

## Students' Perceptions of the Effects of Questioning At Pre-Reading Stage on Reading Comprehension: A Case at a Vietnamese University

Ngan Kim Bui, Huan Buu Nguyen, Thai Hong Ly, Anh Lan Pham

Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Article History</b></p> <p>Received: May 15, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: December 19, 2021</p> <p><b>Keywords :</b> Perceptions, Questioning, Reading, Questioning At Pre- Reading Stage</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> 10.5281/zenodo.5792113</p>	<p><i>Research into questioning at pre-reading stage has indicated its effects on English as a foreign language (EFL) students' reading performance. However, research into perceptions about such effects on students' reading performance is still limited. This current study therefore aimed to explore students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at pre-reading stage on EFL students' reading performance in a Vietnamese context. Data collected in this study include questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Participants in this study were 118 students of English as a foreign language in English Studies program at a university in the Mekong delta. Findings from this study indicate that questioning at pre-reading stage was found to be an effective instructional tool for enhancing students' reading performance. Pedagogical implications for teachers and students are also presented.</i></p>

### Introduction

In the current integration era, English as an international language plays an important role in several fields of life, namely business, management, science, technology, and education. Thus, the need for English language proficiency by students is addressed to respond to social, professional, and educational contexts in the globalized world (Nguyen, Haworth, & Hansen, 2019).

In Vietnam, students have to learn English as a foreign language in school across the schools, from elementary to tertiary levels. Reading, one of the four most important English language skills, is necessary for mastering knowledge of disciplines and processing information in appropriate and meaningful ways.

In reality, however, reading is by far the most complicated skill of the four English language skills. Recognizing the gist of the reading text is found to be challenging for the readers because they need a great amount of background knowledge related to the contents of the text, as noted in the literature (e.g., Israel & Duffy, 2009; Nunan, 2003). It was found that students in Vietnam higher education institutions were weak in reading comprehension, insufficient relevant background knowledge and inappropriate reading methods (Le & Nguyen, 2017). Lack of relevant background knowledge and suitable reading strategies were observed to be two big challenges for students to enhance or use their reading skills to process information from texts provided to them (Grabe, 2009).

One way to help students enhance their reading comprehension is through questioning at pre-reading stage (PRS). This type of practice is seen to stimulate students' relevant background knowledge and interest in learning reading in reading classes (Hong & Nguyen, 2019). In reality, however, there exists limited research into this constructivist learning influencing students' reading comprehension and particularly, their perceptions of this questioning strategy at PRS may impact on their practice. This paper therefore investigates students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS on EFL students' reading comprehension.

### 1. Literature Review

#### 1.1 Perceptions

Perception is viewed as the process that information interprets based on senses to understand everything around us (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001). Perceptions are likely to influence individuals' thinking (Borg, 2015). Perceptions, in particular, are shaped by individuals' learning ability and concentration or expectation. These views suggest that students' perceptions are necessary for their learning process in relation to their thinking. For the purposes of this study, perceptions are viewed as individuals' sensory information to understand a particular topic of interest.

#### 1.2 Reading comprehension

Reading is one of the most important skills in English foreign language learning. It is an interactive activity of decoding the meaning-making process between the reader and the text (Grabe, 2009; Nuttall, 2005). According to Nuttall (2005), reading is viewed as an interactive process of decoding the meaning generated from the text

based on the reader's knowledge and the context. In a same vein, reading comprehension refers to the ability of individual students to deal with the text and to decode its message (Grabe, 2009). Reading comprehension requires the ability to know words, understand the word meaning, analyze the organization of the passage, decode the contents of the text, make inferences, and answer the questions (Israel & Duffy, 2009).

### 1.3 Questioning

Questioning is grounded on the work of Socrates as it refers to a form of inquiry that motivates students to think about a particular topic for effective learning (Maphosa & Wadesango, 2016; P. N. T. Phan & Nguyen, 2021; Şeker & Kömür, 2008). Drawn on Socratic perspective, questioning is related to the view of making student learning more interactive (Fahim, 2012). Other views stress that questioning allows students to understand, participate, and evaluate what is going to read (Maphosa & Wadesango, 2016). As a matter of fact, questioning activates students' prior knowledge, extend their thinking, and interpret the meaning from a particular text (Hill, 2016; Le & Nguyen, 2017; Yang, 2017). Thus, questioning as a pre-reading activity involves lesson delivery and directions for students to facilitate their learning (Amalia & Devanti, 2016; Hong & Nguyen, 2019). From the social constructivist learning theory, questioning is therefore essential because teachers act as facilitators of student learning and students as active participants of constructing new knowledge (Farrell & Mom, 2015). For the purpose of this study, questioning is defined as a teacher's questions that give students the opportunity to articulate their thoughts and interaction in processing knowledge for effective comprehension and learning. This paper therefore extends to the literature on questioning as a pre-reading stage to enhance student reading comprehension.

A study by Pham and Hamid (2013) explored the relationship between teachers' beliefs about the quality of questions and their questioning practice regarding students' cognitive level. Findings reveal a difference between teachers' beliefs and their practices in four aspects: purposes, content focus, cognitive level, and lexis and syntax. These authors believed that reading comprehension questions were used to check students' memory of previous lesson contents, give students prompts, and promote students' thinking skills. In practices, questioning allows the teacher to recheck or give students more clues to a subject specific matter.

A study by Tran and Phuong (2018) focuses on the effects of questioning and semantic map in pre-reading stage on 52 grade 12 students' reading in the Vietnamese context. The findings from the interview data and tests indicate that using students' schema through questioning as a pre-reading stage influenced student comprehension.

A case study by Do and Tran (2020) reported teachers' questioning in English reading classes. Data collected in this study include audio-recording and classroom observations from three reading classes where a teacher and 30 freshmen of English majors participated. The findings reveal that audience-oriented and content-oriented questions could involve students in interactive learning with higher level of cognitive competence.

A recent doctoral study by Phan (2020) looked into how teachers and students perceived and used questions to improve teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in tertiary classrooms in a public university, Vietnam. Interviews with eight teachers, focus groups with eight students, and observations of eight classes were data gathering tools for this study. The findings reveal that questioning could yield English learning through critical thinking and collaborative learning. However, this benefit from questioning was largely dependent on the role of the teachers.

Despite the positive effects of questioning on student reading process, little research has investigated students' perceptions of questioning at pre-reading stage in English Language Studies classes. This paper therefore extends the literature on this area.

### 1.4 Questioning at pre-reading stage (PRS)

The questioning strategy is widely held as one of the most popular instructional way to promote student thinking and understanding of how to process information (Nuttall, 2005). This type of practice can be done at different stages of a lesson delivery: pre, during, and post. Questioning at pre-reading stage (PRS) is seen as crucial and effective since it may allow students to predict the contents of the reading text and become more aware of what to do or how to do with teacher's questions (Amalia & Devanti, 2016; Erdogen & Campbell, 2008). Questioning at PRS means that teacher asks students questions related to what they are going to read in a given text. Thus, questioning at PRS may well enhance students' reading comprehension in their learning process. The question that guided the study reported in this paper was:

What are students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at pre-reading stage on their reading comprehension?

## 2. The study

A descriptive research using mixed-method design was conducted to investigate students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at pre-reading stage (PRS) on students' reading performance. Quantitative data from questionnaires were used to collect data about students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS on students' reading performance. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were used to explore in depth students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS on students' reading performance.

Participants in this study were 118 students of English as a foreign language. At the time of the study, of 118 students, 72 students were from English Studies major constituting 61% of the participants. 25 students were from English Translation and Interpretation made up 21.2%. 21 students were from English Pedagogy constituting 17.8%. Of 118 students, 38 students were sophomore constituting 32.2% of the participants. 71 students were junior constituting 60.2% of the participants. 5 students were senior constituting 4.2% of the participants. 3 students were five-year students made up 2.5% of the participants. Of 118 students, 19 students were male constituting 16.1% of the participants and 98 students were female constituting 83.1% of the participants. Of the total 118 students, nine students were invited to participate the semi-structured interviews.

Data collected in this study include questionnaire and semi-structured interview. All the data were gathered in the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021. The questionnaire with 22 items consists of three main sections: participants' personal information (name, student's ID, major, course, and gender), students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS on EFL students' reading performance, and self-report. The second section with 20 items using a five-point Likert-scale type was categorized into three clusters, namely Involvement (Item 1), Benefit (Items 2-16) and Challenge (Items 17-20). The third section with two open-ended questions was utilized to gain insights into students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS on their reading comprehension. The Scale test was then used to check the reliability of the questionnaire. The result indicated that the questionnaire was reliable with the Cronbach alpha coefficient ( $\alpha = 0.854$ ).

Semi-structured interviews were used to explore in depth students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS on students' reading performance. The interview was designed based on the purpose as well as the questions of the study. The interview with four open-ended questions was divided into two clusters, namely students' perception of the effects of questioning at PRS on students' reading performance, and students' attitudes towards questioning as a teaching technique in the reading class. Nine students who participated in the questionnaire were invited for the actual interviews in this present study. Each interview took approximately twenty minutes.

### 3. Findings

#### Findings from questionnaires

*Students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS on reading*

A *Descriptive Statistics Test* was used to examine students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS on EFL students' reading performance. Table 1 shows the result of this test.

Table 1 Mean score of students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS

	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Students' performance	118	1.5	5	3.48	.80

Table 1 shows that the mean score of students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS is at a high level ( $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=.80$ ).

A *Descriptive Statistics Test* was conducted to measure the mean score of three clusters, namely Involvement, Benefit, and Challenge. Table 2 shows the result of the test.

Table 2 Mean scores of three clusters of students' perceptions

Clusters	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Involvement	118	2	5	3.92	.656
Benefit	118	1.6	5	3.73	.781
Challenge	118	1	5	2.41	.912

Table 2 shows that the mean scores of the participants' agreement level of clusters were between 2.41 and 3.92. The mean score of Cluster Involvement is the highest ( $M=3.92$ ,  $SD=.656$ ), followed by Cluster Benefit ( $M=3.73$ ,  $SD=.781$ ) and then Cluster Challenge ( $M=2.41$ ,  $SD=.912$ ).

#### Involvement

Table 2 shows that the mean score of Cluster Involvement is the highest ( $M=3.92$ ,  $SD=.656$ ), indicating that students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS on EFL students' reading comprehension in terms of Involvement are high.

The item of Cluster Involvement was analyzed by A *Frequency Test*. Table 3 shows the result.

Table 3 Percentages of students' perceptions of involvement of questioning at PRS

	Items	SD & D		N		A & SA	
		F	P (%)	F	P (%)	F	P (%)
1	I believe questioning at PRS allows me to involve in learning reading.	4	3.4	18	15.3	96	81.3

Table 3 shows that 81.3% of the participants (n=96) believed that questioning at PRS got students involved in reading.

#### *Benefit*

Table 2 shows that the mean score of Cluster Benefit is the second ( $M=3.73$ ,  $SD=.781$ ). This shows that the mean score of students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS on EFL students' reading comprehension was at a high level.

A *Frequency Test* was conducted to check items of Cluster Benefit. Table 4 shows the result of this test.

*Table 4* Percentages of students' perceptions of the benefits of questioning at PRS

	Items	SD & D		N		A & SA	
		F	P (%)	F	P (%)	F	P (%)
2	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage is a good condition for me to enhance my reading comprehension.	6	5.1	21	17.8	90	76.3
3.	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage assists me in reviewing vocabulary I have already known/ learnt.	7	5.9	32	27.1	78	66.1
4	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage assists me in connecting my previous lesson to the present reading texts.	7	5.9	36	30.5	75	63.5
5	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage helps me brainstorm some topic- related ideas.	2	1.7	12	10.2	104	88.2
6	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage helps me recognize the general ideas of the upcoming topic.	2	1.7	10	8.5	106	89.8
7.	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage engages me in guessing the theme and contents of the text.	9	7.6	23	19.5	84	71.2
8	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage assists me in thinking of the organization of the text.	26	22.0	45	38.1	47	39.8
9	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage helps me get across the unfamiliar contents of the text.	13	11.0	25	21.2	80	67.8
10	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage makes me feel confident in doing reading exercises.	21	17.7	51	43.2	46	38.9
11.	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage helps me gain more words.	32	27.1	31	26.3	54	45.8
12	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage helps me learn new ideas from my friends.	9	7.6	20	16.9	89	75.5
13.	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage draws my attention in learning reading.	6	5.1	36	30.5	73	61.9
14	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage creates an active atmosphere in the reading class.	3	2.5	26	22.0	88	74.6
15	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage helps me enhance inference-making ability.	2	1.7	19	16.1	97	82.2
16	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage helps me analyze reading activities.	8	6.7	53	44.9	57	48.3

Table 4 shows that 89.8% of the participants (n=106) believed that questioning at PRS could help students predict the general ideas of the upcoming text. 88.2% of the participants (n=104) believed that questioning at PRS could make students brainstorm some ideas related to the topic. 82.2% of the participants (n=97) believed that questioning at PRS could help students enhance students' inference-making ability. 76.3% of the participants (n=90) believed that questioning at PRS might facilitate students' reading comprehension. 75.5% of the participants (n=89) believed that questioning at PRS could make students learn new ideas from friends. 74.6% of the participants (n=88) believed that questioning at PRS could make an active atmosphere in the reading class. 71.2% of the participants (n=84) believed that questioning at PRS could engage students in guessing the topic and contents of the text. 67.8% of the participants (n=80) believed that students could get across the unfamiliar contents of the reading text based on questioning at PRS. 66.1% of the participants (n=78) believed that questioning at PRS could assist students in reviewing words they have already learn. 63.5% of the participants (n=75) believed that questioning at PRS might engage students in connecting their previous lesson to the present reading texts. 61.9% of the participants (n=73) believed that students could pay attention to reading based on questioning at PRS. 48.3% of the participants believed (n=57) that questioning at PRS might

help students analyze reading activities in reading class. 45.8% of the participants (n=54) believed that questioning at PRS could help students gain lots of vocabulary. 39.8% of the participants (n=47) believed that questioning at PRS might assist students in thinking of the organization of the text. 38.9% of the participants (n=46) believed that questioning at PRS could make students feel confident in doing the reading exercises.

### Challenge

Table 2 shows that the mean score of Cluster Challenge was under 2.5, indicating that the mean score of Cluster Challenge is at the lowest level of the three clusters ( $M=2.41$ ,  $SD=.912$ ).

A *Frequency Test* was conducted to check items of Cluster Challenge, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Percentages of students' perceptions of the challenge of questioning at PRS

	Items	SD & D		N		A & SA	
		F	P (%)	F	P (%)	F	P (%)
17	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage is not useful in enhancing reading comprehension.	86	72.9	28	23.7	4	3.3
18.	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage is stressful to students in reading class.	63	53.4	41	34.7	13	11.0
19	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage is time-consuming.	71	60.2	34	28.8	12	10.1
20	I believe questioning at pre-reading stage is complex/ difficult in mixed-ability reading classes.	45	38.2	46	39.0	27	22.9

Table 5 shows that 22.9% of the participants (n=27) believed that questioning at PRS could be problematic in mixed-ability reading classes. 11% of the participants (n=13) believed that questioning at PRS might make students stressful in reading class. 10.1% of the participants (n=12) believed that questioning at PRS could be time-consuming. Only 3.3% of the participants (n=4) believed that questioning at PRS might be not useful in enhancing reading comprehension.

### 3.2 Findings from the interviews

Analysis of the interview data reveals that the three themes are identified as student understanding of the nature of questioning at PRS, their perceptions of the effects of questioning at PRS and the challenges.

#### Students' understanding of questioning at PRS on reading comprehension

Nine students reported that they understood that questioning at pre-reading stage (PRS) refers to the ideas or topic of the coming lesson, which were delivered to students in reading classes. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*In my view, questioning at PRS means teacher question related to the upcoming topic. (Hoa, interview extract)*

*This method is that teacher asks some questions related to the lesson before learning to read. (Thu, interview extract)*

*The teacher often has students answer questions before reading the text. For example, on the sports topic, the teacher asks some questions such as "What sports are the reading?", "Is this sport familiar to you?", "What major ideas are about?" and "What knowledge can I learn from the text?". (Nhung, interview extract)*

*She also asks the textbook questions and asks more questions related to the upcoming topic. (Nhung, interview extract)*

*Teacher questions will ask some questions related to the upcoming lesson for students to respond to. (My, interview extract)*

*Questioning at PRS assists students in guessing the upcoming topic or aspects of the lesson. (Lan, interview extract)*

*To be honest, I have little experienced this method in class. (Dao, Interview extract)*

*In my opinion, this method means teacher gives students some related-topic questions. (Mai, interview extract)*

*In my reading book, there are some questions or pictures before the reading text. Teacher lets students make groups answer them. (Hanh, interview extract)*

*Teacher often asks students a lot of questions regarding the upcoming reading. (Hung, interview extract)*

The above quotes indicate questioning at PRS are related to questions generated by the teacher to engage students in the learning process or encourage them to think about the focus of the lesson content.

*The importance of questioning at pre-reading stage*

Three participants thought that questions before reading was important in students' reading comprehension. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*I therefore think that questioning at PRS is necessary for students to enhance their reading comprehension. (My, interview extract)*

*This method is necessary for students to learn reading. (Dao, interview extract)*

*I think this method is necessary for reading class. (Hanh, interview extract)*

### **Students' perceptions of the effects of questioning on students' reading**

#### *Reviewing prior knowledge and vocabulary*

Three participants said that questioning at PRS could motivate students in reviewing prior knowledge and words. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*Students will think of a set of words or problems. (Lan, interview extract)*

*This method makes me have many ideas and reviewing prior vocabulary related to the upcoming topic. (Dao, interview extract)*

*I can review my knowledge. (Hung, interview extract)*

*I can review my knowledge. (Hung, interview extract)*

#### *Predicting the contents of the upcoming text*

Seven students believed that questioning at PRS might engage them in guessing the reading theme. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*Firstly, I can predict the topic and contents of the text. (Hoa, interview extract)*

*I have a general view of the text. (Thu, interview extract)*

*This method helps me visualize the upcoming topic, guess main ideas and focus on them better based on teacher questions. (Nhung, interview extract)*

*Questioning at PRS helps me guess the general content of the topic. (My, interview extract)*

*Teacher questions help students predict a general picture of the topic. (Lan, interview extract)*

*Questioning at PRS helps me have an overview of the upcoming topic. (Mai, interview extract)*

*I can guess the content of the lesson. (Hanh, interview extract)*

#### *Gaining new ideas and more words*

Five of the nine participants shared that questioning at PRS might assist them in learning new ideas and more words. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*I can learn other words from teacher and friends. (Hoa, interview extract)*

*This method makes me have many ideas and words related to the upcoming topic. (Dao, interview extract)*

*I can know a lot of knowledge and vocabulary from friends. (Mai, interview extract)*

*I can learn a lot of new words from each other's opinions. (Hanh, interview extract)*

*I learn many ideas and receive words from others. (Hung, interview extract)*

#### *Comprehending the text better*

Seven participants agreed that questioning at PRS could make them understand the text better. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*I can learn other words from teacher and friends that make them understand information more easily. (Hoa, interview extract)*

*I comprehend the text faster. (Thu, interview extract)*

*I have understood the lesson before. (Nhung, interview extract)*

*I gain the reading text better. (Dao, interview extract)*

*I can understand the text better. (Mai, interview extract)*

*This method is useful in improving students' reading comprehension. (Hanh, interview extract)*

*I comprehend the text more easily. (Hung, interview extract)*

The above quotes indicate questioning at PRS helps them read the text easily.

#### *Feeling of confidence and interest in reading*

Four students perceived that they could feel confident and interested in reading. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*I feel confident to do all of the reading exercises and save more time to read because I understood the lesson before. (Nhung, interview extract)*

*I felt more interested. (My, interview extract)*

*This increases students interest in learning reading. (Lan, interview extract)*

*I feel interested in the upcoming content of the text thanks to questioning at PRS. (Dao, interview extract)*

#### *Drawing students' attention in learning reading.*

Four students said that questioning at PRS could engage them in drawing interest and paying attention in learning reading. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*This method at PRS helps to warm up and focus on the reading lesson more on traditional reading methods. (Hoa, interview extract)*

*I think that questioning at PRS draws attention in the text. (Thu, interview extract)*

*This method helps me visualize the upcoming topic, guess main ideas and focus on them better based on teacher questions. (Nhung, interview extract)*

*I was curious about the text, which draws my attention in learning reading. (My, interview extract)*

### **The challenges of questioning at PRS in the reading class**

#### *The unfamiliar topic*

Four students believed that the unfamiliar topic was a problem of questioning at PRS. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*The difficult topic makes students discouraged in reading. (Hoa, interview extract)*

*Some abstract topics make us not comprehend the question and the contents of the text. (Nhung, interview extract)*

*In reading class, I am not able to answer teacher questions about the unfamiliar topic because I do not have background knowledge about this topic. For example, the topics of the environment or an extinct animal are unfamiliar to students. (Dao, interview extract)*

*Some topic is unfamiliar to students. For instance, the Western art form is a strange theme to the cultural context of Vietnam because students do not have much knowledge to understand the text. (Hung, interview extract)*

#### *Difficult question*

Five students believed that difficult question was a problem of questioning at PRS. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*If teacher question is too difficult, students will only focus on finding the information to answer the questions. They will skim the other information. (Hoa, Interview extract)*

*If teacher question is ambiguous, students are not able to understand and answer them. This method requires the proficient teacher's questioning skills. (Nhung, interview extract)*

*Teacher question is too difficult to answer, makes the confusing atmosphere. The interaction between teacher and students is therefore reduced. (My, interview extract)*

*Ambiguous questions make students not understand the focus of the question. In addition, the question is too difficult for students to think about the aspect that teacher wants. (Lan, interview extract)*

*The other one is that teacher questions are too ambiguous for us to recognize the focus of the question. (Hung, interview extract)*

#### *Time-consuming*

Two students believed questioning at PRS was time-consuming. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*Teacher is not able to introduce the topic clearly, which makes time-consuming. (My, interview extract)*

*Time-consuming is a significant problem. If teacher does not manage time well, students' time for the text will be limited. (Mai, interview extract)*

#### *Mixed-ability reading classes*

Two students believed questioning at PRS was difficult in mixed-ability reading classes. The following extracts illustrate their views.

*This method is difficult in mixed-ability reading classes. Students who are not good unable to keep up with the progress of the class. For instance, good students answer all of the ideas so the others have nothing to answer. (Nhung, interview extract)*

*I believe this method is complex in mixed-ability reading classes. Many students cannot keep up with the process in class. If teacher is too focused on good students, the other ones feel bored with reading. (Mai, interview extract)*

## **4. Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that questioning at pre-reading stage was beneficial to students' reading comprehension. This finding is in line with a study by Tran and Phuong (2018) and a study by Hong and Nguyen (2019). These authors indicate that questioning before reading a text was useful for encouraging students' existing knowledge and ideas related to a given topic or lesson in reading classes. Student participants in the current study believed that questioning at PRS could allow them to review the knowledge they have already learned and to connect this type of prior knowledge with the current one. This finding is in line with a study by Tran and Phuong (2018) who contend that questioning at PRS could activate students' background knowledge of the topic. The finding is consistent with a study by Sunggingwati and Nguyen (2013) who claim that questioning before reading a text was likely to assist students in connecting their experiences to the lesson content, contributing to improving their reading and vocabulary gains.

Students perceived that questioning at PRS could facilitate them to get across the lesson contents and get them involved in a given text they were going to read. This finding is consistent with Hong and Nguyen

(2019)who contend that predicting the contents could provide students with an opportunity to familiarize the topic.

## 5. Conclusions

This research provides insights into students' perceptions of the effects of questioning at pre-reading stage (PRS) on EFL students' reading at a university in the Mekong Delta. The findings of this research indicate that questioning at PRS was an effective strategy towards students' reading comprehension. Questioning at PRS could encourage students to involve in learning reading, pay attention to the reading text, predict the lesson contents and interpret the reading messages. Questioning at PRS should be therefore applied in the teaching reading process because of its perceived effectiveness on EFL students' reading.

Pedagogical implications for teachers and students are made from the findings of this current study. Teachers are encouraged to stress the importance or value of questioning at PRS on students' reading. The teacher-student interaction should be known as the most important factor of using of questioning, promoting students to answer teacher's questions. However, the application of questioning at PRS could be problematic in mixed-ability reading classes. Teachers should provide students with relevant background knowledge about the reading topic before learning reading, contributing students' vocabulary and ideas related to the contents of the text. Teachers should have students a variety of questions in the reading class, allowing students to share their own understanding as well as ideas of the text. Students need to experience the questioning strategy aspre-reading stage because of its perceived effectiveness on their future reading classes and practices. Once students understand that questioning indeed could promote students' independent learning of reading, they will become more responsible and active readers in their learning process.

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**Author Information**

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**Ngan Kim Bui**  
Can Tho University

**Huan Buu Nguyen**  
Can Tho University

**Thai Hong Ly**  
Can Tho University

**Anh Lan Pham**  
Can Tho University

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