributions. Both authors have accepted responsibility for the entire content of this manuscript and approved its submission.

Conflicts of Interest. The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding. This research received no funding.

Ethical Approval. Anonymity was ensured by removing information about the participants' identities.

Data Availability Statement. The data supporting this study's findings are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments. During the preparation of this work, the authors used Grammarly and ChatGPT to support editing in terms of accuracy, sentence coherence, and clarity. The authors declare that they reviewed and edited the final output as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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